

McGill University, Department of Geography.

**GEOG 381  
GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT & PRACTICE**



Winter 2020  
Wednesday and Fridays 2.35-3.55pm, Burnside 308

Prof. Melody Lynch  
Office: 305a Burnside Hall  
Office Hours:  
Wednesdays, 4:00-5:00pm  
[for Part 1; Part 2 by appt.]  
Email: melody.lynch@mcgill.ca

Prof. Sarah Turner  
Office: 431 Burnside Hall  
Office Hours:  
Wednesdays 4.30-5.30pm  
[for Part 2; Part 1 by appt.]  
Email: sarah.turner@mcgill.ca

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course has two principal objectives. The first is to develop a critical perspective on the nature and practice of geography. We will trace the history of the discipline and consider different paradigms and theoretical approaches that have been influential in its development. The second is to focus on the process of conducting geographical research in preparation for GEOG 491/492 (Honours Thesis Research). We will explore the practical and conceptual aspects of project design, examine a range of methods, and debate ethical and reflective concerns.

When it comes time to design your Honours thesis, the expectation is that the *first part* of this course will provide you with the foundations to create the conceptual framework that will guide your thesis. The second part will provide the information you need to help design the structure of your project and consider which are the most appropriate methods to choose, taking all relevant considerations into account. How you take this information and develop your thesis will vary according to your topic and thesis supervisor; but this course will create the solid foundation on which to build your thesis programme.

## READINGS

Each week there are 2-4 readings to be completed. These are mandatory and are posted on MyCourses. The other readings listed at the end of the Course Outline are additional, optional suggestions or/and those that might be of use for your Honours thesis.

## EVALUATION

Requirement	Value	Date
Take home exam (covers material from first half of course)	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distributed 14<sup>th</sup> February (in class)</li><li>• Due Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February, 5 pm</li></ul> Submit on MyCourses
Participation, weekly reading questions & brief presentations	30%	Ongoing. Includes - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weekly reading questions</li><li>• Participation in class</li><li>• Two brief presentations (different styles for each half of the course).</li><li>• Attendance at Honours Poster Session (details in class)</li></ul>
Honours proposal and annotated bibliography	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wednesday 22 April 5 pm.</li></ul> Email to Prof Turner (cc yourself)

## **Take home exam 35%**

**Distributed Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February; due Friday 28<sup>st</sup> February at 5pm on MyCourses.**

The take home exam will cover material from the first half of the course (with Prof Lynch). It will comprise several questions from which you will be required to answer **two (2)** by drawing on class readings, lectures and discussions. The word limit for each answer is 1500 (excluding reference list).

Your Take Home exam will be assessed in terms of:

- A grasp of the nuances and subtleties of the topic covered
- Logical organisation of material covered
- Effective and thoughtful incorporation of readings into your analyses
- Evidence of attention to details, care in preparation, and accurate referencing (including keeping to word limit)

## **Participation, weekly reading questions & brief presentations 30%**

This course is organised in part to build skills in seminar discussions, spoken critical reflection, and team work. You are expected to complete the assigned readings in advance of class meetings, to attend the class, to stay for the full duration, and to participate fully. There will be occasional brief lectures but much class time will be spent discussing the weekly topics and assigned readings as a group.

Your participation will be assessed in terms of:

- overall commitment to participating in class discussions, with evidence of critical reading
- a display of excellent listening skills
- being able to respond in a constructive way to what others have said
- consistently contributing to and facilitating group discussion on the topic at hand
- preparation of relevant and logical questions for weekly readings
- brief, well-prepared presentations.

Note that active participation and facilitation includes *giving space for all to respond and talk* – everyone needs to be careful not to dominate each conversation.

Your participation in weekly seminar classes is essential for the completion of this course. If you are going to miss a class, please inform the Prof in advance.

### **Weekly Reading Questions:**

For each class in Part I, prepare two (2) questions that come to mind as you do the readings (2 questions per class, not per reading). These must be submitted on MyCourses by 5 pm on the day before class (i.e. by 5 pm Tuesday or 5 pm Thursday).

For each week in Part 2, prepare three (3) questions that come to mind as you do the readings (3 questions per week, not per reading). These must be emailed to Prof. Turner by 5pm on Monday for the week's readings. You should submit at least one (1) question pertaining to each class (e.g. 1 for Wednesday's class and 2 for Friday's class, or vice versa; NOT 3 all for Wednesday's class).

The questions will (usually) be used in class and are mandatory. These form part of your participation grade.

Upload these to MyCourses (part 1 of course) or email these in the body of the email (not as an attachment – part 2 of course) in this format:

*Your question (followed by your name in brackets at end of question).*

*E.g.:* In the reading by Smith (2010) she notes X. Although I thought this was an important statement I wondered why she didn't discuss Y too, since that would also seem relevant for Z? (Bob)

### Article Presentations (Part 1)

You will present on a course reading during the first half of the course. You will choose the reading you will present in the second week of classes. This presentation forms part of your participation grade. Your presentation should be about 10 minutes long and should include:

- a brief summary
- key concepts and their definitions
- a critical reflection
- any clarification questions you might have
- anything else you want to discuss related to the article.

Note: at the end of Part 1, you will receive informal (emailed) feedback about your participation to date. This will NOT be a set grade, but will give you an understanding of where 'you're at' in relation to expectations.

### Methods Presentations (Part 2)

You will present a brief presentation/overview of one method/reading during the second half. Presentations will be 10 minutes (concise!) plus time for a brief discussion. Your presentation should be oral (notes allowed), but should *not* use PowerPoint. The aim is for you to:

- succinctly summarise the main points concerning an individual method
- show a understanding of key points
- outline the method's strengths and weaknesses
- briefly critique the article itself (e.g. would you recommend it; why? Why not?).

More information on both presentations in class.

## **Brief proposal and annotated bibliography 35%**

**Due Tuesday April 22, 5pm. Submit by email to Prof Turner, cc yourself.**

This assignment is intended to help you begin to design your honours thesis research project. It comprises two parts:

### **1) Brief proposal**

This comprises four sections:

1. Overview/ Introduction
2. Research aim and questions
3. Conceptual framework (diagram and summary of core ideas)
4. Methodology, including brief statements on possible *analysis* approaches, and your *positionality*.

The word limit for this part of the assignment is 2500 words.

### **2) Annotated Bibliography**

- Provide a selected bibliography of scholarly literature relevant to your potential honours thesis topic. Bibliography should list twelve (12) refereed journal articles and/or book chapters minimum.
- Annotate six (6) of the key references from your list. These annotations should include a summary and critical engagement with the text. Each annotation should be no longer than 200-250 words. These six (6) references should be on your topic, not methods.
- The word limit for this section of the assignment (the annotated bibliography, not the full reference list) is 1500 words (*excluding* the 6 reference citations themselves).

More details will be provided in the tutorial class on the proposal as a whole.

Your 'Brief proposal and annotated bibliography' will be assessed in terms of:

- Four clear sections in the proposal that are detailed, yet succinct, and include the required information detailed above and outlined in the tutorial.
- Six clearly written and well-structured annotated bibliography references, showing evidence of engagement with the relevant academic themes.
- A grasp of the nuances and subtleties of the topic covered.
- Logical organisation of material covered – including the full bibliography list.
- Evidence of attention to details, care in preparation and accurate referencing.

### **Important information for all assessment and the course as a whole**

- ♦ **Ten percent (10%)** will be deducted for every 24 hours past the deadline a piece of work is late. (Note: ½ hour late on the due date is considered part of the first 24 hours late).
- ♦ No supplemental work is allowed to improve grades.
- ♦ In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

- ◆ If you have a disability please contact either Prof to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the *Office for Students with Disabilities* at 514-398-6009 before you do this.
- ◆ In extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control (or ours!), the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
- ◆ Plagiarism will not be tolerated within the University system and is dealt with seriously at all levels of learning. Please make sure you source your ideas and direct quotes clearly.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

Note that if the Profs suspect plagiarism or cheating it is immediately out of our control and the case goes directly to the Associate Dean, Student Affairs. If you are unclear, in any way, as to what might constitute plagiarism or cheating, please talk about this with us during office hours.

- ◆ No lecture notes will be available on MyCourses (although interesting diagrams, information, news etc. will be). It is a student's responsibility to gain notes from class members if they miss a class.
- ◆ This is a small seminar based class. In class, you are expected to be active participants. Disruptive activities such as excessive talking unrelated to class content, web surfing, emailing, newspaper reading, and the like will not be tolerated. People trying to multi-task and read email, Facebook, etc. when we are actively working in class will be asked to leave. Best option – turn the Wi-Fi and cellphone *off* unless we are doing a group activity with the internet.
- ◆ Mutual respect is expected at all times among instructors, teaching assistants, support staff and students at McGill University. Students are referred to the Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities (the 'Green Book') for McGill's policies on Code of Conduct and to [www.mcgill.ca/dp-cio/epolicies](http://www.mcgill.ca/dp-cio/epolicies) for McGill's E-policies.
- ◆ Sexual Assault Survivor Support and Allyship:  
Should you or someone you know need support as a survivor of sexual assault, harassment and/or discrimination on campus, please contact McGill's Sexual Violence Response Advisor, Émilie Marcotte, at 514-398-4486 or by email at: [osvrse@mcgill.ca](mailto:osvrse@mcgill.ca), situated in the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (located at 550 Sherbrooke, suite 585) for assistance. They also offer drop-in hours during the school year (the schedule is online). For more information on their office, sexual violence support and reporting options visit: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/>

The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student's Society (SACOMSS) offers peer counseling and support to students who have experienced sexual violence and their allies, as well as outreach and education. You can find out more about them at <http://www.sacomss.org/wp/> Their hotline number is: (514) 398-8500 and they offer drop-in hours as well (the schedule is online).

## Running late?

Submit late work by email to the relevant Prof: take home to Prof Lynch; proposal and annotated bib to Prof Turner.

Do not hand in work at the Department Office.

Students can make a formal request for special consideration for an extension to one of the Profs *only* with one of the following documents in hand:

- (i) a Medical Doctor's note which specifically states that you were unable to attend the test or hand in your annotated assignment by the due date because of a medical emergency (note that getting the flu or food poisoning the day before an assignment is due doesn't work- don't leave things to the last minute for an Honours class), or
- (ii) a bereavement notice from a newspaper or other legitimate documentation in the case of a family death or emergency.

It is appreciated if you know you will miss a deadline because of a bereavement or illness that you let us know as soon as possible.

***Poor organisation is not a valid reason for an extension of due dates.  
We believe in strictly enforcing due dates for equity amongst your class peers.***

## MyCourses

The course outline and any other relevant information, including readings, will be posted on MyCourses. Full lecture notes will not be posted to MyCourses.

## Editing Support

If you feel that your work would benefit from editing help or help with English grammar, check out these resources:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tutoring/>

Advanced, experienced tutors will proofread your work for you, for \$15 an hour.

There also free tutoring (and proof-reading) available for science undergraduates at: <http://peertutors.sus.mcgill.ca/> (other faculties have similar services; go to the tutoring page above).

*The readings for class and the class-by-class structure are available in class for registered students and on MyCourses.*