

**PSS 6130 - Participatory Action Research (PAR)
and Transdisciplinary Approaches to Agroecology**

Course Facilitator-Teachers*

Primary: [Colin R. Anderson](#)

Email: colin.anderson@uvm.edu

Support: [Nils McCune](#)

Class Meeting Times and Location

- All meetings will be online
- Weekly 120 minutes MS Teams meetings on Thursdays from 12-2pm – calendar invites with the sign-on link will be sent by email.
- 3 X 90 mins small group meetings – self-organized scheduling
- 2 X meeting with critical friend – self-organized scheduling

Online Office Hours

By appointment.

A Warm Welcome and An Invitation

I invite you to join in on the collective construction of a course that will be focused and purposeful, but also intentionally open ended and iterative. Within the overall framework of the course (see course description in syllabus), and under the stewardship and guidance of the instructor, we will form a learning community that will collectively shape the course content and methodology based on the interests and proclivities of the course participants. In this way, the methodology of the course will aim to embody and model practices that are crucial to participatory action research – horizontality, collective critical thinking, adaptive planning and an ethic of care.

The course plan is preliminary and will be adapted and fleshed out with your input. As you will see in the syllabus, I have crafted an initial slate of learning objectives, readings and assignments for the course. These are subject to change, within reason. The overall class schedule lays out a road map for the flow of the course. I will be populating the MS Teams platform each week with readings and other learning materials as the course unfolds. I have pre-programmed the pre-module and a few of the later sessions, but the plan is that the remainder of the course be more open-ended

and determined by your interests. I do have a range of ideas, topics, case studies, speakers and processes that I have in mind that I think we would all benefit from engaging with, but these will be selected/dropped and/or adapted as we learn what everyone is most interested in.

I have crafted the assignments in a way that I believe will be useful for everyone, and allows each of you to explore topics of most interest to you. All of this will require iterations of individual and collective reading/discussion/work/reflection. The assignments are focused on honing your reflexivity and praxis and are based on processes that I have been involved in (or am currently involved in) as a part of PAR research groups and communities of practice that I spend time with. Thus, the assignments are not only created for the purpose of the course, but are active processes in use 'out there' and ones that you might choose to deploy in other formations/groups that you engage with in the future.

Given its rootedness in participatory practice and its deliberative nature, the course will take on a persona, energy and foci based on what we put into it. This is an invitation for you/us to... bring ourselves fully into this community to give it shape and life... to connect with each other in caring and thoughtful ways...to challenge each other...to reflect inwards on our selves and our praxis... to share our doubts... our fears... our hopes...to be humble... Be generous and kind to each other and to ourselves... to listen: 'to lean in softly with the willingness to be changed by what we hear'¹... to humbly offer our gifts.

The course is of limited duration (15 weeks), and will bring together a range of people with different backgrounds and levels of experience in research, activism, participatory practice and that bring many life experiences that are relevant to the theory and practice of PAR. The approach I adopt, and that I propose for this community, is to meet each other "wherever we are" (another key idea in PAR) and together to grow, understand, connect, gain new skills and do what we can to be more effective agents of change in our praxis.

This course will be 100% online – this is both a challenge and an opportunity. One of the main opportunities is that the online space allows geographically dispersed people to meet together in digital space. In fact, as you'll soon find out, we have participants in the class from different locations in the world. It is important also to name, however, that building a relatively safe and trusting learning community can be challenging in any setting, let alone online. Yet, many of us have sharpened our skills in interacting online, especially in the past years, and I'm sure we can brew up a meaningful learning environment if we lean into it. We will take advantage of the tools, technologies and methodologies that are made possible through the online space (e.g. snappy break-out groups, interactive online tools). I intend for us to move in-between full group and small group learning and to keep our classes varied, lively, deliberative, and multi-vocal.

¹ Mark Nepo

Welcome all to the learning community and see you next week!

Our Online Learning Platforms

All interactive elements of the course, including messaging and our class meetings, will take place on MS Teams. We will also use MS Teams to take collective class notes (to be explained in the first weeks) and as a space for learners to write and submit their assignments. The static content — namely the course material (readings, videos, etc.) will also be available in the filing system on MS teams. Grades will be entered and available in Blackboard. MS Teams is also a great place to share links, documents, files, comments, reflections, etc. with each other.

If you need support on getting set up on these platforms, please reach out to Colin. During the course we encourage you to support each other in making the most of these platforms and in troubleshooting as problems arise.

Course Description

Participatory, transdisciplinary and action research have become widely recognized as pillars of knowledge production for agroecology and food sovereignty. These approaches are also complex and unorthodox in many contexts and require a careful and intentional cultivation of a researcher's commitments, skill and competencies. This course will help students to meet this challenge through a systematic engagement with theory, skills, methods and a critical reflexive self-examination of our roles in the research processes.

We will build a foundation for our learning by examining the 'politics of knowledge' or the ways that power and privilege shape science, academia, innovation and development. To this end, we will engage with critical theoretical traditions, such as feminism and decoloniality, to help students understand and challenge oppressive power relations in society as they are expressed in the knowledge systems that we are embedded within.

If this sounds like challenging material, that's because it is! But don't stress too much, we'll do our best to demystify and unpack these concepts together and to ground these ideas in relation to our own work, lives, and perspectives. We will also get practical and focus on the nuts and bolts of doing Participatory Action Research (PAR), which can be described as a process of research, education and action in which participants work together to understand and transform their realities. It generally involves iterative cycles of inquiry by collectives of people seeking to address problems of common practical and political concern. We will shine a spotlight on several methods used within this tradition including, for example, participatory photography, popular education, theatre, deliberative methodologies, auto-ethnography and different forms of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods inquiry.

We will look at PAR especially in the context of agroecology and examine how the integration of PAR and transdisciplinary approaches can serve to deepen our collective understanding of complex problems/issues. Students will learn how transdisciplinary and PAR approaches are applied to topics in agrifood system studies and action. We will examine examples of agroecological PAR projects, to draw lessons learned and to find inspiration.

Students will be asked to articulate and develop their own self-understanding of their praxis as a researcher. In addition to asynchronous online learning, this course will include a synchronous 2-hour weekly online meeting via MS Teams that will involve a range of different interactive activities including discussions, workshops and guest speakers. Regular and active participation in these sessions is a core component of the course learning and assessment.

Readings:

All weekly articles, videos, podcasts, etc. will be made available on MS Teams in the lead up to each week's synchronous session.

Some recommended reference materials are as follows:

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2021) *Decolonizing Methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. 2nd edn. London: Zed Books.

Freire, P. (2017) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Penguin Modern Classics). London: Penguin.

Fine, M., & Torre, M. E. (2021). *Essentials of critical participatory action research*. American Psychological Association.

Méndez, V.E., C.M. Bacon, R. Cohen and S.R. Gliessman (Eds.) (2015). [Agroecology: a transdisciplinary, participatory and action-oriented approach](#). Advances in Agroecology Series. CRC Press/Taylor and Francis.

People's Knowledge Editorial Collective (ed.). (2017). [Everyday Experts: How people's knowledge can transform the food system](#). Coventry: Coventry University.

Herr, K., and Anderson, G.L. (2014). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students will have:

- Developed an understanding of participatory action research (PAR) and transdisciplinary approaches, and how they are distinct from other methodologies and approaches;
- Deepened their understanding of how knowledge is situated, gendered, racialized, colonial and thus can contribute to social injustice and oppression;
- Considered how these structures and power dynamics influence research and learning processes;
- Explored how PAR and transdisciplinary approaches can be applied in agroecology, including through the examination of inspirational case studies;
- Learned about participatory action research design that produces meaningful contributions to the community/stakeholder(s) and the researcher(s);

- Thought about their own positionality to situate themselves in the learning objectives above;
- Developed strategies for critical self- and collective reflection and evaluation in participatory research processes and practice;

Assessment

Participation in weekly meetings, contributing to the learning community	20 %
Response to Agroecology Summit	5 %
Personal manifesto, trajectory and philosophy (5 parts)	50 %
Group-led session	15%
Let's get practical in small groups	10 %

Total	100 %

Participation in class discussions (20%): Participation in course discussion is central to our learning. Show up, participate meaningfully in the course discussions and do your part in contributing to the collective processes and you will do well on the participation component of your assessment. We will also share collective note-taking amongst the group. For each week, one of you will be responsible to make sure the notes are taken and cleaned up, etc. as well as managing the MS Teams discussion channel for that week. This part of your assessment will include a self-evaluation component.

Contributing to Discussion on Politics of Knowledge at Agroecology Summit: On September 18, 2023, the UVM Institute for Agroecology will be hosting a global forum, Seeding Transformation. The event will convene international scholars, activists, organizers and partners from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Europe, and other regions of the world. This public half-day conference will explore agroecology as a transformative solution to regenerate the environment, cool the planet, and provide good, healthy food for all. One of the sessions, is perfectly aligned with the content of the course and a wonderful opportunity to hear from several leading thinkers on the politics of knowledge, participatory research and transdisciplinarity (their work is also on our reading list!)

4:30 – 5:45 EST - HOW UNIVERSITIES ARE TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE TO TRANSFORM OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

Universities are being called upon in partnership with communities, social movements, and others to help drive sustainability transformations. Yet, the traditional academic culture has been part of the problem and is criticized for helping to “lock in” the exploitation of people and nature, including in food systems. This session will focus on how to transform universities and research institutions in ways that normalize, consolidate and drive forward participatory, transdisciplinary research for just transitions in food systems and beyond.

Your assignment is to:

- A) **Watch** the session from on September 18th – ideally watch it live, but you can also watch the recording which will be available the next day.
- B) **Write one short reaction/response** either as a post on social media (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn or Facebook). Use the tag #SeedingTransformation and tag the Institute for Agroecology ([Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#)). Ideally provide a link to one of the speakers or organizations that inspired you and tag them. If you don't use social media, simply write a short email with the thing that inspired you most and share it with friends, family, a listserv. Paste your post (the text) into the MS Teams Channel for the course. If you posted on social media, please also paste a link to the post.
- C) **Contribute to discussion:** Bring your reactions and questions into the discussion in class on September 21st.

The content of your post will not be assessed. Simply participating in these three ways will yield full marks.

Personal manifesto, trajectory and philosophy (3 parts for total of 50%): The development of a personal research trajectory manifesto/plan/guidebook will be the central assignment in this course, which will be iteratively developed throughout the 15 weeks. Through your engagement with the reading material, course processes, self-reflection and systematized dialogue, each student will leave the course with a document that locates themselves in relation to the course content. This exercise is not only about the individual act of writing a reflexive document (what I refer to as self-writing), but will systematically incorporate a social learning and feedback process (through discussions with a 'critical friend'). Both the product (the document) and the process of producing this assignment (along with the collective elements) will ideally provide seeds and tools for ongoing reflexive praxis.

The assignment has three main parts which will be written and shared with the instructor in a single iterative google or sharepoint document. More instructions on each part will be provided during the weekly class meetings. Feedback will be provided by your critical friend throughout the process, and by one of the course instructors on the final version of the document at the end of the course.

This assignment will be developed in three parts:

	Description	Expectation	Due date
Part 1 (10% of total grade)	Situating yourself: Building off our learning processes in module 1, each student will be asked to situate themselves – who they are and what brings them to their research, activism, action and teaching and why this is important. This should draw from, riff off of and/or directly	Roughly 1000 words and/or other forms of expression	Sep 30

	incorporate the work you do as a part of the “River of Life” activity we will undertake in the first module.	(art, video, etc.)	
Part 2 (25% of total grade)	A. Research Philosophy/ Approach: You will articulate your philosophy, worldview or theory of change as it relates to your work; How you plan to go about your knowledge work and why? How will this affect change in the world? What thinkers, activists, researchers, ideas, traditions underpin your work. What are your values and commitments? Draw from the readings and experiences from class. This should be a referenced piece of writing.	Roughly 1500 words	Nov 1
	B. Work plans for the coming years: You will articulate your work program, and how you plan to incorporate participation/transdisciplinarity into your work in the coming years (you can choose your timeframe). You should draw from the Let’s Get Practical Session that you will undertake during modules 2 and 3.	Roughly 1500 words	
Part 3 (15%)	A. Systematizing critical friendship and self-collective growth: You will develop a plan for your own growth, learning and development. In order to realize your vision and approach, and to be an effective agent of change, what do you need to work on, to aspire towards? What are your goals and doubts? What kinds of formations of critical friends can you participate in and contribute to? How and when will you set aside time for reflection (self, and collective)?	Roughly 1000 words	Dec 7
	B. Critical friendship and reflection: A reflection piece on the process of critical friendship, a critical perspective on its value and if/how it might be useful for you moving forward.	Roughly 500 words	

Group-led session (15%)

Each of the small-groups will be responsible for organizing one 'block' in the final (of 3) modules of the course. Working as a group, you will choose a topic and organize a dynamic to help your fellow students learn about whatever topic you choose. The 'dynamic' could include a facilitated discussion, a guest speaker, a creative participatory discussion – basically you can do whatever you believe to be the most interesting and effective way to facilitate learning on the topic.

Let's get practical in small groups (15%)

Each student will present a current or future research, learning or action project to discuss the planning, execution and the (ongoing or anticipated) dynamics of the project in relation to the course material (politics of knowledge, etc.). Many students present the work that they ultimately write up in their **Personal manifesto, trajectory and philosophy**. Use this guiding question: How can participation, equity and transdisciplinarity, feminism, decoloniality or other approaches be adopted in your work?

This will be done in small groups, with dedicated feedback and discussion with peers in the three planned self-organized meetings that will take place outside of our regular weekly meetings.

Participants will be expected to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation and to then engage in dialogue with peers to troubleshoot, discuss, etc. Participants will also be expected to participate by giving feedback to their peers. Participating fully in each of these exercises (presenting, discussing other people's work) will yield full marks for the student.

Students should submit their presentation to the instructor, along with some bullet-point notes on key points raised and learning that arose through the dialogue. In past years, the small groups have submitted collective notes from the session rather than sending individual notes, which is completely fine.

[Course Schedule](#)

A more detailed schedule will be provided as a working document in MS teams (so we can revise it as we go along, responding to interests of the learning community).

Module 1 – Setting up our learning process and locating ourselves within the politics of knowledge

(~Aug 31 to Sep 28)

Module 2 – Approaches and methods

(~Oct 5 to Oct 26)

Module 3 – Special topics

(~Nov. 2 to Nov 25)

Module 4 – Looking-planning forward for the development of our praxis

(~Nov 30 to Dec 7)

Recording Classes

Our class sessions may/will be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to, and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the chat feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Class Schedule, Agenda and Planning

This course schedule is relatively set in the first module, with great flexibility in the final modules and will be shaped through a collective process. This is a working document and will change throughout the class.

Background Resources on Agroecology

Because many in the learning community have not taken the prerequisite (PSS 6110) - Intro to Agroecology), I have created a set of resources that learners should review in order to have a basic understanding of agroecology. Of course everyone is welcome and encouraged to review these materials, provided below. No need to look at these before the first class, but try to give them a review before mid-Sept. Students should at a minimum:

- watch the video
- read the Nyeleni Declaration on Agroecology
- read at least one of the two articles linked below (Anderson et al. or Mendez et al.)

The Material:

1. This declaration was the outcome of an international gathering of social movements to assert their collective vision of agroecology. [Click here.](#)
2. Watch the short or long version of this video and the accompanying multimedia document, provides a view on agroecology through the voices of social movements. The video, and publications, are available at the following links:

English: [Short film](#) – [Long film](#) – [Accompanying publication](#)

Français: [Version courte du film](#)– [Version longue du film](#) – [Publication associée](#)

Español: [Película corta](#) – [Película larga](#) – [Publicación asociada](#)

3. At least one of the journal articles (available in the files tab)

1. Méndez, V.E., Bacon, C.M., and Cohen, R. (2013). Agroecology as a Transdisciplinary, Participatory, and Action-Oriented Approach. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 37(1), 3-18. doi: 10.1080/10440046.2012.736926.
2. Anderson et al. 2021. Origins, Benefits and the Political Basis of Agroecology. Ch 2 in Anderson, C.R., Bruil, J., Chappell, M.J., Kiss, C., and Pimbert, M.P. (2020). *Agroecology Now! Transformations Towards More Just and Sustainable Food Systems*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Module 1 – Setting up our learning process and locating ourselves within the politics of knowledge

Week	Date	Agenda	Guidance and Readings (from instructor)
Week 1	Aug. 31	<p>Agenda:</p> <p>A. 05 mins - Welcome and overview of the course and approach</p> <p>B. 15 mins - Brief intros</p> <p>C. 25 Mins - Overview/discussion of key concepts underpinning course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paradigms (mapping/moving exercise) • Overview of Participatory Action Research and Transdisciplinarity <p>D. 5 Mins – BREAK</p> <p>E. 60 mins - Syllabus review and co-design part one</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learning objectives exercise b. The Platforms (Teams, Blackboard) c. Assignments d. Assessment and Feedback e. Participation, including online f. Readings g. Grading h. Note-taking i. Small groups j. Recording classes <p>F. 10 Mins - Overview of River of Life Exercise and Prep for next class</p>	<p>Topics: Welcome, meeting each other, key ideas underpinning course, start setting up group process</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages 40-48 of Creswell, J.W., and Creswell, J.D. (2017). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sage publications. (Research Paradigms) • Wakeford, T., and Sanchez Rodriguez, J. (2018). "Participatory Research: Towards a More Fruitful Knowledge", in: Connected Communities Foundation Series. (Bristol: University of Bristol/AHRC Connected Communities Programme). • Levkoe, C.Z., Brem-Wilson, J., and Anderson, C.R. (2018). People, power, change: three pillars of a food sovereignty research praxis. The Journal of Peasant Studies 46(7), 1389-1412. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1512488. • River of Life Instructions. <p>Notetaker: Colin/Nils</p>

Week 2	Sept. 7	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 min - Paired small group chat • 10 mins – Preliminaries a. Start recording b. Geographies exercise • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteur from last week’s class (Nils) • 25 mins – Reviewing syllabus items, assignments and small groups . Questions in groups of 3. • 10 mins - Overview of key ideas . Participatory Action Research, Transdisciplinarity a. Positionality, Reflexivity • 5 mins - Break • 55 mins - River of Life small group exercise • In our small groups you will each share your river of life in a 5 minute presentation (feel free to show your river of life on screen as you present). After everyone has presented their rivers, please discuss for the remainder of the time together. Please record these small group sessions and, if you are comfortable with doing so, please share your river of life with the entire class by dropping it into this folder: Rivers of Life of Class • 5 mins – next week’s class 	<p>Topic: Situating ourselves – discussing the importance of our histories and selves in research and navigating PAR in our work. Positionality.</p> <p>Notetaker: Colin/Nils</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martens, T. (2017). Looking inwards, looking outwards: reflecting on an Indigenous research approach). In: People’s Knowledge Editorial Collective (eds.). (2017). Everyday Experts: How people’s knowledge can transform the food system. Coventry: Coventry University • Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A.L., Avila, M., Belone, L., and Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes. Critical sociology 41(7-8), 1045-1063. doi: 10.1177/0896920513516025. • Anderson, C. R. (2020). Confronting the Institutional, Interpersonal and Internalized Challenges of Performing Critical Public Scholarship in the Elite Academy. ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies.
Week 3	Sept. 14	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mins – Preliminaries and Reflections from rapporteur (nils) • 40 mins - Rivers of life, continued. We will break into the small groups again and will allow time for you to finish sharing your rivers of life. With any left over time, the small groups will be asked to: 	<p>Topic: Catch Up: Positionality, Participatory Action Research, Transdisciplinarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers of Life • Re-focus on class 1 and 2.

		<p>ask questions of each other, talk about the process of doing the rivers of life, and discuss why your own personal histories are important to keep in mind in participatory research/Learning/Action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BREAK • 30 mins – Whole group discussion of readings and ideas from Class 1 and 2 - PAR, Transdisciplinarity, Positionality, Readings. • 30 mins – More on co-designing the latter half of the course schedule. Learning objectives • 5 mins - take aways from this week’s class to record in notes 	
Week 4	Sept. 21	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteur (Ayana) • 30 mins - Reflections on International Agroecology Summit – self-facilitated discussion. • Break • Last 80 minutes: Small Group Meeting 	<p>Topic: HOW UNIVERSITIES ARE TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE TO TRANSFORM OUR FOOD SYSTEMS (see syllabus – this is linked to the second assignment)</p> <p>This week, students are asked to watch (live or recorded) the session at the Agroecology Summit from 4:30pm to 5:45pm EST on September 18th. In class, we will have time for reflection on the event, issues.</p> <p>The second part of the class will provide space for small groups to meet and plan their remaining required three meetings for the term.</p> <p><u>Agenda for Small Group Meetings</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose someone to take notes and to facilitate (consider rotating these responsibilities). Please think about how to make sure there is equal participation amongst your group members. 2. Group-led session: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the syllabus, choose one of the slots in which you will take responsibility for organizing a session. 2. Choose a topic, you can draw one from the ‘menu of options’ we are developing here. 3. Add your topic to the class schedule in the appropriate spot.

			<p>3. Let's Get Practical Session: Discuss the Let's Get Practical Session – do you understand it?</p> <p>4. Scheduling: Figure out how to schedule your second and third small group sessions. These should be 90-120 minute meetings and one should be in October and the other in November. These will be spaces where you will present your Rivers of Life, plan for the group-led session you will hold and there will likely be one or two other agenda items.</p> <p>5. Discuss assignments – do they make sense, any questions – can you help each other with any gaps in understanding.</p> <p>6. Rose-bud-thorn: Discuss overall course vibe and process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose (A highlight, success, small win, or something positive that happened) • Thorn (A challenge you are experiencing or something you can use more support with) • Bud (New ideas that are blossoming or something you are looking forward to) <p>7. Any other things.</p> <p>8. NOTE: Send notes to Colin and Nils right after the meeting please.</p>
Week 5	Sept. 28	<p>Agenda (Class led by Nils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12:00- 12:05 - Check-ins • 12:05- 12:10 - Report from week 4 • 12:10- 12:25 - Reading between the lines: text and context of Pedagogy of the Oppressed • 12:25- 12:45 - Group work: Placing Freire and our work in dialogue • 12:45- 1:00 - Inputs from group work • 1:00- 1:10 - Break • 1:10- 1:30 - Experiences building processes of and inspired by critical pedagogy and popular education 	<p>DUE DATE FOR PART 1 OF RESEARCH TRAJECTORY AND PHILOSOPHY ASSIGNMENT: SEP 30</p> <p>Topic: Freirean praxis (Tentative)</p> <p>Hello to all,</p> <p>What an exciting moment in our class-- we are to study Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Paulo Freire this week.</p> <p>As many of you know, this work has become a classic in Latin America and across the world, as Paulo Freire is an enduring reference point for radical thinkers-- and those trying to close the gap between thinking and practice-- and his written word continues to challenge us, whether our work is in literacy, agriculture, health,</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:30- 1:40 - Group work: Takeaways from today's class • 1:40- 1:50 - Inputs from group work • 1:50- 1:59 - Course housekeeping and scheduling • 2:00 - Goodbyes • 	<p>housing, education or any other field. Freire argues convincingly that social justice and radical change must stem from critical consciousness (and we will discuss what that means and how people develop it).</p> <p>(One of the incredible parts of last week's Global Forum on Food Systems and Agroecology was that, without knowing it ahead of time, one of the panels included two brilliant women who had personally known Paulo Freire.)</p> <p>It was entirely my fault that you all only received the reading yesterday, and thanks to Colin for sending it. As he said in his email, please read Chapter One (pp. 43-69), and feel free to read more (Chapter Two on the "banking model of education" is super famous). For those looking to contextualize the reading (and hear Freire's own voice!), Ayana found a great podcast worth listening to: https://spotify.link/RYCB2kfjDb</p> <p>For the section of the agenda called "reading between the lines," please bring a sentence or paragraph from Chapter One that spoke to you, or that you would like to discuss further. Also, please write down any words or phrases from Freire's philosophical language that you'd like to grapple with (much of the critique of Paulo Freire has to do with the inaccessibility of his language).</p>
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During this module you will need to:

Hold self-organized small group meeting #1 in week 4 or 5.

Small group meeting, agenda points to address (more direction will be provided):

1. Look at the syllabus, choose one of the slots in which you will take responsibility for organizing a session.
2. Discuss the Let's Get Practical Session – do you understand it?
3. Discuss assignments – do they make sense, any questions?
4. Discuss overall course vibe and process – rose, bud, thorn exercise.
5. Any other things.

Estimated: 90 minute meeting.

Follow up: Present feedback in appropriate channels for all to see, or directly to the instructors.

Module 2: Approaches and methods

Week	Date	Overview	Readings
Week 6	Oct. 5	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • Continuum of positionality in PAR - Discussion <p>Break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ernesto Mendez ‘lessons learned’ from 23 years of doing and reflecting on PAR - Presentation and Discussion. 	<p>Part 1 – Guest: Ernesto Mendez ‘lessons learned’ from 23 years of doing and reflecting on PAR</p> <p>Please read: Méndez, V.E., M. Caswell, S.R. Gliessman and R. Cohen (2017) Integrating Agroecology and Participatory Action Research (PAR): Lessons from Central America. Sustainability 9 (5): 705. 10.3390/su9050705</p> <p>Optional/extra: View Video about the process in Tacuba that the paper talks about: https://streaming.uvm.edu/private/videos/s8HMvME</p> <p>2) Continuum of positionality in PAR - Thinking more about how PAR projects begin, how we are positioned within them, and practicalities about setting them up. I have selected a chapter out of Anderson and Herr’s “The Action Research Dissertation”. Please read chapter 3 – “The continuum of Positionality in Action Research” (pp. 29-48). I selected a chapter out of this book because it is a nice reader action research for grad students (most of you are grad students :->). We could dig further into this book if it is of interest.</p>
Week 7	Oct 12	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • 60 mins – People’s Circle on Decolonizing Research 	<p>Topic: Decolonizing Research and Knowledge and Participatory Photo (with Jasber Singh)</p> <p>Please read the following three resources:</p> <p>Please read chapter 1 “Imperialism, History Writing and Theory” in:</p>

		<p>and Knowledge and Participatory Action Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break • 40 mins – Participatory Photo case study 	<p>Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2021). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Zed. London.</p> <p>Audrey Lorde - The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House</p> <p>Audrey Lorde - The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power</p> <p>Optional/Other Resources:</p> <p>For Additional Resources and Readings, Click here: Decolonialization, Feminism, Agroecology and Research: Readings and Other Resources</p>
Week 8	Oct 19	<p>Agenda: TBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • 45 mins - Feminisms, Intersectionality, and Participatory Research - Part 1 • BREAK • 45 mins - Feminisms, Intersectionality, and Participatory Research - Part 2 • 5 mins Closing and setting up next class 	<p>Topic: With Lucy and Jessica from CAWR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminisms, Intersectionality, and Participatory Research • Please read: https://www.participatorymethods.org/resource/feminisms-intersectionality-and-participatory-research
Week 9	Oct 26	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs 	<p>Topic: TBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block 1: Using Principles to Guide our Praxis and Ethics • Block 2: Participatory Techniques, Tools and Facilitation in Agroecology <p>Block 1: Using Principles to Guide our Praxis and Ethics</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 mins – Block 1: Using Principles to Guide our Praxis and Ethics • BREAK • 50 mins – Block 2: Participatory Techniques, Tools and Facilitation in Agroecology 	<p>We frequently hear requests for simple, short guidelines or principles that can be used by practitioners of participatory approaches to research, learning and action.” In this class block will examine several of these and discuss the use of principles and other tools to guide PAR work. You can see this link (https://www.uvm.edu/agroecology/protocols-par/) for a long list of these that we’ve been collecting and sharing on our blog. This will: a) give us a reference point to discuss the concrete manifestations of ‘doing’ PAR; b) give you all some practical resources that might be helpful in your future work.</p> <p>We will focus our discussion on two of these resources/principles in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, please read: Community-based participatory research: A guide to ethical principles and practice. Please review this (it is only about six pages of actual content) and, as you read, please think about how these ethical principles relate to the ideas we’ve been discussing up to this point on positionality, the politics of knowledge, etc. and make notes of questions that come to you, that you want to raise with the learning community. There are several pragmatic issues that the guide raises around ethics protocol, disseminating results, confidentiality, etc. that are also important to think about. Finally, think about from where this document arose, and how has that shaped the presentation and emphasis of the writing (and also thinking about other pieces we’ve read that have been written by people from different positionalities). 2. Please also read Box 3 (15 practical questions for institutionally-based researchers considering participatory and transdisciplinary approaches) on p. 45 from the Wakeford and Sanchez Rodriguez article provided as a reading in the first class. This as an alternative approach to using the idea of ‘principles’ to guide your praxis. Here, Javier and Tom’s piece poses a set of critical reflective questions to institutional-based researchers to ask themselves <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The box is on p. 45 of: Wakeford, T., and Sanchez Rodriguez, J. (2018). "Participatory Research: Towards a More Fruitful Knowledge", in: Connected Communities Foundation Series. (Bristol: University of Bristol/AHRC Connected Communities Programme.</p> <p>Block 2: Participatory Techniques, Tools and Facilitation in Agroecology</p> <p>With this email, I want to propose a dynamic for the second hour of our class on October 26th.</p>
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			<p>The first hour will focus on using PAR principles to guide research design and practice. The second hour will focus on critically reviewing tools that have been used for years in participatory practice.</p> <p>For the second hour, there is a homework assignment. Please download the attached book, "80 Tools of Participatory Development." This book was published by the Interamerican Institute of Agricultural Cooperation in several languages and became a crucial reference for early agroecologists, sociologists, agronomists, veterinarians and others looking to carry out participatory action research and community development.</p> <p>What are the critical wisdoms that we can find in these examples of "hard skills"? and what could be improved upon or transformed to reflect today's thinking about feminism, decoloniality, and positionality?</p> <p>Each group will focus on two tools. As you read about the tools, imagine that you are a critical friend to someone who has proposed a PAR project and written the methodological tool that you are reading. What advice would you give this person? What are the fundamentally sound parts of the method, what could be improved on, and what critiques are important?</p> <p>Please read the introductory chapter of the book "80 Tools of Participatory Development." Then, depending on which group you are in, read about one of the following three tools:</p> <p>(GROUP 1 –Organizational/Institutional Analysis (Venn Diagram) pages 40-41 AND Gender-based Farm Map, pages 131-132</p> <p>(GROUP 2 –Timeline, pages 52-53 AND Use of Time, pages 132-133</p> <p>(GROUP 3 –Cow Interview, pages 124-125 AND Gender-based Seasonal Calendar 134-135.</p>
<p>During this module, you will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold small group meeting 2 – Let's get practical session (more direction will be provided in class) • Hold critical friend meeting 1 			

Module 3: Special Topics – Including Group Led

Week	Date	Overview	Readings
Week 10	Nov. 2	<p>Agenda: TBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • 45 mins - When PAR goes wrong/wild (Nils) • Break • 60 mins - Farmer Research Networks (Group 1) 	<p>DUE DATE FOR PART 2 OF RESEARCH TRAJECTORY AND PHILOSOPHY ASSIGNMENT: NOV 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Led Session 1 - Farmer Research Networks, <p>Thanks again for a wonderful session yesterday. The Zoom recording is uploaded to the course site here.</p> <p>Colin and I wanted to share the readings for next Thursday, November 2nd.</p> <p>First, please take a longer look at the attached article that we read an excerpt from, "Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research," by Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang. If you find a line or paragraph that is important to your work, please bring it to the next class.</p> <p>Second, take a look at the attached document I wrote in 2017, "Toolkit: Peasant Agroecology Schools and the Peasant-to-Peasant Method of Horizontal Learning." There are two completely different parts to the toolkit. I would suggest that if your time is limited, you focus on the second part, especially page 32 to 50, which focuses on farmer-to-farmer learning and more directly relates to methods of PAR in rural communities. If the reading generates a question for you, please bring that question to class.</p> <p>In our Zoom session, Group 1 will take most of the first hour, sharing on Farmer Research Networks. After break, Colin has invited me to lead the second part of class on When PAR Goes Wrong/Wild, based on some of many mistakes/surprises in PAR processes that I have been part of, and you all will help to pull lessons from the wreckage/experiences.</p> <p>Also, we have a new rule for Thursday's class (thanks to Group 1): "On November 2, 2023, all students must wear a "funny hat" of their choosing for at least 30 seconds sometime during the class period." Beware to those who forget this rule, we might make you sing...</p> <p>One last thing to share: please note that Group 1 has asked that people take a look at the case study of peasant technical schools on pages 21-24.</p> <p>Peasant Agroecology Schools and the Peasant-to-Peasant Method of Horizontal Learning from La Via Campesina. https://archive.foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/TOOLKIT_agroecology_Via-Campesina-1.pdf</p>

Week 11	Nov. 9	Agenda: TBA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • 50 mins – PAR Research at the Intersection of Feminism, Food Sovereignty and Security, and Health Equity • Break (5-10 mins) • 50 mins - Adjusting PAR for the context and resources we have 	Readings/Pre-Work Group Led Session 3 - Adjusting PAR for the context and resources we have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Group #2's session approaches we will not be giving you any readings, to fill out a padlet for discussion. Group Led Session 2 - PAR Research at the Intersection of Feminism, Food Sovereignty and Security, and Health Equity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thelwell, K. (2020, December 9). Exploring Land Rights for Women in Kenya. <i>The Borgen Project</i>. https://borgenproject.org/land-rights-for-women/ 2. Halonen, T. (2023). Securing Women’s Land Rights for Increased Gender Equality, Food Security and Economic Empowerment. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/securing-women%E2%80%99s-land-rights-increased-gender-equality-food-security-and-economic 3. Weiler, A. M., Hergesheimer, C., Brisbois, B., Wittman, H., Yassi, A., & Spiegel, J. M. (2015). Food sovereignty, food security and health equity: A meta-narrative mapping exercise. <i>Health Policy and Planning</i>, 30(8), 1078–1092. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czu109
Week 12	Nov. 16	Agenda: TBA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins – Preliminaries • 5 mins – Report back from rapporteurs • 50 mins – Participatory Video Research Case Study • 5 mins – BREAK 	Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Video <p>a. Case study. Participatory Video as a methodology. I will talk about a participatory video project that I was involved in as a way to review another case study of a project which will hopefully give a sense of where the PAR project came from, what it was attempting to accomplish, how it was funded, what happened, what didn’t and for us to reflect on some of the mechanics of an imperfect and messy PAR process.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 mins – Co-Creating Knowledge from Different Perspectives 	<p>Please read pages 4-16 of the publication: Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field. This will give you an overview of Participatory Video and, if you care to read further, some concrete details on how to go about running a participatory video project.</p> <p>a. Optional: This article by Sarah Kindon provides an excellent link between our early learning in the course, particularly linking feminism (and decolonization) to participatory video as a particular methodology.</p> <p>i. Kindon, S. (2003). Participatory video in geographic research: a feminist practice of looking? <i>Area</i>, 35(2), 142-153. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4762.00236</p> <p>b. You can also find other resources on participatory video in this curated reading/resource list that we created: https://www.peoplesknowledge.org/resources/read/pvlist/</p> <p>b) Navigating PAR in conventional academic structures and institutions.</p> <p>a. Please read the attached article by Littman et al.</p>
Week 13	Nov. 25	THANKSGIVING – no class.	
<p>During this module, you will need to (further direction will be provided in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-organize small group meeting 3 Hold critical friend meeting 2 			

Module 4 : Looking-Planning Forward for the Development of our Praxis

Week	Date	Overview	Readings
Week 14	Nov. 30	<p>Agenda: TBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 mins - Preliminaries 5 mins - Report back from rapporteurs 	<p>Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge communication and mobilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please read: Cahill, C and Elena Torre, M. (2007) Beyond the journal article: representations, audience, and the presentation of Participatory Action Research. In Kindon et al. PP. 196 to 205.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 minutes - Knowledge Communication and Mobilization • Break • 30 mins - Navigating institutions • 30 mins - Getting in, getting on, getting out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating PAR in conventional academic structures and institutions (carried over from last week's session) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please read the article by Littman et al. on "Navigating, subverting, and replacing conventional academic structures and expectations to co-create with participatory action research (PAR) teams: where to for PAR scholarship?" • Getting in, getting on, getting out of PAR processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please read: McArdle, K.L. (2008). Getting in, Getting on, Getting out: On Working with Second-person Inquiry Groups. pp. 603-614 in Sage Handbook of Action Research.
Week 15	Dec. 7	Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins - Preliminaries • 5 mins - Report back from rapporteurs • 30 mins - Navigating Institutions • 20 mins - Individual reflective writing • Break • 50 mins - Full group reflection on learning PAR together. 	DUE DATE FOR PART 3 OF RESEARCH TRAJECTORY AND PHILOSOPHY ASSIGNMENT: DEC 7

Other Information from UVM

Lived Name and Pronoun Information

The UVM Directory includes fields for indicating your lived name and your pronouns. Lived names (preferred names, names in use) are names that an individual wants to be known by in the University community. Entering your pronouns is strongly encouraged to help create a more inclusive and respectful campus community. To update your information, login to the UVM Directory. A preview box will allow you to see how this information will appear in other systems used on campus such as Microsoft Teams and Blackboard.

More information about how to make changes to your lived name and pronouns is available in the [Knowledge Base](#).

Research and Citation Help

For help selecting research topics, finding information, citing sources, and more, ask a librarian. The UVM Libraries are eager to help. You may ask questions by phone, e-mail, chat, or text, or make an appointment for an individual consultation with a librarian.

Howe Library: <https://library.uvm.edu/askhowe>

Dana Medical Library: <https://dana.uvm.edu/help/ask>

Silver Special Collections Library: <https://specialcollections.uvm.edu/help/ask>

Course Evaluation:

Include a statement that all students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. Indicate that the evaluations will be anonymous and confidential, and that the information gained, including constructive criticisms, will be used to improve the course.

If your department is using Blue for this class, you can link to the UVM Knowledge Base page with [student instructions on how to access Blue course evaluations](#).

General statement regarding potential changes during the semester:

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/>

The University of Vermont reserves the right to make changes in the course offerings, mode of delivery, degree requirements, charges, regulations, and procedures contained herein as educational, financial, and health, safety, and welfare considerations require, or as necessary to be compliant with governmental, accreditation, or public health directives.

Intellectual Property Statement/Prohibition on Sharing Academic Materials:

Students are prohibited from publicly sharing or selling academic materials that they did not author (for example: class syllabus, outlines or class presentations authored by the professor, practice questions, text from the textbook or other copyrighted class materials, etc.); and students are prohibited from sharing assessments (for example homework or a take-home examination). Violations will be handled under UVM's Intellectual Property policy and Code of Academic Integrity.

Tips for Success (optional):

Course-specific study/preparation tips

Here are a few resources for students on remote/online learning:

- Checklist for success in <https://learn.uvm.edu/about/support-for-students/checklist-online-credit-courses/>
- Academic support for online courses: <https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/online-learning-student-resources-remote-instruction>
- 30-minute webinar on online learning success (Mar 2020): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp_MYsqQyvE

Helpful resources other than the professor (e.g., [Undergraduate/Graduate Writing Center](#), [Supplemental Instruction](#), [Learning Co-op tutors](#), supplemental course materials)

Student Learning Accommodations:

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing ADA accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus for students. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly recommended to discuss with their faculty the accommodations they plan to use in each course. Faculty who receive Letters of Accommodation with Disability Related Flexible accommodations will need to fill out the Disability Related Flexibility Agreement. Any questions from faculty or students on the agreement should be directed to the SAS specialist who is indicated on the letter.

Contact SAS:

A170 Living/Learning Center;

802-656-7753

access@uvm.edu

www.uvm.edu/access

Important UVM Policies

Academic Integrity:

The [Academic Integrity policy](#) addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

Code of Student Conduct:

[UVM's Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines conduct expectations as well as students' rights and responsibilities.

FERPA Rights Disclosure:

The purpose of UVM's [FERPA Rights Disclosure](#) is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

Final Exam Policy:

The University [final exam policy](#) outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period.

Grade Appeals:

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures [outlined in this policy](#).

Grading:

[This link](#) offers information on grading and GPA calculation.

Religious Holidays:

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

The complete policy is [here](#).

Promoting Health & Safety:

The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:

[Center for Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Counseling & Psychiatry Services \(CAPS\)](#) Direct Phone Line: (802) 656-3340

C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by [visiting the C.A.R.E. Team website](#).