EDST 601B

**Advanced Doctoral Seminar on Research Methods**

(Winter 2018, Wednesdays, 9:00-12noon)

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**WHAT IS THIS SEMINAR ABOUT?**

EDST 601B offers participants a broad introductory overview of major methodological approaches (paradigms or traditions) they could draw on to research distinct contexts of practice. To that end, the course introduces a select range of research methods located within these approaches or at their intersections. The course also offers participants with an opportunity to critically reflect on what it means to undertake research. It provides participants with conceptual, theoretical, and practical tools and understandings in relation to which they could position themselves meaningfully as they move to design their respective projects.

Central to this course stand concerns over the [social, cultural, economic, political, and ethical](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scientific-knowledge-social/) implications of research about (and on) Indigenous peoples, colonized, marginalized, socio-economically oppressed, [pathologized](https://youtu.be/Gr_sY-yXKHE) communities, and racialized groups. From that perspective, ‘doing research’ is not just about mastering the technical skills needed for the conduct of research. It hinges on the researcher’s understanding of the fundamentally contested character of knowledge generation practices. It further hinges on the researcher’s understanding how theories, methodologies, and research methods – and their ensuing knowledge-claims – are situated in relation to the inherent “antagonism present in human societies” (Mouffe, 2014:150).

EDST 601B is underpinned by the premise that methodologies – and their concomitant methods – need to be judiciously drawn upon, not just as research techniques and tools (which they are), but also as practices that carry with them ethical and political implications for individuals, groups, and societies. Undertaking research requires a reflexive consideration of the contested character of social theory and the methodologies and methods it relies on in generating knowledge. It also requires an understanding of what theory and methodology entail within the context of a democratic, just, equitable, multicultural, and diverse society. This means, as [Boaventura de Sousa Santos](http://www.boaventuradesousasantos.pt/pages/en/homepage.php) (2007:xvii) observes, that those doing research need not only master the research tools placed at their disposal; they also need to question their limits, “[trying out new ways of producing knowledge and of examining their possibility for social emancipation](http://www.boaventuradesousasantos.pt/media/General%20Introduction.pdf)”.

**AIMS**

By the end of this course participants would be expected to:

1. understand the [epistemic](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/) and [ontological](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-ontology/#DifConOnt) assumptions of different research traditions they may draw on in relation to their research projects;
2. understand how researchers – as social actors – construct and engage social, cultural, economic, and political issues within different sites of practice;
3. consider intersections of theory and methodology in terms of how they challenge the researcher’s judgment, ethical considerations, and social-political awareness and engagement;
4. position themselves critically in relation to various methodologies and their associated research methods;
5. apply core [concepts](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/concepts/) in research methods to the design of research projects.

**HOW IS THE COURSE ORGANIZED?**

EDST 601B is organized in a [seminar](https://www.brightknowledge.org/education/how-do-seminars-work) format, [intuitively understood as a space of discussions, group work, individual reflection and plenary presentations](https://youtu.be/qNyXwy5hN2g). It offers participants with an opportunity to engage readings, online and audiovisual resources that focus, in the present case, on methodological traditions and research methods. In plenary discussions and group activities participants will bring their professional and life experiences, expertise, skills, and knowledge to bear on what it means to undertake research in diverse contexts of practice. They will also reflect on how to enhance their understanding of research methods in relation to ethical considerations and wider social issues associated with their areas of interest and fields of practice.

All assigned course readings and resources are, without exception, accessible online through the [UBC Library](http://www.library.ubc.ca/) and its [off-campus access](http://services.library.ubc.ca/#access) platforms or found on the World Wide Web.

References

Chantal Mouffe (2014). By Way of a Postscript. *Parallax*, 20(2), 149-157.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007). [Reinventing social emancipation: Toward new manifestos](http://www.boaventuradesousasantos.pt/media/General%20Introduction.pdf). In *Democratizing democracy: Beyond the liberal democratic canon*, edited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (pp. vii-xxiii). London & New York: Verso.