



SOCSCI 3F03

Social Sciences in Action

Instructor: H. Gibbs
McMaster University
WINTER 2019
(outline as of Oct. 2018)

Class Time: Mondays 7-9:50pm (check schedule for meeting weeks)
Classroom: WILSON HALL 1056

Instructor Email: gibbshm@mcmaster.ca

Instructor Office: KTH 208

Instructor Office Hours:

- Online/e-mails/discussion board (Avenue2Learn): Monday evenings (6-7pm)
- In person: Monday Evenings 6-7pm before workshops or by appointment

Course Description: Connecting the Community and the Classroom

Social Sciences in Action is an experiential education course where students participate in an active learning opportunity to engage more deeply with their education, applying the knowledge they have gained in social sciences to real world experiences; this type of learning exposes them to learning skills and gathering information that is not readily available in a classroom. By combining in-class workshops with participation in an experience in the community, students engage in a dynamic process of using academic concepts, approaches, and methods to interpret, apply and develop their skills and knowledge in their experiences and will also learn to enhance their scholarly inquiries by bringing their experiences to the classroom.

This course will enrich and enhance student's graduate education and help prepare them for their labour market and community goals. Students must be registered as a Social Science Student in order to take this course.

Course Objectives

1. Provide an opportunity for students to put theory/ concepts into practice.
3. Encourage and recognize student's involvement in their communities.
4. Develop students' capacity to prepare their academic, career, and life paths.
5. Develop students' interest in life-long learning through engagement with the broader community.
6. Develop students' capacity for reflection and integrative learning.

Understanding the Hybrid Structure of SOCSCI3F03

This course is conducted through a blend of in-class workshops, online interactions on Avenue2Learn, and in the community experiences. The class will not meet every week but will be in touch weekly through posted online discussion questions. Please make sure you are familiar with the unique schedule of this course.

- Students are expected to have their experiences/placements confirmed, started or completed prior to the start of the class. A Placement Information form will be completed and submitted **to a dropbox on avenue by January 7th by 7pm**. This form can be downloaded from Coursepage on Avenue, completed and upload to the Dropbox on Avenue. If students need to discuss placement confirmation, please contact the instructor prior to the start of term.
- With the exception of the first 2 weeks, the class meets every other week until the end of February; after which we will return to our classroom on March 25 and April 1st for student presentations, and our final workshop night on employment
- Students are expected to complete **at least 40 placement hours** in the community. Please see section on "Experience Guidelines" for further information.
- Students will be expected to complete the 10 weekly discussions posted on A2L. Discussion questions will be posted weekly during the Instructor's real/virtual office hours (Mondays 6-7). The purpose of our discussion questions is to establish consistent connection and make meaningful student experiences through critical reflection.
- Students will be required to complete forms pertaining to workplace safety and insurance, police checks (where relevant), and a signed hours of participation form.

Course Assessment

15% Assignment #1a (Pebble Pad Website Learning Plan)
15% Assignment #1b (Annotated Bibliography)
5% Class Preparation and Participation
20% Weekly Online Guided Research and Reflections
20% Class Presentation (Three Lenses of Experiential Education)
25% Final Project (Learning Plan Reflection, Articulated Learning)
100%

Assignment #1 a/b

In this 2-part assignment, students will be expected to develop a learning plan and annotated bibliography that serves as an individual 'course outline' for their experience in this course.

- In Assignment 1a, students will create a website on Pebble Pad that includes About Me, About My Experience, and My Learning Plan tabs. The Learning Plan section involves 4-6 knowledge, skill, and professional goals based in a SMART framework, and that includes strategies and methods of evaluation. More details and materials given in class.
- **Assignment 1a is due by 11:59pm on January 21st shared via email from Pebble Pad with the instructor.**
- In Assignment 1b, students will create an annotated bibliography of social sciences/your disciplines' sources that are relevant to interpreting the social contexts, issues, and problems involved in their community experiences. This annotated bibliography serves as a 'reading list' for your community experiences and your final project. Citation Style should be APA. More details and materials given in class.
- **Assignment 1b is due by 11:59pm on February 4th to the Avenue Dropbox.**

Class Preparation and Participation

- Class attendance is of great importance for student success in this class. For each of the classes, students are expected to not only attend but to have completed the readings and to participate in class discussions and exercises.
- Demonstrated preparation (where comments can be seen to be linked to readings) and participation (where contributions advance our discussions) will be evaluated out of 5% of the final grade.

Online Guided Research and Reflections

- Critical reflection is an important part of the learning process in Experiential Education. It helps students to deepen and make more meaningful their learning from their 'community classroom' as well as to stay connected to the classroom while you are in your experiences in the community. Engaging in instructor directed queries can also help to scaffold your learning and reflection for your final project.
- There will be 10 weekly critical reflections and information gathering questions posted to the Discussion page on Avenue2Learn.
- Students will have one week to answer the questions, i.e. answer each question before the next one is posted. Questions will be posted on Monday evenings each week beginning on January 14th

Class Presentation

- Students are to prepare a 15-20 minute oral presentation with visual supports that engages the audience in what they have learned from their experiences in the community using our three lenses of analysis.
- Presentations will be conducted over two weeks: March 25th and April 1st or an extended 'workshop' class on either date – depending on class numbers and vote.

Final Project

- Students are to submit a final written reflection piece that acts as a summation of their experience
- In addition to an introduction and conclusion, the report has three sections: a reflection on learning goals, 3 lens summation and articulated learning section, a reflection on experiential education.
- Final Projects is expected to be 10-11 pages.
- The final project will be due by prior to 11:59pm on April the Avenue to Learn Dropbox

Class Meeting and Reading Schedule

WEEK 1: January 7th

Introduction to Class and Each Other

WEEK 2: January 14th (Online Questions begin after class)

Discussion: What is the purpose of the University Today? What is and Why do Experiential Education?

Readings:

- Coates, K. and Bill Morrison (2012) "The Uses and Abuses of the University" *The Walrus*
- Noonan, J. and M. Coral (2015) The Tyranny of Work: Employability and the Neoliberal Assault on Education found in C. Fanelli and B. Evans, eds. *Neoliberalism and The Degradation of Education, AlternateRoutes*: <http://www.alternateroutes.ca/index.php/ar/article/view/22338/18128>
- Eyler, J. (2009). The Power of Experiential Education. *Liberal Education*, 95(4), 24-31.
- Giles, D. and J. Eyler (1994) The Theoretical Roots of Service-Learning in John Dewey: Toward a Theory of Service Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 77-85.

Further Reading on Experiential Education & Service Learning

- Chapman, S. et al (1992) What is Experiential Education? *Journal of Experiential Education*. V. 15, no 2.
- Giles, Dwight E. Jr. and Eyler, Janet, (1994) "The Theoretical Roots of Service-Learning in John Dewey: Toward a Theory of Service-Learning" (1994). *Service Learning, General*. Paper 150.
- Maas Weigert, K. (1998, Spring). Academic Service Learning: Its meaning and relevance. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 3-10.

WEEK 3: January 21st (no Class, Learning Plans due)

Week 4: January 28th

Discussion: How can we see and use the Social Sciences in the Community?
Academic Knowledge of Social Problems, Application, Interpretation

Readings:

J. Macionis (2015) "Chapter 1: Studying Social Problems" *Social Problems*, 6th ed.
Pearson: Toronto, 1-30.

W. Antony, L. Samuelson & J. Antony (2017) Social Problems and Social Power:
Individual Responsibility or Social Injustice?. *Power and Resistance: Critical Thinking
about Canadian Social Issues*. W. Antony et al, eds. Halifax, Fernwood.

WEEK 5: February 5th (no Class, Annotated Bibliography due)

WEEK 6: February 11th

Discussion: The Ethics of Working and Researching in the Community
Thinking about Presentation of the Self, Subjectivities, Assumptions, Responsibilities

- Chapdelaine, A. (2005) *Service Learning Code of Ethics*. Boston, Mass: Anker Pub. Co., Chapter 3.
- Johnson, L. R. (2017) The Role of the Researcher in Community-Based Qualitative Research. *Community-Based Qualitative Research: Approaches for Education and the Social Sciences*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publishing).
- Selection from: Access Alliance, [Working Rough, Living Poor](#)

******February 18th (No Class- Family Day/Reading Week)******

Week 7: February 25th

Discussion: Types of Social Research and Reporting outside of the Academy

Readings:

- G. Merrigan, Huston, and Johnson (2012), “Table 3.1: Three Paradigms of Knowing” and “Table 3.3: Methods Typically Associated with Each Paradigm” and “Table 4.1: Types of Claims” and “Table 5.1: Types of Warrants” in *Communication Research Methods*, Canadian Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Examples to look at:

- Celine Cooper (March 2018) “G7 Countdown: How civil society groups hope to get through to leaders” *Open Canada* <https://www.opencanada.org/features/g7-countdown-how-civil-society-groups-hope-get-through-leaders/>
- *Policy Memos:* [CIGI examples](#) ; [Maytree Policy Brief](#); [VAW Learning Network Briefs](#)
- *Survey using CBR:* [Food Security Canada](#)
- *Organizing Quick Facts and Community Profiles:* [SPRC of Hamilton](#) , [Homeless Hub](#)
- *Research Report from Advocacy Groups:* Wellesley Institute [Sick and Tired](#); [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#):
- *NewsRelease from Advocacy Organization:* [Fraser Institute](#)
- *Submission to a Standing Committee on a Bill:* [Workers Action Centre on Bill 148](#)
- *Infographics:* [National Resources Canada, 4 ways Forests can help mitigate climate change](#); [Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education](#)
- *Web Information for Users/to encourage Program Connection:* [YMCA Hamilton Burlington Brant](#)

Week 8: March 5th (No Class)

Week 9: March 11th (No Class)

Week 10: March 18th (No Class)

Week 11: March 25th
Presentation Group 1

Week 12: April 1st
Presentation Group 2

Week 13: April 8th
Discussion of Final Project
Workshop: Preparing for the Workforce: EE, Skills, and the Labour Market

Readings:

Ash, S. and P. Clayton (2004, Winter) The articulated learning: An Approach to Reflection and Assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 137-154.

OUR COMMUNITY CLASSROOM: INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

Course Materials

- There is no textbook for this course. There are required readings that are designed as both the basis for class discussion as well as experience resources. All readings will be provided via pdfs/weblinks/library on Avenue or are on public websites.

Code of conduct: <http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca>

“McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, the dissemination of knowledge and personal and professional development. Membership in this community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study work and live within it.”

Please follow these rules to cultivate an environment of mutual respect.

- Don't arrive late or leave early, you are not invisible – it disrupts the class
- Limit in class chitchatting while central discussions are ongoing
- No inappropriate use of mobile/electronic devices: use for educational purposes only or students will be asked to leave the classes
- Limit eating during lecture
- Often in the Social Sciences, we have discussion on challenging topics on which people have differing ideas, have had different experiences, and different exposures to research and information – disagreements will likely occur, but respectful listening and being a 'humble learner' is central to learning and debate for all of us. Critical engagement with *ideas* is important but no personal attacks or intentional harm directed toward any student will be tolerated. Questions directed as genuine learning about experiences that are different from your own are welcome to stimulate understanding and, of course, education.

E-Mail Communication Policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences:

All e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including 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/TA receives a communication from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. **Please always include student name, ID, course # and TA name in messages.**

- Emails to the instructor should expect a response only during weekdays and prior to 5pm. The instructor will do her best to answer any emails within a 24 hour period.
- The professor has office hours to give your concerns attention - My door is open, come see me!

Absence Reporting: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/> On-line self-reporting tool – illness lasting **less than 3 days**. Can only be used once per term. Instructors are not allowed to accept medical notes! These must be submitted to your Faculty office. In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please also communicate with the course instructor.

Submissions and Late Penalties

- Assignments are to be uploaded to Avenue (using *.docx, *.rtf, *.pdf formats) prior to end of day (11:59pm).
- An assignment will be considered late after 12am the next day (1 minute later). Assignment will be accepted up to one week late but they will be subject to a 5% penalty for each partial or full day that they are late (each new day begins at 12:00am), including weekends.
- In the case of online reflections, each day that a submission is late will diminish your grade for this portion by .5%/20% (for example, if 3 reflections are each 2 days late, the reflection grade decreases by 3%).
- No assignments/reflections will be accepted after 7 days late, after which a zero will be assigned.
- All grading will be completed within three weeks. The instructor will not reveal grades nor discuss grading concerns via email; make an app't during office hours to discuss any issues or concerns.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html>

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

Course Modifications:

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 their McMaster email AND Avenue to Learn (if used by instructor) *regularly during the term* to note any changes.

Evaluations (Online): <http://evals.mcmaster.ca>, and log in via MACID.

These help faculty and the School of Labour Studies to meet our goal of continually improving teaching effectiveness. All students in the course are invited and encouraged to complete the evaluation.

Student Success Centre: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/>
GH-110 905-525-9140 x24254

Some services include: student orientation, academic skills, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition. Writing Support:

<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>

Student Wellness Centre: <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/> **MUSC-B101 905-525-9140 x27700**

Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services

Student Accessibility Services: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/> **MUSC-B107 905-525-9140 x28652**

NOTE: Disclosure of disability-related information is personal and confidential.

Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. We work with full time and part time students. SAS provides or assists students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, and Classroom Accommodations. *Please inform the instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.

McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy

- <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

Avenue2Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue2Learn. 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.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. 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 with assignments for return by mail;
4. submit/grade/return papers electronically.

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

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

1. This course requires that students complete or have completed 40 hours in an approved experience or placement prior to submitting their final project.
2. Throughout the duration of this course, these experiences/placements will be reflected upon using academic frameworks and concepts in discipline(s) from the Social Sciences and Experiential Education.
3. A student must have their experience or placement confirmed, started or completed by their opening workshop. **All placements must be approved by the instructor.**
4. You may use an experience you are currently involved with or take the opportunity to explore something new that relates to your academic interests and helps build skills that will be transferrable into potential careers after graduation.
5. If you require assistance, the Experiential Education office can provide support in conceptualizing what placement may be a fit for you. Some established placements will be available for students who may wish to apply. Students are to contact Ruthanne Talbot, Programming and Outreach Manager, in the Experiential Education Office for support regarding the placement. Please contact her as soon as possible for inquiries regarding potential placements/experiences at talbotr@mcmaster.ca, 905.525.9140 x23382, or in KTH 129.
6. Students may choose to combine more than one experience/placement to achieve their necessary hours for this course, however, all experiences or placements are to be confirmed prior to the opening workshop & discussed in connection in the Learning Plan.
7. Unless there are highly unusual or challenging circumstances, students are not permitted to change experiences/placements once they have submitted their Learning Plans.
8. Students must have an experience/placement supervisor who can confirm and sign off on the number of hours a student has spent in that experience. An Hours of Work form will be completed by both students and experience supervisors as a part of the final project.

LIST OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES/PLACEMENTS (examples):

- Volunteer experiences with community agencies (eg. agencies that provide services to youth at-risk, immigrant and refugee communities, people who are homeless or living in poverty, or other vulnerable populations, etc.)
- Volunteer experiences with health care, education or other publicly-funded organizations/offices
- Student government or other university-related volunteer work
- Roles on an executive committee or board of directors
- International field, internship or other approved experiences (eg. experiences related to academic exchange opportunities, etc.)
- Research experiences

LIST OF UNACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES/PLACEMENTS (examples):

- Job Shadowing; students must have a role and responsibilities
- Experiences for which academic credit has already been granted
- An experience for which a student is already currently seeking academic credit in another course, unless the hours committed to the experience satisfies the requirements for both courses (i.e. an experience of 80 hours committed: completing 40 hours for SOCSCI 3F03 and 40 hours to meet the requirements of another course).