

Course Outline

Social Sciences 1SS3: Inquiry in the Social Sciences

Course Information

McMaster University, Faculty of Social Sciences

Term: [Winter 2022](#), Section C08 (Online)

Theme: Gender, Education & Career Choice

Instructor: Dr. Mark Busser

Email: bussermp@mcmaster.ca

Course Description

Inquiry courses are designed to teach students how to learn and how to share academic knowledge. The courses are skill-driven, rather than content-driven, with a *focus on the skills required to perform effectively in university*. These personal, transferable skills and approaches to learning will be useful in other university courses, and beyond. Students will engage in a process to begin to learn how to formulate good academic questions, gather and interpret scholarly evidence, draw reasoned conclusions, and communicate these conclusions, using as content, topics central to research in the Social Sciences (e.g., social identity, globalization, health, and gender).

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course you will have valuable experience in:

- developing a researchable question and refining it;
- demonstrating the ability to obtain relevant information to answer this question;
- critically evaluating the validity and relevance of academic research;
- communicating a reasoned response to the researchable questions; and
- critically reflecting on your learning process.

Expected Time Commitment

As a general rule, in a university class, for every hour of scheduled in-person contact time, you should also budget 1-2 hours per week for reading, preparation and homework. Typically, this totals 6-9 hours per week. While this course is delivered online, the time commitment is similar. The recommended time budget is:

- Avenue Content & Online Engagement: 2 hours per week x 12 weeks = 24 hours
- Assigned & Research Reading: 3 hours per week x 12 weeks = 36 hours
- Assignments: 2 hours per week x 12 weeks = 24 hours

What is Inquiry?

Inquiry is the process of developing skills to arrive at understandings of a problem, an issue, or a phenomenon, through the process of asking good questions, searching out good evidence, and arriving at well reasoned conclusions. The process of critical inquiry promotes self-directed learning, helping you to develop the skills necessary to acquire and reflect on new knowledge and understanding, and that will be invaluable in your other university courses and your academic, personal, and professional lives.

Developing Transferable Skills

You will work on developing academic skills that are transferable to your other university courses as well as to the workforce. These skills include:

- question formulation;
- critical reading and thinking;
- communication (oral, written and visual);
- self and peer evaluation;
- research skills; and
- group work skills.

Course Theme: Gender, Education & Career Choice

While the focus of this course is on the process of inquiry, the theme “Gender, Education & Career Choice” will provide the content that we will use to develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

In the first phase of our class we will begin to examine what “masculinity”, “femininity” and “gender” mean to us, both as individuals and in the larger society. In subsequent classes and in your research paper/capstone assignment you will have the opportunity to further explore how individuals and groups, understand, use and debate ideas about masculinity in everyday life.

There are many ways that people in the social sciences seek to understand the concept of gender: Is it related to culture or economics? Is it a process or a set of facts? Is it determined by biology? Why does it matter? What all agree upon is that social, cultural and economic factors influence how masculinity shapes and influences the world we live in. Social structures such as family, work environment, political structure, as well as our cultural practices -- what we eat, and how we live -- all have consequences for our lives, our health, and our relationships with others.

Each student in the course will be asked to develop their own curiosity about how gender is connected to specific issues or topics related to education and/or career choice. While gender matters almost everywhere, our shared attention on the world of work, career pathways, education and training will help us to learn from each other and gather momentum for our individual research through social learning.

The themes of gender, education & career choice, along with the design of this course, provide ample flexibility to enable you to engage your own ideas and interests with the topic, while demonstrating the skills of inquiry.

Online and Electronic Course Components

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn (“Avenue”) for the online components of the course. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation, may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

PeerScholar

This course will use an online peer assessment and feedback tool called PeerScholar as a part of a pilot project being conducted by McMaster’s MacPherson Institute. Using this tool will be free for students, and the experience will be embedded into your Avenue to Learn experience. On [PeerScholar’s website](#) you can find [a video introducing the ideas behind the tool](#). As a part of your work in the course you will be asked to participate in the peer assessment process, both by having your work reviewed and by acting as a reviewer for others.

Hypothesis

This course will also use a free [social reading tool called Hypothesis](#), which is also being piloted in collaboration with the MacPherson Institute. Using this tool will also be free for students, and the experience will be embedded into your Avenue to Learn experience. This tool will allow students to engage socially with our course readings by digitally making annotations, comments, and connections in a social environment. As a part of your work in this course you will be asked to engage regularly with the readings by using the Hypothesis tool.

Digital Submissions

The written assignments in this course will be submitted via the digital Assignments function on Avenue to Learn, found under the Assessments tab. Many file types are compatible with the submission system, including Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), or Rich Text (.rtf) files. Please note that Pages (.pages) and Google Docs files are not compatible. If your word processing program uses a file type not listed here, please contact the instructor to check compatibility.

Written Assignments

All written assignments are to be typed and double-spaced. Please include your name, student number and email address, the topic title of the assignment and the date submitted. Printed copies of assignments submitted through Avenue will not be necessary unless explicitly requested.

Submitting Assignments Electronically

Individual assignments submitted electronically must somehow include your last name in the filename, e.g. "Ahmad – Assignment 5.docx" or "Smith_Assignment_5_Article_Assessments.pdf"

Submissions

All written work is **due at 11:59 p.m. on the date stated** in the **Detailed Course Schedule** document in the *About the Course* module, unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor. A **late penalty of 3%** will apply after the due time on the due date. Further penalties will accumulate beginning the next day (6%) and increase by 3% per day following (including weekends). Late assignments will only be accepted within the first 7 days after the due date, but will not be accepted thereafter. *Assignments will be marked and returned in the order in which they were submitted.*

Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including to TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Avenue Mail

Please use your McMaster e-mail account to contact the instructor. There is a technical difference between the Mail feature in Avenue to Learn and the McMaster e-mail services, including the mail service used by most instructors. Messages sent from Avenue to e-mail, for example, can often cause unhelpful delays and errors.

Copyright and Recording (University Policy)

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Online Course Engagement

Prepare for Collaboration

This course is designed as an interactive online environment in which the members of the class can interact, converse, and learn from one another. Many other online courses focus on individual completion of tasks and do not require much meaningful interaction

between students. This course, in contrast, does include many opportunities to engage with and learn from others. There are no 'group work' assignments, so you will not be required to meet up with or sync up with other students. However, you should indeed expect to provide and receive feedback in alternating steps via the Discussions area of Avenue to Learn, in the peer-assessment tool PeerScholar, and through the social reading platform Hypothesis.

Please Engage Regularly

While this course is delivered online, it is designed as a 'synchronous' rather than 'asynchronous' course. This means that the course community will work through the inquiry process together, at a fairly even pace. Assignment due dates will serve as benchmarks and checkpoints for our shared and interactive learning. While the online format will allow you flexibility in time management day-to-day and week-to-week.

Expect a Steady, Even Workload

The course components are not meant to be 'binged', and so unlike some online courses they will not be released all at once up front. Instead, content will be staggered in order to allow you to get a bit ahead and manage your time (but not to 'skip ahead' or 'race ahead'). In addition, most course content will be released 'conditionally', meaning that before you access the next step you will need to have completed the previous step.

Please Stay in Touch if You Fall Behind

In order to keep pace, students should expect to spend an average of 7-9 hours per week on the course, with a backlog of work accumulating for missed time. **Please e-mail me (the instructor) to coordinate a recovery plan if you are not able to fulfil this time commitment for two (2) or more weeks in a row.** See 'Expected Time Commitment' above.

Academic Integrity

University Policy on Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the University.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the McMaster Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>. The following illustrates only a few forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Submitting work that is not your own.

2. Submitting your own material for which other credit has already been obtained in another course.
3. Using another writer's sentences, phrasing, or writing structure without properly indicating your debt by using quotation marks.
4. Neglecting to properly cite the source of your ideas.
5. Improper collaboration in non-group work.
6. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.
7. Requesting accommodation or exceptions in bad faith or under false pretenses.

Quotation Marks

Anytime you borrow the wording or phrasing of a research source in your writing, you must indicate properly acknowledge your re-use by putting the borrowed wording or phrasing in quotation marks (i.e. "these"). It is not enough to add a citation. A citation gives credit for the idea, but without quotation marks it is implied that the wording and phrasing are of your own creation and authorship. You may put full quoted sentences in quotation marks. However, you may also quote only half a sentence and merge it with your own half sentence to make a *blended quotation*. If you are trying to paraphrase but can't find a better way to express a particular phrase, you can also put just a few borrowed words in quotation marks and do a *fragment quotation*. You can quote several sentences in a row, too -- but if you do, you should look up the formatting guidelines for *block quotations*. Note: whenever you borrow wording, you should both use quotation marks and provide a citation giving the author credit.

Originality Checking

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Digital work submitted via *Avenue to Learn* will be automatically submitted to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty, and so that the paper can be marked digitally using the service's digital feedback system. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com have the right to arrange, with the instructor, an alternate submission method that bypasses Turnitin. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

Reporting Missed Academic Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

The MSAF is an on-line self-reporting tool for undergrad students to report missed academic work. The MSAF gives you the ability to request consideration for missed work (worth less than 25% of the final grade) due to illness or injury lasting 3 days or less. You must visit McMaster's online MOSAIC system to locate the MSAF to report your absence. This form should be filled out as soon as possible after your absence. It is your responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately (within 48 hours of submitting the MSAF) in person or by email regarding the nature of the relief that may be possible for the missed work. Whether consideration is given for missed work, and the type of consideration provide, is the decision of the instructor.

MSAF Limitations

You may submit only 1 MSAF per term without supporting documentation. An MSAF cannot be used for any final examination.

Longer or Successive Absences

For absences longer than 3 days, for reasons other than illness or injury, or for missed work worth 25% or more of the course grade, you must contact the Faculty of Social Sciences office to request an MSAF exception link. You will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation to the Faculty office before an exception link will be approved. You may also be required to meet with an academic advisor.

Privacy

Please do not submit any medical or other relevant documentation to your instructor. Your instructor may not typically ask you for such documentation directly. You are not required to share the details of your medical or personal situation with any instructor. And the instructor may not ask for any such medical or personal information. Your faculty office is the right place to bring documentation.

Responsibilities

The purpose of the MSAF is to provide students who miss academic work because of illness or injury with the ability to still fulfill the requirements of the course. However, the MSAF is NOT intended as a time or workload management tool, or as a holiday organizer. As a student you are responsible for using the MSAF tool as it was intended, and to not misuse or abuse it for other reasons. You can also help to prevent any unexpected medical situations from jeopardizing the on time completion of your academic work by starting assignments and studying as early as possible.

Follow-Up E-Mail

In order to arrange for MSAF accommodation, you must e-mail the instructor as soon as possible after submitting your MSAF form. Your message to the instructor should include the following information:

1. If the missed work was an assignment, explain the work that you had completed before your absence and any work you have completed following your absence.
2. Propose a new deadline to submit the assignment, or, for tests, identify blocks of time when you are available to complete the assignment outside of class time.

Academic Accommodations:

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Students who require academic accommodations must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652, or by email at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Responsibilities as a Student Registered at SAS

SAS assists with academic and disability-related resources for students with a variety of learning needs. If you require academic accommodation through SAS, be sure that you arrange your accommodations with SAS as early as possible, and ensure that the instructor receives a copy of your accommodation letter as early as possible in the term.

Students registered with SAS are responsible for:

- meeting their SAS Program Coordinator prior to, or at the start of each academic term (September, January and summer sessions);
- providing their SAS Program Coordinator with relevant and professional medical or psychological documentation;
- notifying their SAS Program Coordinator if courses are dropped or added, or if accommodations require a change;
- meeting with individual course instructors to discuss their specific accommodation needs in relation to the course; and
- providing the instructor with their accommodation letter as early as possible.

For more information, visit the [SAS website](#)

Accommodating Peers

Students may be asked to assist in making our learning environment accessible for all students. For example, in-class presenters may be asked to submit, in advance, a text summary of the presentation's visual components to ensure the inclusion of students for whom those visuals would not otherwise be accessible.

Administrative Notes

Policy for Returning Assignments/Posting Grades

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow the return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; all tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student.

And since it is important for student learning and skills development that students receive feedback on their assignments as they progress through the course, you can expect to receive feedback (comments and a grade) on each of your assignments in a timely fashion. This will allow you the opportunity to see how you performed on each assignment and time to discuss any questions you might have with your instructor.

The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. direct return of materials to students in class;
2. return of materials to students during office hours;
3. students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope when submitting the assignment for return by mail (for final capstone assignment only); and
4. submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements will be finalized for the return of assignments from the options listed above by the instructor during the first class.

Grades for assignments may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. Final grades for the course will be posted on MOSAIC.

Course Details

This online course uses several companion documents to complement and supplement this course syllabus. Please consult the documents in the 'About this Course' section for details on assigned readings, a schedule of assignments, and other details.

Assignments

The assignment breakdown for the course will be as follows:

- Participation and Social Reading (15%)
- Research Question and Brainstorming Report (10%)
- Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (20%)
- Citation Chain Assignment (10%)
- Research Paper (25%)
- Assessment and Reflection (20%)

Full details are available on Avenue to Learn in the *Evaluations* module.

Course Modification Statement

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.