

University of Toronto
School of the Environment
ENV421Y1 Y: Community Research for Social and Environmental Change
Fall 2023 & Winter 2024

General Information

Time: Tuesdays 10:00am – 12:00pm

Location: HA (Haultain Building, 170 College Street)

Instructors:

Nicole Spiegelaar

Email: nicole.spiegelaar@utoronto.ca

Office hours: 10:10 – 12:00, or by appointment

Michael Classens

Email: michael.classens@utoronto.ca

Office hours: Tuesday 12:10 – 2:00, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Aden Fisher

aden.fisher@mail.utoronto.ca

Course description

The world is facing multiple, intersecting and interconnected socio-ecological crises. In this course we will contemplate the role research can play in addressing these challenges. We will focus specifically on community-based action research and consider questions pertaining to a range of issues, from ontology, epistemology, and power, through to knowledge translation and mobilization as central considerations in understanding what it means to do research to effect positive socio-ecological change. Working in a small group of your peers, you will have the opportunity to further develop your understanding of research and gain valuable experience by undertaking a substantive community-based research project with a community based organization.

Course objectives

This course is designed to support students to:

- 1) Develop an appreciation for the implications of different approaches to knowledge generation
- 2) Explore their various accountabilities and ethical responsibilities as researchers
- 3) Discover and cultivate skills relevant to undertaking community-engaged research projects

- 4) Creatively engage with knowledge translation and mobilization
- 5) Think critically about the ways power is implicated in research
- 6) Work collaboratively and respectfully with others

Time Commitment

This class will probably be different from many of your classes. This is not a lecture/seminar style class – while we will have some lecture and seminar-style sessions, most of the course is designed to enable and support your group research projects. As we move through the school year, you should keep in mind that you are expected to devote approximately 120 hours to the course, or roughly 5 hours per week.

Evaluation

TCPS 2 CORE module 5% (September 26) *Individual grade*

You will complete the CORE-2022 module. This module is based on the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, which provides general guidance on the ethics of conducting research involving human participants. Once you've completed the training you'll be able to download a certificate of completion. You should then submit this certificate through Quercus.

Find the training module here: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

Shared literature database 5% (October 3) *Group grade*

Using Zotero (or some similar software) you will generate a shared literature database relevant to your project. We'll provide an overview of Zotero, including how to create shared folders, in class. You should include 10-15 relevant articles / book chapters in your database by the deadline (you can build on this subsequently throughout your project). You will submit this database by sharing it with TA for the course (We'll review how to do this in class).

Preliminary research statement + presentation 10% (October 10) *Group grade*

Each group will submit a preliminary research statement of no more than 500 words. The research statement should include the following: (1) research objectives, (2) key research questions, and (3) proposed methods for achieving the research objectives. You will also give a brief (10-15min) presentation on your preliminary research statement. I'm hoping you can use this as an opportunity to collaboratively troubleshoot and solicit feedback and advice from your peers.

Draft ethics application + presentation 10% (November 14) *Group grade*

As part of your work in this course, you'll need to submit a completed ethics application package through the Delegated Ethics Review Committee ([DERC](#)) process (specifically, as a "student-initiated project"). You'll submit a draft of this form and give a brief (10-15min) presentation on your ethics application package.

Final ethics application 10% (November 28) *Group grade*

Each group will submit a final draft of their ethics application through Quercus. I may request further edits before submitting your package to DERC.

Timeline and workflow 5% (January 16) *Group grade*

Each group will submit a short document (2-3 pages maximum) outlining, minimally, (1) key activities and tasks remaining, (2) key deadlines, (3) timelines, and (4) person responsible. You can use any format you like for the document (including online project management software).

Final presentation 10% (March 19/ March 26 / April 2) *5% Group grade, 5% Individual grade*

Each group will also make a presentation of their project. You should include an overview of your research findings and include recommendations for future research. The final presentation should be about 20mins long.

Final output 25% (April 2) *Group grade*

Each group will submit a final research output. The form this output ultimately takes will be negotiated within your group and in collaboration with your community partner. In addition to the final output, you will also submit a document (1 page maximum) summarizing suggested next steps for your research project. This may be used to further support your community partner, and inform the work of other cohorts of students in this class.

Learning reflection (2x5%=10%) (January 9 / April 9 – during exam period) *Individual grade*

Reflection is a key part of learning. In order to encourage you to reflect on your learning experience in this class, I ask that you keep a learning journal throughout the course and make at least 6 TOTAL entries of approximately 200 words each. You do not need to submit each entry – you will submit at least 3 entries on January 10 and at least 3 more entries on April 11. The purpose of the journal is to document and reflect on whatever aspects of the course were most impactful, problematic, resonant and/or challenging for you. Reflections in particular on your experience as a community-engaged learner and/or group learner are welcome.

Collegiality and collaboration (2x5% = 10%) (December 5 / March 26) *Individual grade*

I hope we can challenge the individualism held in such high esteem in many academic spaces by creating a collegial and collaborative co-learning environment in our time together. Toward these ends, I want to reward participating in ways that exemplify support, mutual aid, and gratitude. You can demonstrate this in a variety of ways – if you're unsure whether something will 'count', you can email either me or the TA. A few examples of possible activities:

- Taking notes during class and sharing them on Quercus.
- Sending a classmate a relevant resource/article/book chapter.

- Undertaking an act of mutual aid (e.g. proofreading someone's work, showing them how to use a piece of software, talking through a concept/research challenge, etc. with someone, etc.)
- Writing an email to an author / community partner / mentor / classmate to express your gratitude to them.

Aim for 5-7 collegial activities per semester, and log them in a word document (2-3 sentences per activity). Submit this log twice during the year – once at the end of the fall semester (December 6) and once at the end of the winter semester (April 4).

Readings

All course readings are available through the University of Toronto library system and/or the course Quercus site.

Quercus

We'll make extensive use of Quercus in this class, and you'll find a variety of useful resources there. Each week of the course is laid out with the weekly topic and readings. You'll submit all of your work through the appropriate assignment drop box in Quercus. We'll also start various informal discussion boards through which we can communicate between classes.

Schedule

**Note: This schedule is subject to change*

Date	Topic/readings	Deadlines
September 12, 2023	<u>Introductions, course overview</u> *Note, we will also select groups this class – a link to the sign-up sheet will be in Quercus.	
September 19, 2023	<u>Workshop – Community Engaged Learning (CEL)</u> Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to Community Engaged Learning • Preparing for your Community Engaged Learning experience Guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catie Thompson, Centre for Community Partnerships • Keagan Urbanowicz, Office of Experiential Learning & Outreach Support Workshop – Zotero overview	
September 26, 2023	<u>Research design</u> Read	Due: TCPS 2 CORE module

	<p>Maxwell, J. A. (2022). Interactive Approaches to Qualitative Research Design. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design</i> (Vol. 1–2, pp. 41–54). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529770278</p> <p>Rapley, T. (2022). Developing Research Questions: The Social Lives of Ideas, Interests and Questions. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design</i> (Vol. 1–2, pp. 257–272). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529770278</p> <p>Workshop – Research design [objective(s) / questions(s) / method(s)]</p>	
October 3, 2023	<p><u>Research as resistance</u></p> <p>Strega, S., and Brown, L. (2015). “Introduction: From resistance to resurgence”, in Brown, L. A., & Strega, S. (Eds). <i>Research as resistance: revisiting critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches</i> (Second edition). Canadian Scholars’ Press (1-16)</p> <p>Potts, K.L. and Brown, L. (2015). “Chapter 1: Becoming an anti-oppressive researcher”, in Brown, L. A., & Strega, S. (Eds). <i>Research as resistance: revisiting critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches</i> (Second edition). Canadian Scholars’ Press (17-42).</p>	Due: Shared literature database
October 10, 2023	<p><u>Presentations + workshop</u></p> <p>Each group will provide a preliminary presentation of their research statement document (including an overview of their (1) research objectives, (2) key research questions, and (3) proposed methods for achieving the research objectives.</p>	Due: Preliminary research statement + presentation
October 17, 2023	<p><u>Positionality + privilege</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Jacobson, D. and Mustafa, N. (2019). Social identity map: A reflexivity tool for practicing explicit positionality in critical qualitative research. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Methods</i> 18 https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919870075</p> <p>Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes. <i>Critical Sociology</i>, 41(7–8), 1045–1063. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025</p> <p>*In addition to readings, I would like you to complete the mapping exercise outlined in Jacobson and Mustafa (2019), and come to class prepared to discuss. You DO NOT need to submit your map, and you should only share as much as you feel comfortable sharing during the class discussion.</p>	
October 24, 2023	<p><u>Research ethics</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Wilson, S. and Hughes, M. (2019). “Introduction: Why research is reconciliation”, in Wilson, S., & Breen, A. V. (Eds.). <i>Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships</i> (5-20).</p>	

	<p>Mahoney, T., Grain, K., Fraser, P., Wong, J. (2021). Community Resource Handbook. Community- Engaged Research Initiative, Simon Fraser University. Available here.</p> <p>Review</p> <p>Undergraduate Ethics Review Protocol Form – Student Initiated Projects found here.</p>	
October 31, 2023	<p><u>Ethics application workshop</u></p> <p><u>Watch this video BEFORE class</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dean Sharpe, Research Ethics Board Manager – Social Sciences and Humanities <p><u>Review</u></p> <p>Undergraduate Ethics Review Protocol Form – Student Initiated Projects found here. Come prepared to work through the ethics application with your group after the presentation from Dean Sharpe.</p>	
November 7, 2023	<u>NO CLASS – READING WEEK</u>	
November 14, 2023	<p><u>Presentations + workshop</u></p> <p>Each group will prepare a short presentation to share with the class a draft of their research ethics application. We will workshop these documents as a group.</p>	Due: Draft ethics application + presentation
November 21, 2023	<p><u>Co-creation + ethics</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Clark, T. (2008). 'We're Over-Researched Here!': Exploring Accounts of Research Fatigue within Qualitative Research Engagements. <i>Sociology</i>, 42(5), 953–970. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508094573</p> <p>CFICE: Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement. A project development checklist for community-based research. Available here.</p> <p><u>Project management + community partners + group dynamics</u></p> <p>Watch</p> <p>Watch the three short videos found here. Together, we will discuss and work through the learning case study</p>	
November 28, 2023	<p><u>Ethics application workshop II</u></p> <p>Come prepared to finalize the ethics application with your group.</p> <p><u>Read</u></p> <p>Undergraduate Ethics Review Protocol Form – Student Initiated Projects found here.</p>	Due: Final ethics application

December 5, 2023	<p><u>Community based research and the university</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Zielke, J., Thompson, M., & Hepburn, P. (2022). On the (im)possibilities of being a good enough researcher at a neoliberal university. <i>Area</i>, 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12815</p> <p>Bell, M., & Lewis, N. (2022). Universities claim to value community-engaged scholarship: So why do they discourage it? <i>Public Understanding of Science</i>, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625221118779</p> <p>If you're feeling ambitious...</p> <p>Ball, J. (2014). On thin ice: Managing risks in community-university research partnerships. In, Hall, B.L., Etmanski, C., and Dawson, T. (Eds.), <i>Learning and teaching community-base research: Linking pedagogy to practice</i>, University of Toronto Press, 25-44.</p>	Due : Collegiality and collaboration 1
EXAM/HOLIDAY BREAK		
January 9, 2024	<p><u>Workshop – Methods</u></p> <p>Working in your groups, you will ‘test drive’ your research methods. This could include practicing your interview questions, staging a trial focus group, etc. We will then convene as a whole group to debrief and discuss.</p>	Due: Learning reflection 1
January 16, 2024	<p><u>When things don't go “right”...</u></p> <p>Guest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD <p>Read</p> <p>Hughes, Jason, Tarrant, Anna, Hughes, Kahryn and Sykes, Grace (2021) <i>F**k ups in social research: learning from what goes ‘wrong’</i>. <i>Impact of Social Sciences Blog</i> (02 Aug 2021). Blog Entry.</p> <p>View</p> <p>Bella, A. (2022). [Research poster]. The ups and downs of research: How I learned through everything that went wrong.</p>	Due: Timeline and workflow
January 23, 2024	<p><u>Data analysis + interpretation</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Alcoff, L. (1991). The Problem of Speaking for Others. <i>Cultural Critique</i>, 20, 5–12. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354221</p> <p>Cashman, S. B., Adeky, S., Allen, A. J., Corburn, J., Israel, B. A., Montañó, J., Rafelito, A., Rhodes, S. D., Swanston, S., Wallerstein, N., & Eng, E. (2008). The Power and the Promise: Working With Communities to Analyze Data, Interpret Findings, and Get to Outcomes. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>, 98(8), 1407–1417. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2007.113571</p>	

	<p>Workshop – NVivo</p> <p>See the link below to download NVivo 12 for free</p> <p>https://mdl.library.utoronto.ca/technology/nvivo-software</p> <p>See here for more resources on using NVivo</p> <p>https://mdl.library.utoronto.ca/tools/nvivo</p>	
January 30, 2024	<p><u>Check-in and troubleshooting</u></p> <p>On January 30, February 13, March 5, and March 19 the course instructor will meet with each group separately during class time. We will arrange a schedule for these meetings in class.</p>	
February 6, 2024	<p><u>Knowledge mobilization</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Tool: So what the heck is knowledge mobilization and why should I care?</p> <p>https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/2014/so-what-the-heck-is-knowledge-mobilization-and-why-should-i-care/</p> <p>Watch</p> <p>What is knowledge mobilization? https://researchimpact.ca/kmb_resource/what-is-knowledge-mobilization/</p>	
February 13, 2024	<p><u>Check-in and troubleshooting</u></p> <p>On January 30, February 13, March 5, and March 19 I will meet with each group separately during class time. We will arrange a schedule for these meetings in class.</p>	
February 20, 2024	<u>READING WEEK NO CLASS</u>	
February 27, 2024	<p><u>Workshop – reflection on learning</u></p> <p>Read</p> <p>Ash, S. L., and Clayton, P.H. (2009). <i>Generating, Deepening, and Documenting Learning: The Power of Critical Reflection in Applied Learning</i>. 24, 24-48.</p> <p>Come prepared to class to share and discuss your experiences as a community engaged learner.</p>	
March 5, 2024	<p><u>Check-in and troubleshooting</u></p> <p>On January 30, February 13, March 5, and March 19 I will meet with each group separately during class time. We will arrange a schedule for these meetings in class.</p>	
March 12, 2024	<p><u>Check-in and troubleshooting</u></p> <p>On January 30, February 13, March 5, and March 19 I will meet with each group separately during class time. We will arrange a schedule for these meetings in class.</p>	

March 19, 2024	<u>Final presentations</u> Each group will do their final presentation. You are encouraged to invite your community partners to the final presentations.	Due: Final presentation
March 26, 2024	<u>Final presentations</u> Each group will do their final presentation. You are encouraged to invite your community partners to the final presentations.	Due: Final presentation Due: Collegiality and collaboration 2
April 2, 2024	<u>Final presentations</u> Each group will do their final presentation. You are encouraged to invite your community partners to the final presentations.	Due: Final presentation Due: Final output Due: Learning reflection 2 (April 9)

Course Policies

1. **A note on COVID-19:** It is important to recognize the likelihood that COVID-19 will substantively shape our time together in class, as well as our respective lives outside the classroom. The frustrating truth is that we cannot predict the specific impacts of COVID-19 in the coming academic year. However, I hope the following will help guide us.
 - I hope that we are able to conduct community-based research projects this year, and that you all will get to spend time ‘in the field’, so to speak. If this is not possible, we will adjust and find equally meaningful projects to work on and learn from.
 - The pandemic has and will continue to have unequal and differential impacts. I hope that we are all attuned to this fact and resist assuming how the pandemic is being experienced by others in the class.
 - Given the profound disruption of the global pandemic over the past 3+ years, many of us are rightfully beleaguered. Given this, I hope we can prioritize being kind, gentle and understanding with each other.
 - I expect that everyone in the class will follow the COVID-19 guidelines established by the university and do their utmost to keep their peers safe and healthy. Updates on COVID-19 protocols can be found here: <https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether>
2. **A note on the use of AI/ChatGPT:** I want us to consider our responsibilities to each other as members within a community of learning, and think about how using AI tools may impact/undermine that. I also want us to consider the hidden environmental impacts of all digital tools (particularly those that rely on very large servers). We should also keep in mind the invisibleized labour – often done by racialized people in the majority world – that maintains these digital infrastructures. Finally, drawing on Métis scholar [Max Liboiron](#), I want us to consider the *citational politics* of using AI. Who we cite in our work, who we chose to be in scholarly conversation with, is always a political choice. I want to acknowledge [Sarah Martin](#), whose inspiring thinking on AI I draw on here.

3. **Deadlines:** Please do your very best to submit your work on time. In this class, perhaps more than most, your peers will be relying on you to complete your work in a timely fashion. Late penalties of up to 2% per day may apply in cases where work is not submitted on time. If you need extra time for an assignment, please do not hesitate to ask – and please try to do so at least a week in advance of the deadline.
4. **Academic Integrity:** (<http://uoft.me/CodeofBehaviour>)

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document.

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments: Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor. Making up sources or facts. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).
- Misrepresentation: Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me, the Writing Centre or the Academic Success Centre.

Institutional Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

On Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.

3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>).

COPYRIGHT

If a student wishes to copy or reproduce lecture presentations, course notes or other similar materials provided by instructors, he or she must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. More information regarding this is available here: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/audio-video/copyright-considerations/>

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility: if you require accommodations for a disability, or have any other accessibility concerns about the course, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

Support

Writing Support: Writing support is available to all students year-round at Writing Centres: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>. You can visit the writing centre for help with an writing projects.

Writing Workshop Series: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/>.

English Language Learning: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

Academic Success Centre: www.asc.utoronto.ca

AccessABILITY: (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) Students with diverse learning styles and needs are very welcome in this course. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services immediately.

Wellness: Wellness refers to maintenance of a balanced life, stress reduction and prevention of serious health issues. You are encouraged to seek support early and often. Find out more here <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

Support is also available **24/7** for students within and outside of Canada at:

U of T My Student Support Program (U of T My SSP) at **1-844-451-9700** or, outside of North America, **001-416-380-6578**.

More info is available at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/myssp/>

The following are some important links to help you with academic and/or technical service and support

- General student services and resources at [Student Life](#)
- Full library service through [University of Toronto Libraries](#)
- Resources on conducting online research through [University Libraries Research](#)
- Resources on academic support from the [Academic Success Centre](#)
- Learner support at the [Writing Centre](#)
- Information for [Technical Support/Quercus Support](#)