PY/ED 912: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH:
GENDER, ‘RACE’ AND POWER

Instructors: M. Brinton Lykes; Karla M. Nicholson

Fall, 2013

Class Meets in Campion G016

Tuesdays, 1:30 – 4:20 pm

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Office Hours: MBL: Tuesday, 4:30 – 6:00; Wednesday, 3:30 - 5:00 and by appointment.
KMN: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will introduce participants to a number of theoretical and practical issues in the design and implementation of field based participatory action research (PAR) and activist scholarship. We will explore theories that have contributed to the development of these forms of knowledge generation and review the historical roots of participatory action research. We will critically review the institutionalization of these theories and practices and explore the “critical edge” of activist scholarship. These knowledge generation approaches will be examined through lenses crafted at the interstices of ‘race’, ethnicity and culture, gender, class, sexualities, abilities, and globalization - dynamics of power that facilitate and constrain PAR processes and activist scholarship. Examples of participatory action research and activist scholarship – including critical pedagogy and teacher research; PAR in/and health and mental health; feminist-infused PAR; and PAR and human rights – will be discussed, focusing on their strengths and limitations as collaborative resources for knowledge construction and community-based social change. Theatre, photography, creative arts, and new technologies will be discussed as resources for community problem identification, data collection and analysis, and community-based responses. Ethnographic, narrative and oral history methodologies will be presented as resources for understanding and re-presenting the individual and collective lives of co-participants/co-investigators. Several strategies for data analysis including grounded theory and narrative analysis will be reviewed and students will have the opportunity to “practice” them through course assignments.

Karla M. Nicholson, Executive Director of Haymarket People’s Fund and long-time Boston resident and community organizer and activist has been appointed a Boston College Lynch School of Education Collaborative Community Fellow for the fall of 2013 and will serve as a guest lecturer and collaborator in the course. She has collaborated in Haymarket’s “deliberate and deliberative process to undo racism as ingrained in every aspect of its organization. This open-ended process has transformed the structure, staffing, grant making, and fundraising activities of Haymarket. … As a result …Whites and POC [People of Color] now work together to co-create and continually refine an organizational culture that reflects our anti-racist values while unity is built.” (Excerpted from Introduction, Courage to Change, Haymarket People’s Fund, 2013). Additionally, Karla has given leadership to an ongoing collaboration of Haymarket People’s Fund, Simmons College School of Social Work, the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, and Boston College’s Center for Human Rights and International Justice in hosting Undoing Racism™ workshops facilitated by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond.
The course is designed as an advanced level introduction to PAR as well as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of social oppressions with a particular focus on U.S. racism. This work will be deeply enhanced by our participation in an Undoing Racism™ workshop sponsored by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond (see below for details). Finally, PAR and activist scholarship presume that teaching and learning are deeply participatory and group or community-based and committed to social change. Thus we will strive to co-create a teaching-learning community wherein we critically analyze and respectfully value each person’s individual and particular contributions and our diverse understandings of social reality and how we position ourselves in the multiple worlds in which we live and work.

REQUIRED READING AND COURSE FEES

All articles, as specified with an * in class syllabus, are available online via Blackboard Vista (http://cms.bc.edu). See Blackboard Vista for a copy of this syllabus and other class resources. I will also put some additional resources on Blackboard Vista and encourage you to email research articles and/or relevant www sites that you think would be of interest to others in the class to Shaun Glaze (glazes@bc.edu), Graduate Assistant and PhD student at the Lynch School, who can add to them to our site for all to access. Please be sure to put FOR PY/ED912 in the header of your email.

We will have the opportunity to develop a shared understanding of racism and white privilege through participating in the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism™ Workshop (see Blackboard Vista for additional flyer, registration form, and information). Each student is required to participate in the workshop and to pay as much of the workshop fee as is feasible within her/his budget with a minimum of $150. This cost is the only course expense since all of your readings are provided free of cost on Blackboard Vista. Because the workshop is an integral part of our teaching/learning experience Boston College will cover any amount above $150 and up to the $350 fee per participant for students enrolled for credit in the seminar who are not able to cover the entire cost. You are required to attend the full workshop per dates sent to you in the summer, that is, Thursday, October 3 (6-8pm), Friday, October 4 (9am-5pm), and Saturday, October 5 (9 am – 4pm). Details about the location of the workshop and directions will be posted on Blackboard Vista as soon as they are available.

All students are expected to attend all classes and are required to do weekly class readings PRIOR to the class in which they are discussed and to submit a brief critical essay/journal entry about the week’s reading as specified below in the course requirements. It is expected that all students will engage actively in class discussion, thus participating in creating a shared teaching/learning experience.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

You are not required to purchase these texts but they will be referred to in the course and they are on reserve in the library. It is expected that all students will have read Pedagogy of the Oppressed at
some point in their academic careers. If you have not, I strongly urge you to do so at some point during the semester. The following books are on reserve in O’Neill and can be checked out on a 24 hour basis. All but one are also available for purchase in local venues or on-line.


ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Students should consult the university policies on Academic Integrity (see http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity) and that of the Lynch School of Education (http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/academics/phd_policies.html#integrity) for a discussion of academic integrity. There will be no exceptions to these policies. Please also note specific additional www resources on the Responsible Conduct of Research (http://www.bc.edu/research/oric/rcr.html) as well as those within your individual disciplines.

Boston College students who need special resources to accommodate specific learning challenges should visit the Connors Family Learning Center www.bc.edu/connors or, for other special needs, one of the other offices at the university - for a list and email links (see http://www.bc.edu/offices/odsd/disabilityservices/resources.html). If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan (Kathleen.duggan@bc.edu) Associate Director, Academic Support Services, the Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Paulette Durrett (paulette.durrett@bc.edu),
Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

**GOALS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE**

**ASSIGNMENT 1**

**DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHING-LEARNING COMMUNITY.**

This course is designed as a seminar and it is expected that everyone will actively participate in the teaching-learning process. This goal requires informed contributions from all of us and, therefore, requires that students will have read the relevant materials and completed the relevant assignments BEFORE the class in which they will be discussed. All writing assignments have been organized to maximize meaningful class participation. It is expected that all students will complete assignments by their due dates.

**REQUIRED for ALL STUDENTS**

Each student must post 3 Brief Reflection Papers on BlackBoard Vista no later than midnight Sunday evening:

1. prior to the Undoing Racism: **Brief Reflection Paper 1** (To be posted by Sunday, September 22): How do I understand myself as positioned at the intersection of racism and social oppressions due social class, ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, and/or sexualities? In what ways does this self-understanding inform, facilitate, or constrain my subjectivity(ies) as a participatory action researcher?

2. after the Undoing Racism workshop: **Brief Reflection Paper 2** (To be posted by Sunday, October 6): REVISIT your response to these questions – and after having read those of your classmates: How do I understand myself positioned at the intersection of racism and oppressions based on social class, ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, and/or gender identity? In what ways does this self-understanding inform, facilitate, or constrain my subjectivity(ies) as a participatory action researcher? How do I envision integrating what I have learned into my daily practice as a student and a potential PARer?

3. Develop and circulate via Blackboard Vista (no later than the Sunday preceding Tuesday’s class) a **Brief Reflection Paper 3/Critical Essay** (250-500 words, that is, 1-2 double-spaced typed pages) focusing on the readings for one session of the seminar (see sign up sheet circulated in the first class on Tuesday, September 3, 2013). These essays should be read by all students prior to the class, in preparation for class discussion.

4. Presentation of your Final Paper/Project to Class on December 4 or 11

THEN CHOOSE A or B
A
Develop an INTELLECTUAL/ACADEMIC JOURNAL (ASSIGNMENT I) (typed, double spaced) throughout the semester. You may constitute the journal in whatever way you like - that is, as a learning log, field notes, reflections - but you MUST include both:
(a) your critical and integrative reflections on weekly reading and class discussions, and
(b) your more personal encounter with readings, discussions, and with various field experiences associated with PY/ED912.

You are encouraged to include reflections on readings from other classes (or leisure reading) as well as experiences from other contexts of your lives that are related to the issues we are discussing, but this is not required. (See Handout and Assignments for details)

B
Develop a GLOSSARY or LIST OF TERMS (ASSIGNMENT I) that includes concepts that you are discovering for the first time in this course – or learning more about through the readings and class discussions for this course. The list should include at least 15 terms (at least 7 in Part 1 and at least 8 more in Part 2 – or one per week) with 100-250 word definitions based on research from at least 3 sources and written IN YOUR OWN WORDS. ALSO INCLUDE specific examples that help clarify the ways in which the concept is used in PAR, activist scholarship, or related research methodologies. (See Handout and Assignments for details)

ASSIGNMENT 1 must be submitted for my review and comments twice during the semester (Part 1, ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 8; Parts 1 (with MBL comments) & 2, ON NOVEMBER 26). You may submit your work via email BEFORE class on these days or in hard copy at class.

ASSIGNMENT 2

DEVELOPMENT OR ENHANCEMENT of SKILLS and EXPERTISE as a PAR or ACTIVIST SCHOLAR.

Please note well – if you want to be able to use the work generated in option A of this assignment in any presentations or publications you MUST submit a Human Subjects Review/IRB application and have it approved prior to gathering the data. See http://www.bc.edu/research/oric/human/irbappforms.html

Note well that your topic proposal/plan for Assignment 2 is DUE no later than Tuesday, October 15. Your paper will not be accepted if your topic has not been submitted by this deadline. This plan must be typed, 250 words, and is worth 10% of your final grade. You CANNOT change topics after this date.

A
Develop a “thick description” and an “interpretive, co-constructed understanding” of a social issue or social problem “in context”. This project must be done collaboratively with someone(s) in one of the communities to which you belong or in which you are working/
worked. In order to develop this you must choose one or, at most, two of the 4 resources/strategies for data gathering AND one of the 3 resources for data analysis and interpretation (see Guidelines for Final Assignment Option A for details) AND demonstrate through your final project that you have “mastered” the resources AND increased your understanding of the social issue/problem. Your final “product” must be presented to the class (no later than Tuesday, December 4 or 11) and submitted in a final paper that is 15-20 pages, not including appendices (double spaced, APA style, 6th edition) which must include a brief review of the relevant literature as well as a description of your methodology, findings, and implications/next steps (see Guidelines for Final Assignment Option A for details).

B

Critical literature review and interpretive essay: Identify a specific problem/contradiction/intersection of oppression. Then:
1. Critically review the literature on gender, ‘race’, class and/or power as it relates to the problem/issue/contradiction through the lens of PAR and activist scholarship;
2. Interview two key informants who are experts in and differently affected by this problem, that is, it may directly affect them or they may have been involved in addressing it, etc. Your final “product” must be presented to the class (no later than Tuesday, December 4 or 11) and submitted as a final paper that is 15-20 pages, excluding appendices and references (see Guidelines for Final Assignment Option B for details).


DEADLINES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED. If you need to make a change in the scheduled deadlines, please seek permission well in advance. If you submit a late assignment without previous permission you forfeit comments on your work and will receive a lowered grade.

NB: STUDENTS MAY NOT SUBMIT PAPERS THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED FOR OTHER CLASSES OR THAT ARE BEING DESIGNED FOR OTHER CURRENT COURSES IN WHICH THEY ARE ENROLLED. IF YOU WANT TO COMBINE WORK IN THIS CLASS WITH ANOTHER PROJECT, E.G., YOUR THESIS, ETC. YOU MUST RECEIVE EXPLICIT PERMISSION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO SO DOING.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES and WEIGHTS
1. September 22, October 6 & Per Sign Up Sheet: Three Brief Reflection Papers (Class participation and these exercises/assignments: 20% of grade)
2. October 8: ASSIGNMENT 1, PART 1 (see #4 below)
3. October 15: Topic/plan for Assignment 2 (10% of your final grade)
4. November 26: ASSIGNMENT 1, PART 2 (plus PART 1 with comments) (30% of final grade)
5. December 16: ASSIGNMENT 2: 15-20 page paper in Campion 308, 5 pm (40% of final grade)
COURSE OUTLINE

SEPTEMBER 3: The importance of person-community-context: Gender, ‘race’ and power

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 3


SEPTEMBER 3: Introduction to the course and its participants

- Expectations for the semester
- Reflexive encounter with the syllabus – suggestions, adjustments
- Mechanics of the course, including requirements
- Developing ground rules for discussion
- Building a teaching-learning community

SEPTEMBER 10: Narrating and positioning subjectivity in contexts constrained by racism, sexism, and class oppression: Locating myself “in the field”

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 10:


AND

CHOOSE ONE from these FOUR:

*Collins, Patricia (1996). What’s in a name? Womanism, Black Feminism and Beyond. The Black Scholar, 26(1), 9-17. OR

**SEPTEMBER 17: PAR and Action Researchers: Situating Ourselves in/and PAR**

**READINGS FOR September 17**

*Illich, Ivan (April 20, 1968). Talk delivered at the Conference on Inter-American Student Projects. Chicago, IL

**SEPTEMBER 24: Data Collection in PAR: Ethnography and Focus Groups**

**READINGS for September 24:**


**OCTOBER 1: Eliciting Narratives and Analyzing Text through Grounded Theory and Narrative Analysis**

**READINGS for OCTOBER 1:**

AND

CHOOSE TWO from these FOUR:

*Jones, S. J. (2001). Embodying working-class subjectivity and narrating self: "We were the hired help". In D. L. Tolman & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.) From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods (pp. 145-162). New York: New York University Press. (narrative and grounded theory analyses of in-depth interviews)

*Hughey, Matthew W. (2011). Backstage discourse and the reproduction of white masculinities. The Sociological Quarterly 52, 132–153 (institutional ethnography, triangulated data via ethnographic fieldwork; semi-structured in-depth interviews; content analysis of newsletter issues and any textual information such as e-mails and office memos)


OCTOBER 3 (6-8pm), OCTOBER 4 (9am-5pm), OCTOBER 5 (9am-4pm):
People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism ™ Workshop, at the Smith House Community Room, 757 Shawmut Ave, Boston, MA 02119, 12th floor. Closest MBTA Stop is Ruggles St on the Orange Line; Northeastern on the Green E Line. There are also multiple bus lines.

OCTOBER 8: Undoing Racism and Institutional Change:
A case study from progressive philanthropy

READINGS for October 8


*Excerpts from Courage to Change, Haymarket People’s Fund, 2013


**OCTOBER 15: Teacher Education, PAR and School-Community-based Change**

**GUEST: Alice McIntyre, Professor, Hellenic College and Boston College**

**READINGS for OCTOBER 15:**

* Fine, Michelle and Torre, Maria Elena (2004) Recognizing the Knowledge of Young People: An Interview with Michelle Fine and Maria Elena Torre on Youth Action Research

**OCTOBER 22: Participatory Action Research. Social Controls and Social Action**

**GUEST: Patricia Krueger-Henney, College of Education and Human Development, UMA/Boston and CUNY Graduate Center, Public Science Project**

**READINGS for OCTOBER 22:**

OCTOBER 29: PAR as one Response to Gross Violations of Human Rights, Unnatural Disasters and Disparities

READINGS for OCTOBER 29:


NOVEMBER 5: Gross Violations of Human Rights and Post-Conflict Truth-telling: Creative Resources in Conflict and Post-conflict Guatemala and PAR

READINGS for NOVEMBER 5:


NOVEMBER 12: Representing and Interpreting PAR Data in and through the Arts POSSIBLE GUEST from Beyond Measure, an arts initiative in collaboration with the Boston Health Commission

READINGS for NOVEMBER 12:


* Seeley, Chris (2011). Uncharted territory: Imagining a stronger relationship between the arts and action research Action Research, 9(1) 83–99

NOVEMBER 19: Validation and Truth:
An exploration of what counts as validation in PAR.

READINGS FOR NOVEMBER 19


NOVEMBER 26: Ethical Challenges in PAR and Activist Research

READINGS for NOVEMBER 26:

DECEMBER 3, 10: Activist scholarship: A new direction or more of the same?

READING for DECEMBER 3:


READINGS and/or HANDOUTS for PRESENTATIONS

READING for DECEMBER 10:


READINGS and/or HANDOUTS for PRESENTATIONS

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