

INF385T: Participatory Design and Research with Special Populations
(28849)
Fall 2021

Class Meets: Tuesdays, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM, UTA 1.204

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Office:
Office Hours: Mondays (10:00AM – 11:00AM),
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Note: Syllabus subject to change, and I will inform you in class of any changes. You can find the most up-to-date version on Canvas.

Course Description

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Researchers and designers from computational fields are beginning to understand how the complexity of systemic, structural, and historical circumstances affecting communities (e.g., poverty, illiteracy, and geographical isolation) shape the design process. For example, participatory design (PD) and community-based participatory research (CBPR) have been heavily used in HCI to design with underserved communities. However, there is an opportunity for HCI researchers and practitioners in related fields to improve their use of these methods to account for circumstances that may impact participants' engagement (or lack thereof) in the design process.

This seminar will examine methods used in empirical research studies that focus on designing or researching computational technologies with or for people from underserved communities (e.g., empirical studies from IS-related fields such as HCI and CSCW). We will analyze how principles of PD and CBPR are applied to these studies. This course will provide you with a critical understanding of established or perhaps unestablished research design methods, which support the creation and evaluation of ICT systems and services that would be inclusive and beneficial to a broad range of users.

As a class, we will contribute a framework, or model for understanding how to use specific research methods and when, and the strengths and weaknesses of each method. The research methods investigated will not be fully comprehensive—these methods will be derived from a survey of related research provided by the instructor and also based on students' current research and research interests.

Those of you who have formulated a few focused research questions, intend to engage with populations who may be marginalized or understudied in your area of focus, and have considered the use of methods described

above are encouraged to enroll and would most benefit. An ideal outcome from this class is a well-formed proposal that you can execute over the summer and/or submit to an agency for funding. A key course goal is to create opportunities for you to refine your method/approach. Feel free to use this class as an opportunity to pilot new methods and discuss their outcomes. Ultimately, I'd like for you to walk away with an opportunity to publish your findings to your venue of choice.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

On successful completion of the course, the student will be able to meet the following learning objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the concepts and principles that underlie research methodologies designed with special populations and situations in mind (e.g., Action Research, Participatory Design and Community-Based Participatory Research)
 - a. To define AR, PD and CBPR.
 - b. To identify and explain the key components of and differences between AR, PD and core principles of CBPR
 - c. To describe the strengths and weaknesses of PD and CBPR.
 - d. To critically evaluate the underlying PD and CBPR concepts to evaluate user experiences.
2. To explain the rationale for the use of PD and CBPR to address problems with computational solutions.
3. To compare and contrast the differences between traditional research methods and methods that are designed to be more inclusive.
4. To discuss differences among specialized groups that could impact the use of certain methods (particularly from PD).
 - a. To make informed decisions about which technique(s) to use for certain populations and why.
5. To contribute to a model or framework that includes a curated collection of methods for creating and evaluating more inclusive ICTs.

Preferred Skills:

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. This course is not designed to be an introductory methods course. Ideally, students will have some familiarity with contextual inquiry, qualitative interviewing skills, needs assessment, and some survey design.

How to succeed in this course:

1. Please make sure to complete all readings prior to class and all assignments by their due dates and times.
2. Please make sure to come into the class with an open mind, and to develop your own perspectives.
3. Please make sure to be respectful during all class discussions, and to appreciate others' perspectives.

Course Requirements

Required Materials

All course readings will be made available via the course Canvas site.

Required Devices

There are no required devices, but please bring the readings for the week, in print or electronically.

Classroom expectations

Please make sure to be engaged and respectful at all times and to contribute to class discussions.

Optional Textbook:

I will draw insights from the books: *Methods in Community-Based Participatory Research for Health* by Barbara Israel et al.; *Design for Inclusivity* by John Clarkson, Julia Cassim, and Roger Coleman, and *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

Course Readings:

Course readings will be available via University of Austin's Canvas (or the World Wide Web).

There will be additional assigned readings drawn from a range of sources including your own. These readings and other resources will be available via Canvas. Weekly readings will be located in subfolders labeled by week number.

Assignment Submission:

For all writing assignments, please use a digital format that permits inline comments. Microsoft Word and/or Google Docs are fine. You will upload all assignments to Canvas.

All assignments should be turned in by 8 pm. each Monday before class, on Canvas. Name the file with your surname and the name of the assignment. For example, smith_summary.doc. For group assignments, if applicable, please use surname(s) in alphabetical order, followed by the name of the assignment. For example, smith_turner_summary.doc.

Assignments that are submitted late will lose 2/3 of a letter grade on the first day that an assignment is late. After that, 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each day the assignment is late, up to two whole letter grades. Students may request an extension but they must contact me 24 hours in advance and give a valid reason why they are late.

Assignments

1. Assignment 1: Attendance and Participation

- a) Because the vast majority of the learning in this class will occur within the classroom, you are required to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken during each class period. Absences will only be excused in situations following university policy (illness, religious holy days, participation in University activities at the request of university authorities, and compelling absences beyond your control) with proper documentation and timely notification (prior to class for non-emergencies). Excessive tardiness may be considered as an unexcused absence except in situations following university policy.
- b) Class participation is a critical element of this course. The effectiveness of the course will be significantly impacted by the quality of your participation. Class participation is not merely attendance, but rather factors in your overall contributions to the collaborative learning environment, based on both the quantity and quality of your interactions in all aspects of the course. Discussion of class participation with the instructor is encouraged in order to ensure that you are making the most of the classroom experience and the accompanying opportunities for

learning. You are expected to participate in all aspects of class discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings, as well as your perspectives on these readings. You should strive for balance in your contributions, and your participation will not be based on who speaks the loudest or the longest, but on consistent participation of significant quantity and, most importantly, quality.

- c) Your attendance and class participation grade will be calculated by multiplying the numerical assessment of your class participation by the percentage of classes that you attend (with exceptions made for documented, university-recognized absences as noted above). Please note that regular attendance and active participation in each class session are critical for receiving a good grade in this course. For example, by actively participating in each class, you will receive a full letter grade higher than if you were to skip half of the classes or to be half-awake for all of the classes.

2. **Assignment 2: Article Synthesis**

Students will prepare two 1-2-page (500-1000 words) synthesis **twice** in the semester of at least three articles, ideally related to your area of interest, that you select on your own. If you're unable to determine a topic or articles, feel free to reach out to me. By the end of the semester, the class will have a collection of synthesized articles as well as a spreadsheet capturing key factors about the paper (e.g., title, author, abstract, population targeted, the study goal and research questions asked, research methods used, group dynamics encountered, and outcomes).

3. **Assignment 3: Article Presentation**

Due to the number of students currently registered for the class, we will need to be flexible in our schedule. With 15 students, you will likely only be able to discuss one set of synthesized articles and you will likely need to do so in groups (2 or 3) starting on 9/06/2021 (Week 2). You will present your synthesis and lead a discussion/activity of this work. You will have at least 35-40 minutes to present and time for reflection/discussion/in-class activity. The following is a *suggested* flow for PowerPoint slides, though feel free to improvise. You can also opt to use this time to pilot or propose a new method given the results of their synthesis or new study design altogether:

1. Article Title, author(s), year of publication
2. Abstract, population targeted, goal of study and research questions asked, research methods used, group dynamics encountered, and outcomes).
3. Literature background (note key points and citations),
4. Population targeted (unique traits or characteristics about the population; pluralisms)
5. Research question(s), major hypotheses (presentation should note underlying arguments)
6. Target technology or application being developed or evaluated
7. Key aspects of the research design (research design, sample size, data collection, location of study)
8. Key aspects of the research methods (what methods were used and why?)
9. Your evaluation of the strengths and potential weaknesses of the methods used and why? Students will increase their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses based on summaries and student presentations.
10. Major Findings
11. Discussion points
 - a. Aspects of trust, power, culture and cultural competence, recognition of communities' assets (Johannah and Swartz, 2019)
 - b. How did the community benefit from this research? How was this assessed? (If not, how do

- you propose assessing potential benefits?)
12. Your personal thoughts/reflections (are the results believable, were the methods valid, what are alternative approaches to the methods used, how would you extend/redo this work, etc.)

Each week’s presenters will upload their synthesis and slides before class (**Monday 11:59pm**) to Canvas for other students to preview and prepare questions.

4. Assignment 4: Research Paper

You will be expected to write a draft outline of a final paper (1,500 – 5,000 words) and final paper (5,000 – 7,500 words) for this course, which is high enough quality to submit to a conference or journal in your field. I encourage you to use your journal or conference’s article template throughout the course and treat it as a working paper or work in progress that you plan to submit at the end of the course.

If you are a junior Ph.D. student or a master’s student and do not have access to existing data or results for your final paper, you can write an extended literature review (based on prior summaries) that can be used to motivate a future study.

- a) Paper Proposal: Your paper proposal must include the proposed title of your research paper as well as a one-page description of the goals of your research paper. Research paper proposals will be graded according to the following criteria: suitability of the topic, creativity of the topic, and appropriateness of the research goals.
- b) Paper Outline: Your paper outline will typically include bulleted lists, filling in as much detail as you have ready at this point, and incorporating feedback from the paper proposal. Citations must follow APA Style (there are many useful online resources available; I recommend: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Research paper outlines will be graded according to the following criteria: clarity of the plan for the paper; appropriateness of the plan for the paper; and appropriateness of the references.
- c) Final Paper: Your final paper must incorporate feedback from all previous stages of the paper development. Your paper must be complete, coherent, and easy to read. Please make sure to proofread your paper thoroughly prior to submission. The final paper should be 5,000-7,500 words. All citations must follow APA Style.
- d) Final Presentation: During one of the three final weeks of the semester, you will present your research paper to the class in the form of an audiovisual presentation. The presentation week and length will be announced well in advance of the date. You may give your presentation using a visual aid such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote; create and demonstrate a website or other technology; or create a video. Research paper presentations will be graded according to the following criteria: quality of research, quality of visual presentation, and quality of oral presentation.

Grading for this Course

The following table represents how you will demonstrate your learning and how we will assess the degree to which you have done so.

Assignments	Percent of Total Grade
1. Attendance and Participation	25%
2. Weekly Assignments	25%

• Proposed Article (1)	
• Proposed Article (2)	
• Article Presentation	
3. Research Paper	50%
• Paper Proposal	5%
• Paper Outline	10%
• Peer Reviews	5%
• Final Paper	20%
• Final Presentation	10%

Grade reconsideration:

While I do my best to grade each student fairly, if you believe the grade you received on an assignment is inappropriate, you may ask to have your grade reconsidered. To do so, explain to me in an email why you feel your work deserves re-grading. You should provide details and point to specifics in the assignment that you feel merit a higher grade. Requesting grade reconsideration does not ensure that your grade will change, but your arguments will be carefully considered. *Note: one of three outcomes is possible: your grade may be raised, it may remain the same, or it may be lowered.*

Course Outline

All instructions, assignments, readings, rubrics and essential information will be on the Canvas website at <https://utexas.instructure.com>. Check this site regularly and use it to ask questions about the course schedule.

Changes to the schedule may be made at my discretion and if circumstances require. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced (although I will do my best to ensure that you receive the changes with as much advanced notice as possible).

Week	Date	Class Topic	Out of class activities	Assignments due
1	8/31	Course Background and Overview / Introduction		
2	9/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Intersectionality, Gaining entry as an outsider (Statements of positionality) • Methods: Introduction to PD, CBPR, and Assets-Based Approaches 		Assignment due: Reflections on who you are as a researcher; Your research questions; Sign up for presentations based on your domain of interest.
3	9/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Applications of PD, CBPR, and Assets-Based Approaches IRB completed if necessary 		Assignment due: Proposal of Final Paper

4	9/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: AI and Smart Technologies • Article summary, presentation, and lead discussion on methods 		Assignment due: Article Synthesis #1
5	9/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Accessibility People with Disabilities and Inclusive Design • Emily Wang (guest speaker) 		Assignment due: Draft outline of Final Paper
6	10/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: LGBTQ Populations • Michael Ann Devito (guest speaker) 		
7	10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Inclusive Approaches to Analyzing “Big Data” Social Media 		
8	10/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Children, Aging Populations, and Health (Deconstructing PD) 		
9	10/26	Mid-semester Check-in (Synthesis)		Assignment due: Article Synthesis #2
10	11/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Resource-Constrained Populations (Immigrants, Refugees, Low-Income) • Marisol Wang-Villacres (guest speaker) 		
11	11/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Education and Novice Programming • Student check-in; Brief project updates and draft of your final proposals; 		Assignment due: Peer Review
12	11/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tentative Special Topics: Ethics, Privacy, and Politics of Design 		
13	11/23	No Class		

14	11/30	Final Presentations		Assignment Due: Final Presentation deliverables due 11/29. Final Research Paper due 12/6.
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Policies

Classroom Statements and Policies

Land Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what is now called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo &/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

Statement on Learning Success

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need to be adaptable because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT. Many are listed on this syllabus, but I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

Statement on Flexibility

In acknowledgement of COVID-19 and its impact on the University of Texas at Austin community, this course will reaffirm one of the core values here at UT Austin: responsibility. Our responsibility to ourselves and each other is to put our humanity in the forefront of our academic pursuits. With that being said, this semester I commit to being adaptable in this time of great need, which is reflected in the course policies below around attendance, grading, and assignments/exams.

If you experience any hardships such as illness, accident, family crisis please know that these policies may be amended and therefore you should communicate with me as soon as you feel comfortable doing so. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing with me, please visit [Student Emergency Services](#). For additional campus resources, please visit protect.utexas.edu.

Personal Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name, unless they have added a "preferred name" with the Gender and Sexuality Center, which you can do so here:

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/publications-and-resources/>. I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name that is different from what appears on the official roster, and by the gender pronouns you use (she/he/they/ze, etc). Please advise me of any changes early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records. For instructions on how to add your pronouns to Canvas, visit <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/profile-pronouns>.

Absences

Being present is critical to achieving our goals for this course.

Excused Absence: Absences will be considered excused if they are for religious holidays or extenuating circumstances due to medical or family emergencies. If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, please let us know at least two weeks in advance. You will not be penalized for this absence, although you will still be responsible for any work you will miss on that day if applicable. Check with us for details or arrangements.

If you have to be absent, use your resources wisely. Ask your team and other classmates to get a run-down and notes on any lessons you miss. If you find there are topics that we covered while you were gone that raise questions, you may come by during office hours or schedule a meeting to discuss. Email specific questions you have in advance so that we can make the most of our time. “What did I miss?” is not specific enough.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

University Resources and Supports for Students

Services for Students with Disabilities

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD’s website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

The [Counseling and Mental Health Center](#) serves UT’s diverse campus community by providing high quality, innovative and culturally informed mental health programs and services that enhance and support

students' well-being, academic and life goals. To learn more about your counseling and mental health options, call CMHC at (512) 471-3515.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call the CMHC Crisis Line 24/7 at (512) 471-2255.

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

BeVocal

BeVocal is a university-wide initiative to promote the idea that individual Longhorns have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm. At UT Austin all Longhorns have the power to intervene and reduce harm. To learn more about BeVocal and how you can help to build a culture of care on campus, go to: <https://wellnessnetwork.utexas.edu/BeVocal>.

Wellbeing Resources

[Longhorn Wellness Center](#) resources for self-care
[Virtual Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Activities](#)

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Libraries: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

ITS: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

UT University Health Services: <https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/>

Important Safety Information

COVID-19 Update: While I will post information related to the contemporary situation on campus, you are encouraged to stay up-to-date on the latest news as related to the student experience.

<https://protect.utexas.edu/>

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCCAL (the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Senate Bill 212, they are still mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, including the types of conduct covered under Texas Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: **“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT.** Therefore, if you use

words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address:

<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsconduct.php>

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information about Q drops in general, see:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>. For

COVID-19 Updates

For the most up to date information on learning during COVID-19, including guidance about safety, cloth masks in classrooms, and classroom guidelines, see <https://protect.utexas.edu/learning/>.