

**Research, Practice & Social Change
Comm 653**

Room 236

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Course Objectives

The central questions guiding this course concern the challenges, theoretical models and best practices of academic and community organization research partnerships. The goal of this course is to help students who expect to make careers either as academics or nonprofit policy/research staff to navigate the challenges of bridging the gap between the academy and community-based organizations so that a co-creation of knowledge can occur. The course familiarizes students with theoretical and practical models for academic/community partnerships. Students accrue experience forging partnerships that address the questions of knowledge and power inherent in the process.

To accomplish these goals

- (a) the course instructors join extensive experience in both academic research and the non-profit sector;
- (b) course readings draw from the growing literature on how to establish researcher/community partnerships along with exemplary successes and failures
- (c) course sessions will often include other experts who are actively joining research and community in various issue areas (e.g., environment, health disparities, economic justice, immigration);
- (d) students develop a working relationship by mutual agreement with a non-profit organization; and
- (e) a portion of each course session is devoted to trouble-shooting with regard to student projects.

Our goal is to equip students with the experience and knowledge they need to successfully bridge the academic/community divide in a way that benefits both the career development of the student and community organizations.

Course Eligibility

This course requires that students have basic research skills that they can bring to bear in a researcher/community organization partnership. Doctoral students in and

beyond the Annenberg School for Communication are welcome. Masters level students are also welcome, but need to acquire permission from the instructors.

Academic Integrity is Important!

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the campus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication program.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Office Hours: Because the required fieldwork is time sensitive, faculty guidance should be sought by email or phone in between class sessions. On campus meetings may be set by appointment.

Conduct of Class Sessions

Students are expected to play an active role in shaping class discussion. To that end, students will be asked to take responsibility to lead discussions of the week's readings and will be asked to develop précis of many of the readings. Assignments will be made week to week.

Components of Course Evaluation

Seminar Participation	15
Discussion Facilitation	10
Course Project Research Work Plan	20
Course Project Presentation (20 minutes)	25
Course Project Final Paper	30

Community Research Project

Students will conduct, either alone or in a small group, a research project using a model of community-based participatory research. Students are expected to engage in a systematic inquiry, making use of whatever methodological approaches seem appropriate to the research and that they have the knowledge to apply.

Course projects draw on applications solicited by [Liberty Hill Foundation](#) from its grassroots social justice grantees. Students may also propose a project developed from their own contacts and resources, though such projects must be approved by the instructors. Doctoral candidates may, with instructors' approval, design a related research project that will support the progress of their dissertation.

The second class session includes an opportunity for students and partnering organizations to discuss prospective projects and partnerships. Among the types of research that could be conducted within the semester timeframe might be:

- A small population study, e.g., a study of the demographic and spatial characteristics of a specific geo-ethnic community.
- A community needs/resource assessment or asset mapping
- An evaluation of a program which may include development of survey instruments or development of a focus group protocol

The student(s), working with the partnering organization, will develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that specifies the nature of the research, the tasks the researcher will be responsible for, identify supervision of the project on behalf of the community partner, agreements for regular meetings, and a clear time line for the conduct of the project. In general these MOUs are due no later than the fourth week of the semester.

Although it's desirable to develop and complete a research project, given the constraints of the semester, it's understood that with some fieldwork projects the process is the product. Therefore, keeping detailed notes of the process as it unfolds is recommended.

The **final course paper** has two components:

(1) The **final fieldwork paper** should be prepared in a way so that it is of optimal value to the collaborating community organization, even if this means departing from academic conventions. It is strongly encouraged that reports to community organizations begin with an Executive Summary unless such a summary is inappropriate to the findings or audience. The length of the fieldwork paper will vary according to the nature of the project and the mutually-agreed-to expectations about the report's purposes.

(2) A "**reflection epilogue**" that is not intended for the community organization, and that details your challenges, encounters with power differentials, cultural differences, and otherwise illustrates your hands-on engagement with the central questions of the course. **It is strongly recommended you keep weekly field notes to enrich your end-of-semester reflections.** Please consider the lessons you would draw from this experience and how they would inform your approach in future community based research projects.

Extra-campus resources: URBAN is an emerging national network of academics, independent scholars and community leaders who are engaged in community-based research. Meetings are generally held on Saturday mornings 10 am – 12:30 pm at the Downtown Labor Center near MacArthur Park. Upcoming meetings can be found on their website. <http://urbanresearchnetwork.org/category/local-nodes/los-angeles/>

Seminar Topics & Readings

All readings will be available via [Dropbox](#) unless a hyperlink is included in the syllabus. Many additional related readings that may be of interest are also in the Dropbox.

Each week several students will be asked to prepare précis of the readings for the following week and to distribute via email copies for instructors and students. These précis should summarize salient points from the reading.

The development of community based participatory research, action research, participatory action research and community-engaged research emerge from different disciplines, with slightly different approaches but generally aligned goals. In this course, we are ecumenical in our approach. These aligned research approaches draw on a diverse array of thinkers inside and outside the academy. This course is not designed to steep you in those literatures, but as time permits you may want to explore the work of W.E.B. Dubois, C. Wright Mills, Myles Horton, Saul Alinsky, Kurt Lewin, Jane Addams and Maxine Green among others to develop a richer understanding of the thinking that has contributed to this research approach.

Readings for Classes 1-4

IMPORTANT: The following readings will probably not be discussed in class until week four or five, but you are strongly urged to read them as early in the semester as your time allows. They will give you an essential foundation for developing your partnership.

Strand, Kerry; Sam Marullo; Nick Cutforth; Randy Stoecker; Patrick Donohue. *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. 2003. Chapters 1 and 2.

Nyden, Philip and Wim Wiewel, "Collaborative Research: Harnessing the Tensions Between Researcher and Practitioner," *The American Sociologist*, Winter 1992. 43-55.

Stoecker, Randy, "Creative Tensions in the New Community Based Research," Keynote addressed prepared for the Community-Based Research Network Symposium, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, May 13, 2004.

Class 1/January 10: Course Overview

Instructors' overview of the course and discussion of the student partnerships.

Within 48 hours of the first class, please prepare a personal statement that outlines your interest in community research, any previous experience you have working with community organizations, your research skills and any other information about yourself that you think is relevant as a first introduction to the participating community organizations. **This statement should be emailed to instructors within 48 hours of the first class and will be shared with prospective community partners in advance of the second class meeting.**

Please review the community organizations' RFPs which are available to you in [Dropbox](#).

In addition, there are three community research toolkits listed below. The Research for Organizing Toolkit is most relevant to most course partnerships, but the Advancement Project and DataCenter toolkits frame community research for slightly different audiences. Look closely at the Research for Organizing Toolkit and skim the others. For the third class session please prepare to walk the class through the RO toolkit identifying insights, resources, and highlighting materials that you think you or other members of the class may be able to use in developing your research partnership, and noting distinguishing hallmarks of the others.

1. [Research for Organizing Toolkit](#)
2. Advancement Project's [Healthy City Community Research Toolbox](#)
3. DataCenter's [An Introduction to Research Justice](#)

Class 2/January 17: Initial Partnership Meetings

This class session provides an opportunity for student researchers to introduce themselves to organizations and organizations to introduce their work and their proposed research project. An MOU between students and an organization will be due in no later than early February.

By the end of the evening, students should have identified a project or two that they wish to pursue further. A face-to-face meeting to clarify the goals and scope of the research within the following week is strongly encouraged.

Class 3/Jan. 24: Approaches to Community Research: Toolkit Reviews

For the third class session please prepare to walk the class through the RO toolkit identifying insights, resources, and highlighting materials that you think you or

other members of the class may be able to use in developing your research partnership, and noting distinguishing hallmarks of the others.

1. [Research for Organizing Toolkit](#)
2. Advancement Project's [Healthy City Community Research Toolbox](#)
3. DataCenter's [An Introduction to Research Justice](#)

Class 4/Jan. 31: Community Research in Practice

Guest Speakers: Guest Speakers: Saba Waheed, UCLA Downtown Labor Center and a youth researcher. (Saba was previously on staff at The Data Center in Oakland.)

This class session will focus on how to assist nonprofits new to research in the process of developing strategic research questions, gathering data, and reporting out findings in a way that will be meaningful to the nonprofit's intended audience.

Class 5/Feb 7: The Metamorphosis Project: A Communication Infrastructure Approach to Social Change through Partnership with Grassroots Organizations

Guest Speaker: Evelyn Moreno, Project Manager, USC Metamorphosis Project. This class session will focus on some of the community-based research projects that have been led by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and graduate students through the [Metamorphosis](#) and other projects.

Readings (for Weeks 5 and 6)

Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. "Prologue," from *The Communication Ecology of 21st Century Urban Communities* [\[pub info\]](#)

Matei, Sorin Adam, and Ball-Rokeach, Sandra. "Watts, the 1965 Los Angeles Riots, and the Communicative Construction of the Fear Epicenter of Los Angeles." *Communication Monographs*, vol 72, no 3, September 2005, pp. 301-323.

Kim, Young-Chan, and Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. "Civic Engagement from a Communication Infrastructure Perspective," *Communication Theory* 16 (2006) pp. 173-197.

Chen, N. N.-T, Dong, F., Huang, J., Ball-Rokeach, S., Parks, M., & Huang, J. Building a new media platform for local storytelling and civic engagement in ethnically diverse neighborhoods. *New Media & Society*.

Review [MetaConnects](#) and [AlhambraSource](#).

Class 6/Feb 14: Foundations and Thinktanks

This session is designed to talk about the rise of research and idea production and dissemination through thinktanks and its role in U.S. politics, as well as the role foundations play in supporting these activities.

Readings

Paget, Karen. "State of the Debate: Lessons of Right-Wing Philanthropy," *The American Prospect*, December 15, 2001. <http://prospect.org/article/state-debate-lessons-right-wing-philanthropy>

Rich, Andrew. "War of Ideas: Why mainstream and liberal foundations and the think tanks they support are losing in the war of ideas in America politics," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2005.

Weaver, R. Kent. "The Changing World of Think Tanks," *P.S. Political Science and Politics*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 568-578.

Class 7/Feb. 21 Community Approaches to Evaluation

Speaker: Shane Goldsmith, President & CEO, Liberty Hill Foundation

Rossi, Peter H., Howard E. Freeman and Mark W. Lipsey. *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. SAGE Publications, 2004. 7th ed.

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 7. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Class 8/Feb. 28 – Case Study: Black Worker Center

Guest speaker: Jovanna Rosen, Ph.D. Jovanna now has a postdoc at the Price Center for Social Innovation. She is a former student whose community-based research with Black Worker Center served as the primary case study for her dissertation.

Readings:

Rosen, Jovanna. Chapter 6: Fragile Accountability, a case study from Dr. Rosen's dissertation focused on the Black Worker Center.

Class 9/March 7 Entertainment-Education

Guest speaker: Doe Mayer, Chair of Film and Television Production at USC's School of Cinematic Arts and Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Readings

Moyer-Guse, E. (2008). Toward a theory of entertainment persuasion: Explaining the persuasive effects of entertainment-education messages. *Communication Theory* 18: 407-425

Murphy, S. T., Frank, L. B., Moran, M. B. & Patnoe-Woodley, P. (2011). Involved, transported, or emotional? Exploring the determinants of change in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in entertainment-education. *Journal of Communication* 61: 407-431.

Literat, I., & Chen, N.-T. N. (2013). Communication infrastructure theory and entertainment-education: An integrative model for health communication. *Communication Theory*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1111/comt.12011

Spring Break March 11-18

Class 10/March 21 Community Research in Practice

Guest speaker: Community Health Council staff discussing the “Healthy Kid Zone” and other community based participatory research projects, as well as CHC’s annual community research summit.

Class 11/March 28

Guest speaker: Marina Litvinsky, ABD, former class participant.

Readings:

USC Metamorphosis Lincoln Heights Project description: “Understanding Neighborhood Change: An Inquiry into the Communication Dynamics between Newcomers and Oldtimers”

Class 12/April 4 Perceptions of Success

How to measure success of community research projects?

Readings:

Lindquist-Grantz, R & Vaughn, L 2016, 'The journey and destination need to be intentional: Perceptions of success in community-academic research partnerships', *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 1-21. doi: 10.5130/ijcre.v9i1.4872

Chen, N.-T. N., Ognyanova, K., Zhang, C., Wang, C., Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & Parks, M. (2015). Causing ripples in local power relations: The meso-level influence of a hyperlocal news website. *Journalism Studies*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2015.1078738

Osborn, Barbara. "Can we partner with our closest neighbors?" [Inside Higher Education Beta blog](#). August 2015.

Brough, Melissa. "Participatory Design of a Mobile Platform for Social Justice: Reflections on Power and Participation in the Mobile Voices Project."

Class 13/April 11 The Future

In this session, we discuss challenges and strategies for developing courses of this kind within the university and beyond, and rethinking graduate education for non-academic careers.

Readings:

Friedland, William H. and Rotkin, Michael. "Academic Activists: Community studies at the University of California Santa Cruz," in Dickinson, Torry D., ed. *Community and The World: Participating in Social Change*. Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003, pp. 41-62.

Boyte, Harry, and Farr, James. "The Work of Citizenship and The Problem of Service Learning," in *Experiencing Citizenship: Concepts and Models for Service Learning in Political Science*, edited by Richard M. Battistoni and William E. Hudson. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 1997, pp. 35 - 48.

Gross, Larry. "Rethinking Doctoral Education," unpublished essay, 2010.

Class 14/April 18

Student Presentations

Class 15/April 25

Student Presentations

