We Belong Too: Youths Voices for Action and Equity

Tues/Thurs 3:20 - 4:55 in-person, Porter 148

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Sociology 139T: Community-based Research Practicum

The Sociology and Psychology Departments, along with the new Campus+Community Center have launched an exciting, community-based research project centering Youth leadership and voice and we invite undergrads to participate. The projects builds on an on-going collaborative research project, We Belong, which focuses on immigrant and mixed-status families in Santa Cruz County. From that research, Youth and issues faced by young people emerged as a key but under-examined topic. Our new project, We Belong Too, is a collaboration with the Youth Action Network of Santa Cruz County, a network of Youth organizations that aims to shift the role of youth voice in the county so that they have a say in policies, practices, and procedures that affect them. YAN brings together youth and adults, especially from marginalized communities and/or communities of color, as these groups are disproportionately affected by current county-wide policies and practices.

In this first year (of a planned 3-year project), our course will help support YAN in identifying, reflecting on, and beginning to research an issue they deem important to the youth of Santa Cruz County. The long-term goals are to help youth and their allies create positive change together, increase youth well-being and leadership, and to eventually shift local policies, procedures, and/or practices on a key equity-related issue. Our course will provide support to YAN youth and adults by helping refine the research focus, and collaboratively conduct pilot research. A portion of students in the course will also help support a large community event (to be held at the Watsonville Plaza) as part of the on-going We Belong project focused on immigrant and mixed-status families.

After initial training in participatory research methodologies such as photovoice, social biographies, and community collaboration, students will get out of the classroom (virtually and/or in-person) about once a week, working directly with YAN members and organizations, or with other We Belong community partners to apply their research and planning/presentation skills in the field. We will help Youth analyze photovoice and create social biographies, and assist other community organizations working in immigrant advocacy and services in preparation for the large community event.

Enrollment into SOCY 139T is by permission code only. All students interested in enrolling must fill out the course application/survey online: https://tinyurl.com/ybudprsh (You must be signed into your UCSC email to access). We will review applications and issue permission codes directly to students until the course is full (60 total). There are no specific requirements or previous research experience necessary, but we are looking for: strong interpersonal skills; some Spanish language ability; visual documentation skills (photo and/or video); previous experience with community-based research and presentations. For more information, please email Prof. McKay at smckay@ucsc.edu.