

**TE 939A: VARIATIONS IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH
METHODOLOGIES
FALL 2021**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Office hours: By arrangement.

Class meetings: Tuesdays, 4:10-7:00, 112 Ernst Bessey Hall

Course website: All course materials and information will be on D2L, in googledocs, or available electronically through the library.

PROVISIONAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we will explore some of the variations under the broader umbrella of “action research,” including, for example, teacher action research, community-based participatory action research, and youth-participatory action research. We will consider each variation individually to explore their histories and methodologies but also set them alongside one another to analyze how they attend to issues of power, relationships, and purpose. Using Milner’s (2007) article titled *Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen* as a starting point, we will grapple with questions, tensions, and ethical dimensions about what it means to do research about others’ experiences and how these methodologies, when done reflectively and purposefully, can take on and disrupt power dynamics and the colonizing dominant approaches to conducting research *on* people rather than *with* people. We will draw on a range of readings but also examine cases through watching videos, listening to podcasts, and interacting with people who draw on these methodologies as part of their work and lives.

CONCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION

REQUIRED BOOKS

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*. Routledge. (Available in MSU eLibrary, see link below.)

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/lib/michstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=325551>

The 30th Anniversary edition of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* will also be available through eLibrary.

RELATED PODCASTS

<https://the-action-research-pod.captivate.fm/>

<https://shows.acast.com/humrespro/episodes/70-taking-charge-with-teacher-action-research>

https://www.teachermagazine.com/au_en/articles/action-research-episode-2-four-teachers-120-learners

<https://youthresearchlab.org/whypar>

RESOURCES

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/intervention-research/main>

<https://participation.wordpress.com/field-notes/par-methods/>

prof organization

<https://www.carn.org.uk/about/>

AERA Special Interest Groups related to all kinds of 'action research'

ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

I. Attendance, Preparation, Participation, and Involvement (*Ongoing all semester*)

Your attendance, preparation, participation, and involvement are key to making the course a success. If you have to miss class, please let me know *ahead of time by email* so we can work out details of the absence. Because we are a small group, each of us will make an important contribution to the seminar time. This depends on your coming to class prepared and taking an active role in the class. Being prepared means taking the time to read and be ready to take part in critical conversations in class. It means both trying to understand what the authors are trying to communicate but also interrogating the ideas in terms of other readings you have done, your own life experiences, other academic and professional experiences you have had, and so on. That said, I don't think participation equals involvement. As one of my mentors, Mr. Bill, wrote in a course I had with him, "involvement includes much, much, much (i.e., much³) more than 'talking

in class,' and there are many, many ways to show that you're involved without publicly opening your mouth," whereas participation tends to be more about the number and length of contributions one makes in class. My inclusion of 'involvement' signifies also that I think the qualitative nature of discussions is important because it shows one is prepared to engage in critical and serious conversations about the course material. An important goal of this seminar is to create a learning community in which we can work intensely together to support our own and others' learning.

II. Co-Facilitation (*Due dates contingent on the week you select*)

Often times teaching something helps you understand something better than you did prior to teaching something...and, teaching is part of life and of almost any positions you might take after you finish your programs. Each person will choose a week to co-facilitate the seminar activities with me. An important note: a lecture is not an option during the co-facilitation week! There can be a few opening comments about the readings to set the stage and definitely instructions about what will take place during the session, but the class should be involved in discussions and activities (be creative!) throughout the facilitation time. Whatever the discussions and activities focus on, however, *must require participants to draw on information in the assigned readings—their knowledge, questions, etc. about the readings need to be transparent*. (Although this should be the case, this requirement is based on my experiences asking people to facilitate and seeing the activity have no apparent connection to the ideas in the reading...).

Co-facilitation will involve a few different activities:

- 1) ***Two weeks in advance***: You will meet with me to discuss potential readings, make selections of readings, brainstorm ideas for class (e.g., focus questions, activities).
- 2) ***ONE week in advance***: You will meet with me again to finalize plans for our facilitation of class. You should read the material not once but two or even three times, perhaps tracking down references, looking up any unfamiliar terms, or additional information on the author, information on google or YouTube, timeframe the article was written, etc. An especially-well-prepared facilitator:
 - a. should be able to tell another person, clearly and succinctly (and accurately) what is going on in the readings;
 - b. has thought deliberately and critically about what they think of the author's positions and views;
 - c. is able to explain these thoughts clearly and persuasively to others who have read the material but have not gone to the same lengths to be especially-well-prepared; and
 - d. has probably focused in on some particular part or aspect of the selection that seems particularly significant or controversial or otherwise worthy of attention.

You will then meet with me to engage in discussions to work through any issues, questions, concerns about the readings and collaboratively start to plan for the class by brainstorming a

range of things we could do. As a co-facilitator, you will craft one of at least four ways¹ to “creatively communicate” some of the key ideas in the readings:

- Blog
- Youtube video
- Infographic
- Short cartoon/graphic novel

This method of communication should list key topics/issues/problems/questions you think would be important to address in the discussion of the focal readings, and include some explanation/elaboration of each topic or issue and why it is important. It may include some brief summaries, important quotations, and/or central dilemmas or questions related to the readings. This will serve either as a ‘summary’ experience of the readings and/or may be something provocative that can be the center of the discussion the week your readings are the focus.

In class, you will: a) ‘set up’ the readings in class to prepare colleagues to read the assigned articles; and b) provide focus questions for the group to consider as they read, drawing on the ideas in the “Creative Communication” you did.

- 3) ***On your co-facilitation week***, we will co-facilitate the class! You will also upload to our googlefolder your Creative Communication
- 4) At the end of the class session we co-facilitate, I ask that you write a **brief reflection** (about 1-2 pages) on the experience of doing this assignment, which will be submitted to me as an email attachment **within 48 hours of facilitating the class**. This particular part of this assignment is supposed to support some of your engagement with your personal journey as an educator and someone who has or might facilitate participatory work. The reflection should illustrate some of what you have learned from this deep read, distilling, planning, and facilitating process. For example, you may want to explore some of the following questions: What do you feel like you learned from the reading, distilling, and planning processes? What questions do you still have? What tensions/dilemmas came up for you, either from the readings, the planning process, or the co-facilitating? How does this set of readings and co-facilitating help you reflect on your positionality (revisiting Milner)? What were some salient experiences for the participants in the discussion we had? Please title your reflection as yourlastname_FacilitationRefl_date.

III. Setting Your Own Learning Activities and Plan

In Week 2 or 3 of the class, you will turn in a short description and timeline of 2-4 learning activities that make sense for your interests, what you want to learn, and where you are in your program. For example, you may want to dig much more deeply into aspects of your own researcher positionality or do a literature review related to an aspect that PAR tries to work on/honor (e.g., voice, ‘empowerment’) or a focus of PAR (e.g., using action research in teacher preparation or professional development), or start developing a partnership that could later be a

¹ I’m open to alternatives to these four as long as they are short, creative, interesting and/or engaging ways of sharing information and raising issues about the readings.

site for PAR and capture and reflect on this process.... In the description, you will specify what you want to do, what you hope to learn from your proposed assignments/projects (in relation to the course description), and a timeline for completing the proposed assignments/projects. I will give brief feedback on what you propose and you will be able to revise (or not, depending on the feedback). In my feedback, I will also consider workload and try to make sure it is reasonable for a PhD level course.

GRADING

The breakdown for emphasis will be something like this:

I. Class Participation	15%
II. Co-facilitation (includes facilitation, ‘creative communication.’ & reflection)	40%
III. Your Own Learning Activities & Plan (includes a distribution of the percentages across the 2-4 activities you describe)	45%

No incompletes or deferred grades will be given

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is expected; please notify me in advance if you must miss a class. Since we meet only once a week, and what we do in class – our discussions and activities – is an important part of your learning, it is impossible to “make up” classes you miss. Missing class will affect your grade. If you miss three classes, I will ask you to drop the class.

APA format is **required** for all submissions, with the exception that your short papers should be single-spaced. The final paper should strictly adhere to APA formatting. A title page is not necessary except for your final paper.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Work that is not your own needs to be properly cited, whether the source is a classmate, a Web site, or a published text. Taking credit for work you did not produce is considered plagiarism, which is a serious offense with serious consequences. Work that is intellectually dishonest also includes writing a response to a text you did not read or writing up a report of research you did not plan or carry out. Work that is found to be intellectually dishonest will receive a failing grade and may constitute grounds for failing the course (see your student handbook and MSU policies for students’ rights and responsibilities.) Please be extremely careful about using material from the Web. It must be identified as such with proper citation. (See the APA Guidelines, 2001, for information on citing Web sources.)

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the College of Education adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades* (excerpted below); the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)

“The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall: (1.01) claim or submit the academic work of another as one’s own. (1.02) procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization. (1.03) complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization. (1.04) allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization. (1.05) alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person. (1.06) fabricate or falsify data or results” (From MSU’s General Student Regulations, Protection of Scholarship and Grades).

Because electronic resources are so readily available and so easy to copy and paste into your notes or electronic bibliographic software, be aware that if you quote the exact words of another author you must use quotation marks and give the proper citation. This means that, when copying great quotes to save, you must be extremely careful to record what parts of your notes are direct quotes from the author, and what parts are your own words or interpretation. Using quotes without both a citation and quotation marks (or appropriate formatting as suggested by the APA standards) is plagiarism and will be treated as such. This includes quotes from Web sites as well as from other sources.

I encourage you to discuss the course material, papers, writing assignments, and projects with peers and advisors, both in and out of class. However, I expect that all submitted written work is completed by you and is the result of each your own thoughts and ideas, unless otherwise indicated (by citation). Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course and/or removal from the program.

STUDENT DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, they should call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY).