

# SOCWORK 744: Research Experience and Seminar

Monday, September 14, 2020 to Monday, April 5, 2021, 4:30-7:20pm

Synchronous Online

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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

The Graduate Diploma in Community Engaged Research and Evaluation offers students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in community-engaged research and evaluation, and to contribute to community and agency learning, effectiveness, and change. Through a series of seminars and workshops alongside the conduct of individual research/evaluation projects, the research experience and seminar encourages students to build a practice of self-reflection and to strengthen their knowledge and skills at planning, conducting, and disseminating community-based research and evaluation.

## Course Objectives:

1. To build on the learnings from SOCSCI 701 (Community-Based Research) and SOCWORK 743 (Evaluation) and apply these learnings to individual student research/ evaluation projects.
2. To build student capacity to undertake community-engaged research/evaluation projects that reflect the concepts and ethical frameworks highlighted in the GDip courses.
3. To create opportunities for students to critically reflect on their individual research/evaluation projects including working through ethical, logistical, and methodological challenges and tensions.
4. To troubleshoot pragmatic aspects of individual student projects through group discussion and debriefing.

Students will be encouraged to identify other objectives they hope to meet through this course and the Graduate Diploma overall.

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format

The entire research experience and seminar (SOCWORK 744) will be approximately 100 hours.

The course has three components that should total the 100 hours as follows:

1. Group seminars: Group seminars will occur approximately six to seven times per term. These seminars will be discussion based and incorporate practical workshops. The tentative schedule of group seminars is outlined below.
2. Individual student learning and capacity building: In addition to the group seminars, students may identify additional trainings, workshops, and capacity building opportunities that will support the advancement of their individual projects. Students will allocate time to complete these self-directed learning opportunities outside of the seminar time.
3. Project time: The remaining time will be allocated to individual student projects. Students will devise individual learning / work plans to advance their community-engaged research/evaluation initiatives. How the time is allocated and what outputs are generated will be specific to each project.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

This course is a pass or fail course. Each assignment is evaluated based on a pass, fail or resubmit system. In order to achieve a pass in the course you will need to attend and participate in each group seminar and demonstrate your learning through individual assignments. The goal of the assignments is to structure as smaller milestones that students can use towards their overall project capstone / output. It should be noted that completion of the student’s individual research/evaluation project is not a requirement of the Graduate Diploma, and students will decide the scope, scale, and timeframe of their projects. Individual assignments are as follows:

1. Individual Learning Plan, due September 21st, 2020
2. Student Reflection #1, due December 14, 2020
3. Student Reflection #2, due March 1, 2021
4. Student Presentation / Final Capstone, due April 5, 2021 (as part of final in-class session)

## Requirement/Assignment Details

1. Individual Learning Plan – due September 21st.
   * Students will create a learning plan / workplan / timeline that includes the goals, objectives, and outcomes they would like to achieve by the end of the seminar (April 2021). This learning plan will guide student work over the course of the research experience and seminar. Some ideas to include in the learning plan: development of partnership, confirmation of data collection tools, type / amount of data to be collected, specific questions to answer by end of seminar, etc. Each learning plan will be specific to the individual student and the project they are working on.
2. Student Reflection #1 and #2 – due Dec 14, 2020 and March 1, 2021
   * Reflection papers will be submitted throughout the course based on the student’s individual learning plan and anticipated project outcomes and outputs. Details to be discussed in class. Student reflection assignments will be tailored to each student’s individual learning plan and projects. For example, these assignments could help students to work through some of the tensions that emerge in their projects, to create a comprehensive story and document how the project was developed and unfolded, and/or develop content / arguments to demonstrate how student projects were grounded in community engagement principles (both in terms of theory and applied thinking).
3. Student Presentation / Final Capstone – due April 5, 2021 (in-class)
   * During the final in-person session, students will offer presentations and their reflections of the Graduate Diploma overall. Students will have the option to give an oral presentation or submit a written reflection / capstone that summarizes the advancement of their project during the Graduate Diploma as a whole. Details to be discussed in class. Student presentations and final capstone projects will be tailed to each student’s individual learning plan and projects.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* All assignments must be submitted via email (electronically). Hard copies will not be accepted.
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (E.g. Times-Roman 12, Arial 12, Calibri 12), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements will not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

## Courses with an On-line Element

In this course, we will be using online software such as Zoom and WebEx. 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 with the course instructor.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading

Please submit written assignments via email at [iona@mcmaster.ca](mailto:iona@mcmaster.ca) by the agreed upon due date.

## 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 five 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.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Student Responsibilities

* Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students should read material in preparation for class, attend class on time and remain for the full duration of the class. A formal break will be provided in the middle of each class, students are to return from the break on time.
* In the past, student and faculty have found that non-course related use of laptop computers and hand-held electronic devices during class to be distracting and at times disruptive. Consequently, during class students are expected to only use such devices for taking notes and other activities directly related to the lecture or class activity taking place.

## Attendance

Participation, attendance, and questions are essential in order to fully engage in the capacity building opportunities and the research experience and seminar that is an integral part of the Graduate Diploma. It is expected that students attend the in-person sessions.

## Academic Integrity

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. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

## Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom, and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## E-mail Communication 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, they may not reply.

## Copyright and Recording

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.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

The seminar will include group meetings. For the group meetings, there are no assigned readings (unless otherwise stated in advance of that particular meeting). Students are also expected to review and utilize literatures that are relevant to their individual projects throughout the course of the seminar.

## Week 1: September 14, 2020

### Topic: Reconnecting & Planning Your Project

* Status of Projects - Reviewing project scope, goals, outputs
* REB submissions and approvals
* Developing agreements with relevant partners
* Reviewing plan for seminar

## Week 2: September 21, 2020

### Topic: Literature Searches & Literature Reviews

* How to search for peer-reviewed & grey literature using electronic databases and other library resources
* Citation management software – what’s available, how to use
* Workshop with library staff – Laura Banfield, Health Sciences Library

## Week 3: October 5, 2020

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Research Ethics

* Review concepts and philosophies underpinning research ethics
* Review [Tri-Council Policy Statement](http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education_tutorial-didacticiel.html) + TCPS-2 Tutorial – [Complete the TCPS Core Tutorial](https://tcps2core.ca/welcome).
* Discuss components of a MREB submission – protocol, supporting documents

### Topic: Revisiting Your Research / Evaluation “Puzzle” – Data Collection

* What “data” are you relying on?
* Why is that data important / meaningful?
* How will you collect data? What data collection methods and tools do you plan to use? Why (what is your process of decision-making to assess the pros and cons of various survey instruments and data collection approaches)?

## Week 4: October 19, 2020

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Project Logistics & Data Management

* Data storage, access, ownership
* Software possibilities to facilitate data management, analysis, teamwork (E.g. Excel, NVivo, SPSS, RedCap, etc.)
* Survey design (How to create survey questions, Limesurvey)

## Week 5: October 26, 2020

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Revisiting Relevant Theoretical Frameworks to CERE - From Theory to Research Practice

* Thinking about the relationship between your theoretical framework (ontology, big “why”), methodology (research framework, connects to your “why”), and research methods (how)
* Grounding research in a critical feminist perspective (and extending beyond CBR / participatory action research) – institutional ethnography as example
* Incorporating decolonizing methodologies, applying the principles of OCAP

## Week 6: November 16, 2020

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Revisiting Your Research / Evaluation “Puzzle” – Data Analysis

* What is your data analysis / interpretation plan?
  + Who will be involved?
  + What outcomes are important to you?
  + Embedding participatory & community-engaged approaches in data collection & analysis
  + What are some models of participatory analysis approaches?

## Week 7: January 11, 2021

### Topic: Data Analysis

* Topics to review: Review survey analysis techniques – working with quantitative and qualitative data; Making an analysis plan – making decisions about how you’ll analyse your data before you start; “Trying out” analysis – interpreting emerging data from student projects (as applicable); Trouble shooting data analysis / project learnings – what’s working, challenges, next steps

## Week 8: January 25, 2021

### Topic: Data Analysis (continued)

* Topics to review: Review survey analysis techniques – working with quantitative and qualitative data; Making an analysis plan – making decisions about how you’ll analyse your data before you start; “Trying out” analysis – interpreting emerging data from student projects (as applicable); Trouble shooting data analysis / project learnings – what’s working, challenges, next steps

## Week 9: February 8, 2021

### Topic: Political Activist Ethnography & Advocacy as Researchers

* Guest Speaker: TBC
* How can researchers be advocates? How can research be used to support activist efforts and policy change? This week we will begin to discuss disseminating & mobilizing research, how research (and researchers) can support advocacy & activist agendas, and how the media can be used (or not) to support these efforts.

## Week 10: February 22, 2021

### Topic: Knowledge Translation & Mobilization – Part 1

* What are the fundamentals of knowledge translation and mobilization? What can researchers think about when designing project outputs and transforming project findings into something tangible and sustainable?
* Review Creative Representations for Knowledge Mobilization – Online lecture by Dr. Lisbeth Berbary – we will watch this 15 min video together and then discuss
* Reading for this week: [Innovation to Implementation Guide (Mental Health Commission of Canada)](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2016-06/innovation_to_implementation_guide_eng_2016_0.pdf)
* Work through items 1-3 in the I2I Guide.

## Week 11: March 1, 2021

### Topic:

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Knowledge Translation & Mobilization – Part 2

* Continue reviewing the [I2I Guide](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2016-06/innovation_to_implementation_guide_eng_2016_0.pdf) and apply the concepts to individual projects
* Work through items 4-7 of the guide.

## Week 10: March 8, 2021

* Check-in and debrief from last week – any lingering questions / concerns?

### Topic: Knowledge Translation & Mobilization – Part 3

* Guest speakers: TBC
* How can research inform policy making in the context of health policy and government decision-making?

## Week 11: March 22, 2021

### Topic: Social Justice Oriented Research & Evaluation

* Guest Speaker - TBC
* What is social justice? How can it be applied to research & evaluation?
* How has the concept of social justice been taken up in health and social service settings (e.g. SMH Advocacy Framework, equity, ‘population-based care’, service users knowledges, etc. – and troubling/critiquing these things)?
* Reading: Bonnycastle, C. R. (2011). Social justice along a continuum: A relational illustrative model. *Social Service Review*, *85*(2), 267-295. (download through library)

## Week 12: April 5, 2021

### Topic: Student Presentations and Celebration

* Practice “presenting” research / project findings
* Plan KT/KM opportunities
* Where do we go from here?