

Anth 4701.027, Community Engagement through Action Research

Spring 2015, Wed 2pm-4:50pm

Lang 318

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 2:30-4:30, or by appointment

Course Description:

"...the whole thing becomes a part of your life."-students from Anth 4701.027 Spring 14

Action research is considered both a critique and an alternative way of conducting research. It challenges the separation of expert/scholarly knowledge from non-expert/community knowledge and proposes collaborative frameworks for doing research. Universities have recently made community engagement an important part of their mission as they are challenged to justify their relevance to the public. Anthropologists have engaged the community for some time and in multiple ways by insisting on the relevance of local knowledge. As a result some anthropologists envision their research as applied, public, engaged, or activist. This class is focused on doing anthropology by engaging the community as experts and active collaborators. You will learn about various approaches to action research and do action research. The course requires a commitment to think about and do anthropology differently. As action researchers, we will engage in hands-on learning and research to create social change attempting to democratize the process of research and the relationships between the university and community.

Spring 2015 Project:

During the Spring 2015 semester we will conduct a group project with the following community partner in Denton:

- 1) Opening Doors International Services (ODIS)-a non-profit organization serving the immigrant community <http://www.odisinc.org/en/>

The project will focus on human trafficking. We will work on ODIS' educational campaign and Evoking Thought event.

You must have a flexible schedule and be available during the week and weekends. Most of the work for this class will be conducted outside of class time. In addition, you must have a professional attitude and be committed to serving the local community.

Objectives

When you finish this class you will:

- 1) Understand how and why action research is different from other types of research
- 2) Understand how action research can benefit community engagement
- 3) Be familiar with various forms of action research
- 4) Be familiar with research design and collaborative research

Assignments:

- 1) Class attendance and participation (100 points):
 - To get the most out of this class your attendance is required. You are also required to participate in class discussions and be an active collaborator in the action research project. You will be accountable to the class, action research group, and community partner.
 - You will participate as a volunteer for your community partner and attend activities as determined by the organization/program.
 - I will record your attendance promptly at the beginning of each class and will ask your research group and community partner to provide feedback on your attendance and participation.
 - More than **4** unexcused class absences will lower your total semester grade by 20 points.
 - If you have a documented excuse for your absence let me know as soon as possible and bring it to class. A valid documented excuse consists of a doctor's note documenting your illness or death in the family.
- 2) Weekly activities report (50 points): You will write, submit, and share with the class a brief report of your weekly activities relevant to the action research project. Your report must include:
 - Date, your name, project
 - Activities completed
 - Hours spent
 - Activities planned for the following week
 - Reflections
- 3) Weekly reading journal (50 points): You will write a journal entry for each of the assigned readings listed in the course outline and submit it every week. Your journal must include:
 - Date, your name
 - Author and title
 - Main ideas
 - Questions for discussion
 - Useful ideas for your project
- 4) Lead Discussion (50 points): You will sign-up to lead discussion several times during the semester. To help you lead discussion you will use the reading journal for the week you

selected. You must post the discussion questions on Blackboard the Tuesday prior to your preferred discussion date.

- 5) Project plan (75 points): With your group you will write and present to the class and your community partner a detailed plan for your action research project. The plan must include:
- *Community Problem*: What community problem do you plan to research and why is it important? What question/s will your research try to answer?
 - *Methods/Skills*: What tools of data collection will you use? How will you use them? How will your community partner be involved?
 - *Timeline*: When will you conduct the research and who will be responsible for the data collection? Where will the data be collected? Where will the data be stored, how will it be stored?
 - *Deliverables*: What will you give to your community partner? When?
 - *Community partner approval*
- 6) Data analysis (75 points): With your group you will write and present to the class a brief report of how you plan to analyze the data you collected and how you plan to involve your community partner in the analysis.
- 7) Project deliverable(s) (100 points): With you group you will write a report of your project and present your report to the class. In addition you will also share your deliverable(s) with your community partner and include their feedback in your report.

All grades will be assigned based on the following grading scheme:

100-89% = A
 88-79% = B
 78-69% = C
 68 -59% = D
 58%- = F

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- 1) Since discussion is an essential part of this course please come to class prepared and on time.
- 2) Please turn off your cell phones.
- 4) Do not come into class late or leave early.
- 5) You are responsible for tracking your own grade progress (see course requirements and grading scheme to help you keep track of available points). If you have questions about your

grade come to office hours, make an appointment, or contact me via email. Do not make specific inquiries about your grade in class.

6) No late work will be accepted unless you have a valid documented excuse (documented illness or death in the family). **If you miss an assignment and you have a valid documented excuse notify me as soon as possible via phone or email so we can arrange a reasonable time for you to make up the missed assignment.** All work must be turned in at the beginning of class unless noted otherwise. I will not accept emailed work.

7) **Plagiarism and Cheating:** The department of anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. Any of these will be reprimanded and can result in an "F" in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in your dismissal from the university. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>.

For information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

8) The Anthropology Department does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments or help to individuals with disabilities in its program and activities. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements.

9) SETE (Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness): The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually engage students in my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 1/21	Introduction	-Select roles (in class)
Week 2 1/28	Overview of project partner *ODIS training	Be familiar with: -ODIS website *Meet at ODIS
Week 3 2/4	What is community engagement and action research?	-Henry, Nuñez-Janes, Jordan, and Re Cruz -Stringer Ch 1
Week 4 2/11	Theories and principles of action research	-Stringer Ch 2 -Develop plan for communication, participation, and inclusion (in class)
Week 5 2/18	Planning	-Stringer Ch 3 -Outline project plan (in class)
Week 6 2/25	Identifying and creating tools of data collection	-Stringer Ch 4 -Continue working on project plan (in class)
Week 7 3/4	Sharing the plan	-present project plan and make revisions based on discussion *Meet at ODIS *PROJECT PLAN DUE to ODIS and profe
Week 8 3/11	Looking for data	-we will spend class time collecting data
Week 9 3/18		Spring Break
Week 10 3/25	Thinking about the data	-Stringer Ch 5 -Begin data analysis (in class)
Week 11 4/1	Thinking about the data	-Finalize data analysis -Outline content for project analysis (in class)
Week 12 4/8	Sharing the analysis	-present project analysis and make revisions based on discussion *Meet at ODIS *PROJECT ANALYSIS DUE to ODIS and profe
Week 13	Strategic planning	-Stringer Ch 7

4/15		*Evoking Thought event 4/17 at Cumberland Presbyterian Children's home. EVERYONE MUST ATTEND
Week 14 4/22	Reporting	-Stringer Ch 8 -Outline project deliverables (in class)
Week 15 4/29	Reporting	-Continue working on project deliverables
Week 16 5/6	Reading day	No class
Finals Week 4/13	Final presentation and celebration 1:30-3:30	-present project deliverables and make revisions based on discussion *Meet at ODIS *PROJECT DELIVERABLES DUE to ODIS and profe

*syllabus is subject to changes and revisions