

GSFS 495

HONOURS COLLOQUIUM

2021/2022

Dr. Alex Ketchum

GSFS 495: Honours/Joint Honours Colloquium 2021/2022

PUBLIC VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS

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Public Version of the Syllabus

This public version of the syllabus has been adapted for anyone interested in the course topics. I have provided some links to free versions of the texts on the syllabus that are publicly available. For other texts listed on the syllabus, you may be able to access these readings via your local library or from your local bookstore.

Please note that the course is designed for 20 graduate students who are in the Graduate Option in Women and Gender Studies.

At present this course is scheduled to happen in-person, but this syllabus has a contingency plan in case we have to move to remote/cyber/virtual classes.

McGill students taking the course, please refer to the WMST 601 syllabus on mycourses, as this is an abbreviated version.

About the course:

Approach

This class is both a seminar and a workshop, and is as much about dialogue, exchange and learning to speak about your work as it is about writing a thesis. Students should be prepared to read and discuss assigned texts, participate in research and writing exercises, learn practical skills for writing a thesis, and share, critique and discuss each others' research as it develops. The course is structured organically as a working

intellectual community. It is very important to come to class prepared, with copies of articles you are discussing and your own work-in-progress as needed (we will decide as a class if we will edit by hard copy or on google docs). The class meets biweekly.

This course provides a structured environment to support students writing an undergraduate Honours Thesis in Feminist and Social Justice Studies. Conducted as a seminar workshop, the course provides practical support for writing a thesis, while critically engaging students in the theoretical and practical concerns of feminist scholarship and academic writing. Students will be guided to develop a thesis topic, central research questions, thesis proposal and detailed chapter outline. They are expected to complete a full draft of their thesis by the end of the winter term. Students will also enhance and deepen their understanding of feminist theory and method as it applies specifically to their own research, including such approaches as interdisciplinarity, intersectionality, and queer, critical disability, and decolonizing research. The workshop style of this seminar fosters a sense of intellectual community, as students debate, critique, support, and engage with each other's ideas and approaches. Through participation in seminars and other events offered by IGSF, students will develop a more nuanced understanding of the stakes and challenges of feminist research in the interdisciplinary context of women's and gender studies.

Texts

(you do not need to purchase any texts to participate in this course)

Sheila M. Reindl. "Twenty Tips for Senior Thesis Writers (And other writers too)." Bureau of Study Counsel, Harvard University, 2012. (On mycourses.)

Location

This course takes place in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) on unceded Kanien'Keha:Ka territory. Furthermore the ongoing organizing efforts by Indigenous communities such as the Wet'suwet'en people at the Unist'ot'en Camp make clear the ever present and ongoing colonial violence in Canada. Interwoven with this history of colonization is one of enslavement and racism. This University's namesake, James McGill, enslaved Black and Indigenous peoples. It was in part from the money he acquired through these violent acts that McGill University was founded. These histories are here with us in this classroom space and inform the conversations we have today.

In Person vs Hybrid vs Cyber/Remote Semester:

At the moment, we are scheduled to attend class in-person. I have created a contingency plan in case we revert to cyber/remote classes. Our schedule should not have to change-- rather we will move our discussions to an online format and provide edits/ feedback solely via google docs or word online.

I am aware that there may be barriers for people to attend classes in-person in case they are forced to quarantine after arriving in Montreal, feel ill, or more. I will not take attendance this semester (the seminar participation mark includes other forms of participation). I will also try to have a zoom live stream of our classes for the students who are unable to attend in person. This will be a bit of an experiment in order to try to make our course more accessible (and we may re-evaluate this option after the first couple of class meetings). As I am not provided university resources for creating a hybrid course, this “zoom live stream” will not technically be a hybrid model. I am unable to monitor a zoom feed/ chat while also fostering the in-person discussion. However, students who are unable to attend a physical class that week can still listen to the discussion. Some of this experiment will also depend on the tech in the classroom that we are in.

Assessment and Timeline

Intellectual engagement & community building (1 IGSF event per semester)	Ongoing	15%
Supervisor Confirmed	Sept. 16	----
Thesis Proposal /Ethics review	Oct. 14	20%
Chapter Outlines & Bibliography	Nov. 11	15%
Colloquium Abstract & Bio	March 8	5%
Colloquium Presentation	TBD	15%
Colloquium Written Presentation	TBD	30%

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Intellectual engagement & community building (15%)

Class meetings will involve small group discussion about IGSF seminars and the texts you are each working with, and ‘workshopping’ your chapters and writing process. The group meets biweekly, and attendance is **mandatory (obviously unless you are sick/ feeling unwell/ there is a crisis)**. You also must come to class prepared with your work completed and have uploaded the required materials to mycourses. **You are expected to attend IGSF events as part of your academic and intellectual development (1 per semester- virtual for the fall) and post the title of it on mycourses (you don’t even need to write a description. Virtual events count too.** (Here is the list of IGSF events: <https://www.mcgill.ca/igsf/events/search> If you can’t make any of those events, you can watch a recording of a past event from the Disrupting Disruptions Speaker Series: <https://www.feministandaccessiblepublishingandtechnology.com/p/videos.html>)

Additionally you can meet the expectations for engagement and community building through a range of activities, such as asking questions, offering your insights and comments to your peers, and actively listening to others. Please make an effort to make thoughtful and considered contributions, and to help create space for others to speak.

While class discussion rarely takes the 3 hour time period, reserve the 3 hours as a time dedicated to your thesis each week. The remaining chunk of time is to be used as a group-writing period. Having time set aside biweekly to work on your thesis can be very valuable.

Thesis Proposal- October 14 (20%)

The proposal consists of a topic, research aim (20-50 words) and research questions or objectives (bullet points (100- 150 words) as well as a review of the literature that positions your own contribution and demonstrates your familiarity with the field, including trends, key researchers in the field, and gaps in research (3-4 pages). Include also a proposed methodology (with an epistemological framework and methods) (2 pages). Include 8-12 references in MLA, APA, or Chicago format (be consistent). More details below!

Have a draft to discuss ready on October 7. The better this draft is, the better feedback you will receive.

Ethics Review

If your research includes human subjects, you will need to complete an ethics review form, with the guidance of your supervisor. The ethics review committee usually requests revision and resubmission, so it is best to submit the ethics review as soon as possible.

These are not graded, but you cannot begin conducting research with human subjects until it has been approved. You will need to complete the REB training (and your supervisor as well) and submit the forms. Here is the link: <https://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/reb-i-ii-iii/forms-and-guidelines> It is ideal to start this process the summer before.

Chapter Outlines and Bibliography – Nov 11 at 11:59 PM (15%) (draft due on the 4th in class)

Drawing on your thesis proposal as a foundation, produce paragraph-length descriptions for each of your thesis chapters/sections. This will be very useful for your first chapter.

Submit a bibliography-in-progress for your thesis with citations for at least 20 books chapters and articles. You may include the references used in the proposal in this count.

Colloquium Abstract and bio (5%) March 8

Create a 150-200 word conference style abstract that is specific to your colloquium paper (not your entire thesis), and a 75-100 word scholarly biography.

Colloquium Presentation (15%) (Presentation mid-April)

Participation in this course includes collaboratively organizing and presenting your work in a Symposium in mid-April. Prepare a 15 minute (7 double-spaced page) presentation of one chapter/ element of your thesis. The aim is to develop your ability to disseminate your research as an oral presentation in a scholarly setting such as a conference, put forward an argument pertaining to your thesis, and engage in scholarly discussion. Your presentation will be assessed for evidence of preparation; a narrow, focused, persuasively argued thesis, clarity of communication, and your contributions as a discussant (both in answering questions about your own paper, and in engaging with the work of your colleagues). The draft submitted in advance will be exchanged with the class.

Final Colloquium Paper (30%) mid-April, TBD

Develop your colloquium presentation into a paper. You should add additional sources, expand and deepen your analysis, and use feedback received during the colloquium to strengthen the paper.

Submitting Drafts

I will circulate materials in advance on mycourses and you will upload drafts to mycourse discussion boards for your peers to access. However, as a group we may decide to use other technologies such as google docs in order to give feedback on drafts. We will discuss these technologies during our first class meeting.

Interpreting your Grades

Grades are assigned based on the scale set out in the Arts and Sciences calendar. Grades in the "A" range are awarded only for superior work (and not merely sufficient performance). Grades in the "B" range are awarded for work that is above satisfactory. In the "C" range they are awarded for satisfactory/sufficient work. And in the "D" range, they are awarded for unsatisfactory work. Final grades will be based on the McGill University scale, reproduced here:

85-100% = A

60-64% = C+

80-84% = A-

55-59% = C

75-79% = B+

50-54% = D (Conditional Pass)

70-74% = B

0-49% = F (Fail)

65-69% = B-

Late Policy

Submit your work on time. There will be a 24 hour grace period but after that, late submissions will lose 5% per day. If you are sick, I do not require medical notes due to the barriers in accessing them.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Language:

In accord 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. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Academic Integrity

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/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Inclusion and Access

I am strongly committed to access and inclusion. As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.

Unfortunately my office is not accessible to people with mobility impairments. I am happy to meet elsewhere if 2 flights of stairs present a barrier to access for you.

For the fall, I will have virtual office/ student hours.

Food and Housing Security (Montreal Resources)

When students face challenges securing food and/or housing, it can be difficult to learn. If you are in this situation, resources are available. Our campus offers various services and supports for students; know that you are not alone in dealing with these issues. You can contact (info specific for mcgill students- not on the public version). To enquire about financial aid, contact: Scholarships and Student Aid Office, 514-398-6012, www.mcgill.ca/studentaid There is information about low rent housing in Quebec here: <https://mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/get-support/student-caregivers>. Meals are available by voluntary donation at The Yellow Door <https://www.yellowdoor.org/rabbit-hole-cafe.html> and by <https://midnightkitchen.org>. Montreal has a variety of food banks including, <https://mileendmission.org/food/>.

Mobile Communications and computers

Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class under the conditions negotiated by the class. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

If we move to virtual/ cyber/ remote class, I will never require students to turn on cameras. (<https://anygoodthing.com/2020/04/06/a-reminder-of-who-is-hurt-by-insisting-that-students-share-images-of-their-personal-lives/>).

Appealing a Grade

Grades are final, except where a mistake has been made in calculation. Here are the circumstances under which the professor would change a grade: (a) if an error has been made at the level of calculation, or (b) if you have not been held to the same standard as everyone else. If you seek clarification on a grade you have received, you should visit your professor during office hours, keeping in mind the criteria of evaluation on which your assignment was graded. In the event that you feel you received an undeserved grade and wish to dispute it, you must make your case in writing within one week (7 days) of receiving the grade. The case in writing must detail the grounds on which you are making an appeal, accompanied by the original assignment (make a photocopy for yourself). The letter must be typed, single-spaced and printed on paper; email submissions will not be accepted. Grade complaints will not be considered after the week deadline, or if they are not made in writing. If the professor agrees to review your assignment and re-evaluate its grade, keep in mind that your grade could remain the same, be elevated, or be reduced.

Evaluations

End-of-course [evaluations](#) are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Charter of Student Rights

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights" (The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is available at

<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/students/handbook-student-rights-and-responsibilitiesle-recueil-des-droits-et-obligations-d>.

Note:

© Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Pandemic Preparedness Planning

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

FALL SCHEDULE

Note that while we on average meet every-other week, pay particular attention to the schedule for October 7 and

September 2: Introduction-

Topic: We will first go over the syllabus and the plan for the year—then start into the workshop. Workshop: ideas, brainstorming, discussion, what is feminist research

Early stages – coming up with a research aim and research questions or objectives.

Read past theses.

Discuss which technologies people prefer for communication (google docs for drafts) and the role of mycourses and zoom.

September 16: CONFIRM YOUR SUPERVISOR by this date

Reading: Sheila M. Reindl. "Twenty Tips for Senior Thesis Writers (And other writers too)." Bureau of Study Counsel, Harvard University, 2012.

Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998. (recommended to skim, but not required/ optional)

Due: answer questions 1-3 in your Reindel workbook (on my courses)

On mycourses submit the name of your supervisor and any other deadlines you may have with your other department.

Also due: Be prepared to report on the state of your field in class – what are you finding in the literature? What scholarly discourses are you engaging in? Who are the key scholars? What trends do you see? What are the gaps?

Discussion Topic: Proposal writing – the lit review

September 30:

Topic: Developing your methodology and methods, research ethics

DUE: answer questions 4 -7 in your Reindel workbook

October 7: THESIS PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE at class time (on mycourses discussion thread)

Topic 1: Be prepared to report on your thesis proposal. Share excerpts, and troubleshoot problem areas with class. We will be workshopping the proposals.

Topic 2: discussion of chapters and thesis structure.

Most of you will not have to make too many changes between the draft and the final- this way you can enjoy the fall break.

TURN IN the FINAL PROPOSAL BY OCTOBER 14 at 11:59 PM ET

October 21: Updates on Primary Source Research

Be prepared to discuss your primary source research. Have a research plan assembled for the rest of the semester and winter break. Bring a list of what you have already completed and what you plan to complete.

The more detailed, the better! If you are using archives, I want the names of the archives and the names of the collections you are looking at (if you can include folder numbers, that is ideal!) If you are using magazines, tell me what issue numbers you are looking at.

November 4: CHAPTER OUTLINES and Working Bibliography Draft Due on Nov 4 in class and the Final Draft Due by November 11 at 11:59 PM ET

Topic 1: We will be workshopping the outlines.

Topic 2: We will talk about converting the outline to actual chapter writing.

(you will have a 3 week pause to complete the first chapter)

November 25: Writing Workshop – First Chapter Due

Draft of a first chapter/section ~10 pages of writing or equivalent (does not have to be chapter #1, but likely will be)

Winter Break-

Remember that when you decide to not work, do not feel guilty about not working. Enjoy the rest. Rest, relaxation, and giving yourself time and space are key parts of the writing process.

WINTER SCHEDULE

For the chapter drafts, upload the link to the google doc to the mycourses discussion board by the start of class.

Week of Jan 10: Writing Workshop

Draft of a second chapter/section ~10 pages of writing

Be prepared to share excerpts of your work, discuss your work, critique and engage with the work of others.

Week of Jan 24: Writing Workshop

Draft third chapter/section ~10 pages of writing

Be prepared to share excerpts of your work, discuss your work, critique and engage with the work of others.

Week of Feb 7: Writing Workshop

Workshop on writing an abstract.

Draft next chapter/section ~10 pages of writing

Be prepared to share excerpts of your work, discuss your work, critique and engage with the work of others.

Week of Feb 22: Writing/Editing Workshop

More editing as a group.

Week of Feb 28- March 4 is Reading week

Week of March 7: Conference Organizing

Report on progress and Colloquium Planning

ABSTRACT draft due on the 7th and final abstract due on the 8th by 11:59 PM ET

Bring 3 copies of your conference paper abstract

Week of March 21: Oral Presentation Workshop - DRAFT DUE

Have a draft of your presentation on hand to rehearse.

Week of April 4thish: Feminist Research Colloquium

You will submit the final copy of your colloquium paper 2 days after the colloquium. Date TBD.

Submit a printed copy of your thesis to Andrew Folco's office and upload a finished version to mycourses.

MORE INFO ON ASSIGNMENTS:

GSFS 495: Honours/Joint Honours Colloquium Thesis Proposal 2021

Check list

- Research Aim (20-50 words)
- 3 Research Objectives/Questions (75 -150 words)
- Lit review (750-900 words)
- Methodology (300-500 words)
- Timeline: list in detail all the steps and deadlines for completing the thesis
- Works Cited MLA, Chicago, or APA (10-12 sources)

Please note that these word counts are just meant to be guidelines. You may end up writing more or less.

1. Aim (20-50 words)

Aim: What is the broad topic you are interested in? What problem do you want to investigate? This is your research aim. Focus on a significant problem, issue, controversy or contradiction. Tip on coming up with a good research aim: Ask the 'journalistic' questions (who, what, when, where, why) about your topic until you get down to a single question that is both specific and substantive.

2. Objectives (75 -150 words)

Identify at least three general objectives for your research and list them as bullet points.

Objectives explain the way research aims are answered, and establishes parameters, or limits on

the research. They are headed by infinitive verbs, such as:

To identify

To establish

To describe
To determine
To collect
To develop
To compare
To analyse

It is important to identify these specific research goals at the outset, or you might waste time collecting irrelevant or unnecessary research data.

See also the resource “Developing Aims and Objectives” on Mycourses.

3. Lit review (750-900 Words)

The literature review situates your own research question in the context and state of research in your topic area. You will need to address both the broad area of concern here (keep this brief), and the specific area or focus that you are taking. The literature review begins to answer the question “Why is your research necessary and important?” Give a sense of what work has already been done in the topic, who are the key scholars in the area, and what are the current trends or state of research. Identify gaps in research. Make a case for why your contribution is both interesting and necessary. Keep this section grounded clearly in the literature, identifying and citing authoritative sources. You want to make sure your work does not replicate another research project, but rather builds on and adds to the discourse. Be sure to record and report on the details of your literature search. (What key words did you use? What sites or databases did you search? What volume of research did you find? How did you make selections of what is relevant to your project?) You should cite at least 8 sources in your lit review.

Tip: Make an appointment with a research librarian to learn the search methods available to you. The quality of the literature review and proposal more generally depends on the quality of your sources, rather than just the quantity. Your literature should sound decisive, rather than random – I want to see you making decisions and selections, rather than basing your work on texts you encounter by chance.

4. Research Methods (300-500 words)

Outline and provide a rationale for your approach in terms of methodology and research methods. To make these decisions, think about how your specific approach is situated in the theoretical debates that have taken place with regard to the politics of feminist, critical race, queer, critical disability, and/or decolonizing knowledge production.

i. Methodology is the theories and analyses that guide how research should proceed. Here you are developing a theoretical framework and applying it to the question of how you will conduct your research. You should also specify the disciplinary aspects of your ways of knowing here –

What disciplines are you working in/or between? What problems and opportunities does this pose in how you approach your research process and techniques for collecting and analyzing data? The methodology forms the critical attitude of your research design decisions. You might think of this as the guiding principles of your research practice. These justify your selection of

methods – so they are both ideological and functional. You might choose a specific set of feminist principles such as intersectionality, queer theory, or decolonizing frameworks for your methodological framework. Note what methodological concerns raised in feminist scholarship are relevant to your research. For instance, how are you informed by issues such as situated knowledge, standpoint, objectivity, marginality, representation, intersectionality, decolonization, collaboration and interdisciplinarity? What ethical issues, power issues, risks of othering, access issues and so on inform how you proceed? It might be helpful to outline your methodology in the form of principles that guide your research. You should cite at least 2 sources in developing your methodology.

ii. Method

Methods are the specific techniques you use for gathering evidence. Some methods used by feminist researchers in the social sciences and humanities include discourse analysis, interviews, focus groups, text-based analysis, literature reviews, oral history, archival research, ethnography, media analysis, and arts-based research. Your choice in methods should reflect the aims established in your research question/thesis, epistemology and your methodology. Give a rationale for your choices.

4. Timeline

List all the steps involved in completing the project, with deadlines sketched in. This includes not just the deadline established by the course, but your own internal deadlines for different research tasks. Begin by creating a task list, and go from there.

5. Works Cited (10-12 sources)

Please include a works cited list in MLA, Chicago, or APA format, citing the sources used in your literature review and methodology.

November 4: CHAPTER OUTLINES and Working Bibliography Draft Due on Nov 4 in class and the Final Draft Due by November 11 at 11:59 PM ET

For our November 4 meeting I want you to bring in a “works in progress chapter outline” that we will discuss and that you can amend in order to turn it in for the November 11th deadline.

A) Drawing on your thesis proposal as a foundation, produce descriptions for each of your thesis chapters/sections. I am looking for you to do this in bullet point form.

I am looking for you to explain for each chapter:

1. Topic of chapter
2. Arguments of chapter
3. How that contributes to your larger argument/ thesis
4. What evidence will you be using

5. What scholars will you be citing as secondary literature

Your entire thesis will be between 30 and 50 pages in length. Divide this into the number of chapter that makes sense for your topic and discipline. List these with tentative titles, indicating the number pages you are aiming for. For example, you might structure the thesis as three 10-12 page chapters, with a five page introduction.

To write outlines for each chapter, refer back to your research objectives. What problem/challenges/goals will this chapter address, and how? What methods will supply the data and evidence? What literature might inform your analysis? What problems, tensions, or risks do you anticipate negotiating here? Highlight the key takeaway of the chapter.

Divide your bibliography between primary and secondary sources.

Submit a bibliography-in-progress for your thesis with citations for at least 20 books chapters (and articles. You may include the references used in the proposal in this count (you originally had 12 sources for your proposal- by this point you will likely have at least 8 more).