Anth 395
Community Based Research in Anthropology

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sarah Fletcher

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

What is Community Based Research (CBR) and how can it fit into anthropological research? In the past decades, CBR has gained increasing popularity. Since the 1960’s many anthropologists have called for a more engaged, applied, political, or socially active anthropology. CBR and its variations (Participatory Action Research –PAR, Action Research, Cooperative Inquiry, Appreciative Inquiry) have emerged as prominent research methodologies for research initiatives looking to support or catalyze social change in communities. Many students with a background in anthropology are now going on to work in community or non-governmental organizations, where they face engaging with CBR in the development of research and funding proposals. For these reasons, a critical introduction to the processes of CBR and the application of CBR methods in a variety of contexts may be particularly relevant for anthropology students.

This course introduces students to the theory and methods of CBR. The course will begin by providing students with a history of CBR, defining its principles and the implications of CBR approaches for research ethics. The course will then move to focus on research methods frequently used in CBR (interviews, focus groups and critical incidents) as well as introducing the use and potential of creative methods in the design and implementation of community based research (photovoice, art, and theatre). The weeks of the course will cover thematic areas relevant to the use of CBR as a methodology from an anthropological perspective (Health, HIV prevention, research in First Nations communities, research with youth, environmental issues, and evaluation). Emphasis is placed on the practice of community-based research, within the context of anthropology. The assignments for the course (reflection assignments, community organization interviews and presentations, and research proposal development) will provide students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned to real-life situations.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and critically discuss the basic principles, challenges and advantages of community based research
- Apply community based methods and creative methods in the design and development of research proposals
- Consider the meaning of participation in the context of anthropology and community research
- Assess the potential for the use of CBR methods in different research contexts
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Development of Participatory Research Processes and application of CBR Principles to case studies
- Facilitation skills for community engagement (challenge walls, open space designs, conversation cafes, focus groups)
- Community Agreements (for research)
- Community Based Research Ethics Applications
- Research methods: introduction to arts based and creative methods
- Interview Guides
- Interview skills: semi-structured and critical incident
- Community Based Research Proposal development