



SOCSCI 3F03

Social Sciences in Action

Instructor: H. Gibbs
McMaster University
FALL 2016-2017

Course Description: Connecting the Community and the Classroom

Social Sciences in Action is an experiential education course where students participate in one or more active learning opportunities related to their undergraduate studies. Experiential Education allows students to engage more deeply with their education and exposes them to learning skills and gathering information that is not readily available in a classroom. This course will enrich and enhance your undergraduate education and help prepare you for your future. Students must be registered as a Social Science Student in order to take this course.

Purpose of the Course: Education through Experience

Social Sciences in Action is a capstone course which allows students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained during their undergraduate studies in Social Sciences and apply them through real world experiences. Reading and reflection allow students to integrate their learning from these experiences with prior education and assists them in planning for further education and experiences. Through a dynamic process, students will use academic concepts from their disciplines to interpret their experiences and will also learn to enhance their scholarly inquiries by bringing their experiences to the classroom. This course is not about any particular experience that students may have but rather what they learn from their experiences.

Course Objectives

1. Provide an opportunity for students to put theory/ concepts into practice.
2. Expose students to a wide range of learning opportunities.
3. Encourage and recognize student's involvement in their communities.
4. Develop students' capacity to plan their own academic 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.
7. Assist students in thinking about and preparing for the future.

Schedule of the Course:

Online

This course is largely conducted through online discussions and interactions on Avenue2Learn. Under normal circumstances, students will complete this course in two semesters (September to April). Where students have already begun or completed their experience prior to the start of the course, students may finish this course in a single semester (T1: Sept-Dec; T2: Jan-Apr). In unique circumstances, students may have an additional semester to complete this course (for a total of three semesters) with the approval of the instructor. Due to the nature of the Mosaic grading system, however, students who sign up for a single semester (T1 or T2) but need to spread this course across more than one semester, may risk an “F” on their transcript until completion of the course. In any case, students must indicate in their Term Completion Contract the semester in which they will complete the course requirements. The value of this course remains three units regardless of the number of semesters a student chooses to participate.

Workshops

While students in this course are largely in contact and connected online, there are **two mandatory workshops** that students must attend in order to complete the requirements of this course (No exceptions- students should plan accordingly). Each student must attend an Opening and Closing Workshop (see below for schedule and details) that set the timeline parameters for participation in this course.

The FALL – WINTER 2016/17 Workshop Schedule:

All Workshops are held on Saturdays from 9:00am to 4:00pm:

1. OPENING WORKSHOP: SEPTEMBER 17th, 2015 (T1 & T3 Students) or JANUARY 14th (T2 Students)
2. CLOSING WORKSHOPS: NOVEMBER 19th (T1 Students) or March 18th (T2 & T3 students)

Workshop Location: TBA

Accessing the Instructor:

Instructor Email: gibbshm@mcmaster.ca

Instructor Office Hours:

- Online/e-mails/discussion board (Avenue2Learn):
Saturdays: Weekly Sept. 24th to April 1st from 9:00 am to 10:00am
- In person (KTH 208): Scheduled Saturdays from 9:30 to 10:30am
 - Sept. 24th, December 3rd, Jan. 21st, April 1st

Structure of the Course and Student Responsibilities

- Students begin the course with the opening workshop (Sept. 17th, 2016) which will prepare them for experiences/placements and help them to develop their Learning Plan.
- Students must access & complete the course readings prior to the first workshop.
- Students are also expected to have their experiences/placements confirmed, started or completed prior to **September 13th**. A Placement Information form will be completed and submitted **to a dropbox on avenue by Sept. 13th, 2016 by 4pm**. This form can be downloaded from coursepage on avenue.
- Using Learning Portfolio, Students are required to submit a Learning Plan via Avenue2Learn Dropbox within two weeks of their opening workshop (October 1st)
- Learning Plans will outline the student's experience; learning objectives and strategies; and will contain an annotated bibliography of at least 10 academic sources, within which students will identify concepts and theories that will be used to interpret and frame students' experiences in their presentation and final project.
- After students have had their learning plan approved they will have up to 3 semesters to complete it (i.e. until Dec. 2016, April 2017, or Dec. 2017) – intended completion dates are to be signed in a contract submitted with the learning plan.
- As a part of their learning plan, students are expected to complete at least 80-100 placement hours in the community. Please see section on “Experience Guidelines” for further information.
- While engaged in this course, students will be expected to complete a weekly (or bi-weekly, depending on length of time in course) discussions posted on A2L. Discussion questions will be posted weekly during the Instructor's virtual office hours. The purpose of our discussions is to establish consistent connection and reflection.
- Once Learning Plans are completed, students will be expected to attend a closing workshop (November 19th 2016 or March 18th, 2017 or Nov 2017 TBA) which will include a public presentation of their experiences and assistance with developing their final project.
- Students will be required to submit their final project (approx15-18 pages) via Avenue2Learn Dropbox within three weeks of their closing workshop (due prior to/on December 10th, 2016, or April 10th 2017, or Dec. 2017 TBA).

Student Evaluation

Learning plan and annotated bibliography by October 1 st 2016.....	20%
(Bi) Weekly Reflections on Experience (minimum 10 reflections).....	20%
Presentation in closing Workshop.....	20%
Final project.....	40%

Course Reading Material: Experiential Education and Service Learning

All course reading material can be accessed through e-journals, library reserves and/or Avenue to Learn (A2L) by September 8th. Students are to have read all of the required readings prior to the workshop on September 19th.

Required Readings: Useful to read in the order presented here

- Chapman, S. et al (1992) What is Experiential Education? Journal of Experiential Education. V. 15, no 2 (link on Avenue)
- Eyler, J. (2009, Fall) "The Power of Experiential Education" *Liberal Education*, 24-31. (*On Avenue*)
- 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. (*On Avenue*)
- Maas Weigert, K. (1998, Spring). Academic Service Learning: Its meaning and relevance. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 3-10. (*On Avenue*)
- *Ash, S. and P. Clayton (2004, Winter) The articulated learning: An Approach to Reflection and Assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 137-154. (*On Avenue*)

***This source is the basis for your final project and does not have to be read in advance of the opening workshop**

Further Reading

Stewart, T. and N. Webster (eds.) (2011) *Exploring the Cultural Dynamics and Tensions with Service Learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Kerins, A. (2010) *An Adventure in Service Learning: Developing Knowledge, Values and Responsibility*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing)

WORKSHOP OUTLINES

Workshop One: September 17th, 2016/January 14th, 2017

Morning: Getting to know each other, Understanding Experiential Education

- What is experiential education/service learning/community engagement?
- What have you been up to at McMaster? Assessing learning to present
- What kinds of experiences are you going to have?
- How does Experiential Education fit into your future plans? How does it fit into your life-long learning and development?
- Thinking about assumptions, challenges, communities, ethics, and guidelines

Afternoon:

- Creating your plan:
 - What is a good learning objective?
 - What are learning strategies?
 - How can you evaluate your learning experience?
- How can you use academic theory, concepts and research to frame your own experiences?
- What makes for a good annotated bibliography?
- Online Discussions: Meaningful Reflections and Connections
- Preliminary Discussion of Final Presentation and Project

Workshop Two: November 19th, 2016 or March 18th, 2017

Morning:

- Small group/large group discussion
 - What have you learned? What are the major highlights of your experience?
 - What are the major challenges and pitfalls of your experience?
 - How has your experience shaped your future learning plans?
 - How will you take your community experience and locate it within your theoretical knowledge and academic experience?

Afternoon:

- Student Presentations (Cost for printing poster @\$30)
- The Grand Finale! How to put it all together for your Final Project

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

1. This course requires that students complete or have completed 80-100 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 102.
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 140 hours committed: completing 80 hours for SOCSCI 3F03 and 60 hours to meet the requirements of another course).

Please Note

A final version of the course outline will be made available on Avenue2Learn on September 7th, 2016. Any and all aspects of this syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the instructor with due notice being given to the students as outlined in the University Senate's bylaws.

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 course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Late Policy

Students who submit work late are subject to a penalty of 5% a day for up to one week, after which documentation will be required in order for the instructor to accept any course work.

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.

Academic Dishonesty

McMaster University takes academic integrity and ethics seriously. Your instructor will be vigilant in holding students to the ethical standards of the university.

Academic dishonesty is an offence that 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. If you are unsure, ASK!

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

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.

Support Services

The Centre for Student Development offers group and individual consultation about effective learning strategies, essay writing, and study habits; accommodations, assistive technology, advocacy and support for students with disabilities; and personal counseling. If you believe these services may be helpful to you, contact (905) 525 9140 x 24711; csd@mcmaster.ca

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.

Email Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that 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 becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

The course instructor will be holding weekly virtual office hours on Saturday mornings (see above). During this time, discussion questions will be posted, discussion responses will be examined and the professor will be available for "chats". You can also expect to have close to immediate responses to emails sent during this time. For all other days of the week, responses to emails will be made within a 48 hour period, unless emergency/exceptional circumstances otherwise indicate via a posting on Avenue2Learn.