Indigenous Studies, IND 2M03
Indigenous Research Methods & Ethics
Fall 2018

Academic Yr. 2018 Wednesday 11:30 - 1:20 & Friday 1:30 - 2:20
Location: LRW - Room 1056
Instructor: Dr. Chelsea Gabel, Department of Health, Aging
and Society & Indigenous Studies Program

Office: L.R. Wilson Hall (Room 1056) - 1st Floor
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 - 11:20 (before class) or by
appointment
E-mail: gabelc@mcmaster.ca
Students should put “2M03” in the subject line of
messages regarding this course.

Course Content and Objectives:

This course will address methodological and ethical issues related to conducting research with
Indigenous peoples. Indigenous and Western approaches to the constructions of knowledge are
explored with an emphasis on Indigenous knowledges and how they are practiced in
methodological approaches to research. It will discuss the types of questions and projects that are
well-suited to Indigenous research, as well as, traditional approaches to data collection (e.g.,
interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.). Another theme will be exploration into recent
innovations in qualitative research (e.g., arts-based methods such as photovoice) and why
Indigenous researchers have embraced these trends in contemporary work.

In this course, students will have an opportunity to develop a rigorous academic poster. My hope
is that each of you will find an area in Indigenous Studies that you are passionate and curious
about and explore this in a new and exciting way.

Course Format:

This course will be extremely interactive. Students are expected to attend every class prepared to
discuss the required readings, and to share what they know in discussion with other students. The
material covered includes both practical and theoretical elements. Components covered will
include the development of a research topic and question, reviewing and appraising literature,
ethical conduct of research with Indigenous peoples, planning, collecting and analyzing data,
knowledge transfer and dissemination. Class meetings will involve a series of guest speakers (as
and if they become available) with academic and/or practitioner perspectives, analysis of case
studies, discussion and exercises on readings and student presentations and feedback.
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• More readily understand research methods from Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives
• Identify current culturally congruent approaches to research, advocacy, policy and services for Indigenous peoples.
• Think critically about the congruency of different components of a research project
• Critically examine the structure, method and plans of each student's research
• Provide an opportunity to share in the research progress of fellow students
• Develop a methodologically rigorous academic poster

Course Requirements and Important Dates

- Field Research Project (20%) - Wednesday, October 31st
- 2 Quizzes (20%) - Friday, October 5th & Wednesday, November 14th
- Photovoice Project (20%) - Wednesday, November 28th
- Poster Presentation (20%) - Wednesday, December 5th
- Class Participation and Attendance (this includes in-class case studies/ exercises & guest lectures) (20%)

In this course, you will complete two research-based projects, a class quiz and a poster presentation (described below), which will involve combinations of individual and group work. You will be granted ample time in class to conduct your group work, so that you can receive help and advice from your Professor, but some work will still need to be conducted outside of class time.

FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT: With your group members, you will identify a common, familiar and public setting (e.g., bus stop, classroom, coffee shop, student centre) to be studied using the approach of participant observation. The purpose of this assignment is to observe, describe, and explain a complex public setting using the approach of non-participation observation, and to learn what it is possible to hear, see, and learn through just observation. Before any observations are to take place, you must report to Chelsea the chosen location for this project, and receive permission to work at this site. You must pick a site where there is no expectation of privacy.

You are expected to spend at least one hour in the predetermined location observing and making notes when, or if, it is appropriate to do so. Your field note jottings must be written by hand. Information cannot be recorded in photograph, video, or audio form.

After observation has been conducted, you will transform your field jottings into field note format. Please note that approximately 4 to 6 pages, double-spaced, of field notes should be written for one hour of observation. In your field notes, you may wish to include a map or diagram of the physical space. Your field notes should not identify any individual persons by
their ‘real’ name. If you assign names to people in your notes, be sure to assign them a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity.

While you are in the setting, you should look at, and then describe in your field notes, the following:

**The setting:** What does the entire physical space look like? What do you see? What does it smell like? What sounds are present? How is the space laid out?

**The people:** What types of people are in the setting? What characteristics seem to be common to the people present? (e.g., age, gender, dress codes, speech, activity, etc.). Are any people acting differently or unusually from the others? If so, in what way? Why do you think this might be?

**The action:** What are the relationships between people and groups? What is interesting about the people in this setting? What are they doing? What are they saying?

Once your field notes are complete, you will share them with group members on the virtual and group space set up for you on Avenue to Learn. Upon receipt of each group member’s field notes, you will begin on your own time the process of carefully reading through the field notes and making notes on the data. Later, in class, you will meet with your group to discuss the different approaches used to write field notes and what it is possible to say about your setting as a result of this exercise.

Finally, you will work (on your own) towards the completion of a short reflection paper (4-5 pages).

**Each individual student should submit along with their assignment a copy of the field notes that they wrote for this assignment.**

**PHOTOVOICE PROJECT:** You will work on a photovoice project on the topic of “student well-being and distress.” For this project, you will be both a participant and a researcher. For more information about potential risks to participation in this research and your right to withdraw from or not complete this project, see the note below.

The research question guiding this project is: What are noteworthy sources of emotional well-being/contentment and stress in the lives of undergraduate and/or Indigenous students? For this project, you are asked to take a series of photographs – using either a digital camera or a smartphone – that reflect your different emotional states. Your photographs should be of material objects (e.g., coffee cup, tree, laptop) or landscapes that represent the source of your happy/content and unhappy/stressed moments as an undergraduate student at McMaster. You should take at least 5 photos that are reflective of each emotional state. To conform to our ethical clearance for this course it is absolutely imperative that your photos are of material objects or
landscapes; people can only be in the photo if they are visible at a distance and if their face is not clear to the viewer of the photograph.

The following week, you will share your photos with members of the class in a focus group setting. You may wish to think about the types of photos that you will take knowing that you will be asked to share and talk about them with members of your class, including your Professor. In class you will be required to explain why you took each photo and what it means to you. You will begin the process of identifying common themes or sub-themes that reflect the significance of and meanings embedded in the photographs.

Finally, you will work (on your own) towards the completion of a short reflection paper (4-5 pages).

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Risks to Participation in the Photovoice Research Project & the Voluntary Nature of Your Participation**

While this project asks you to take photographs of material objects/landscapes that represent the source of negative emotional states as an undergraduate and/or Indigenous student, it is not expected that this assignment will heighten your anxiety or discomfort. However, you may find that this project results in reflection and awareness of your emotional state in new, surprising, and uncomfortable ways. If you realize that you are struggling to achieve success, happiness, and satisfaction at university due to your participation in this project, you are encouraged to contact Counselling Services at the Student Wellness Centre (SWC). Counsellors are available on a drop-in basis in MUSC B101 for a 15 minute appointment with a counsellor. With the counsellor you will be able to explore support options and decide the next best steps, including: individual counselling, group programming at the SWC, connections to community/campus resources, etc.

You can also decide not to complete this course assignment/research study up until March 1. If you decide that you do not wish to complete this course assignment/research study, you should notify your Professor so that an alternative course assignment can be designed for you. If you want to take the photographs and complete the written assignment, but do not want to share your photographs or talk about them with group members in class, you should notify your Professor so that alternative accommodations can be arranged. If you decide to complete this course assignment/research study and find yourself uncomfortable during the interview and group work, you can refuse to answer any question that you do not want to or leave the class/group work at any time on March 15.

**QUIZZES (X2):** You will be required to write **two** quizzes on **week 5 Friday, October 5th & week 11 Wednesday, November 14th.**

**POSTER PRESENTATION:** You will prepare a poster in groups of 3-4 that could display a research topic of your choice. You can use either powerpoint or a poster display board to prepare
your poster. Your poster should be easy to read, prepared using a larger font, and tell a story about your research.

**Course Management Policies:**

**Class Communication:**

You can reach me by email at gabelc@mcmaster.ca. Please include the course code in the subject line, and your full name and student number in the body of the email. I will endeavour to respond within 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays). If your question is of a general nature, you might try posting it in the discussion section of Avenue to Learn.

In the context of a university course, email is a mode of professional communication. Please keep the conventions of professional communication in mind when composing messages (e.g. use full sentences with proper punctuation, be polite, and refrain from using informal abbreviations).

A note about e-mail: If you have a complicated question, it is often easier and more productive to discuss the question in person during office hours or before or after class rather than by email. I have weekly office hours, and am happy to meet at other times.

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.

**Academic Accommodation Of Students with Disabilities:**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf

**Alternate/Accessible Format for Course Outlines**
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, 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.

Grading Rubric for all Written Work

A range. Between excellent and exceptional work that combines the following characteristics in differing degrees: a superior grasp of course material, both conceptual and substantive; a strong analytic reading of written materials used; some original insights and generally very thoughtful; and exceptional writing skills.

B range. Strong, good work that combines the following characteristics in differing degrees: a firm grasp of course material, by and large, though there are some minor errors or misunderstandings; a competent analytic reading of written materials used; not especially original but well considered; and competent writing skills.
C range. Average work that displays the following characteristics in differing degrees: perhaps shaky but passable understanding of course material; largely reiterative or summative (rather than analytic) reading of written material; displays a moderate effort to think through issues; shaky but intelligible writing skills.

D range. Poor work that displays the following characteristics in differing degrees: Student appears to have made little to no effort to tackle lecture or reading materials; misunderstands them fairly seriously; and has poor writing skills.

F. No work or insulting work. Student either did not turn in work or what was turned in showed no serious effort to keep up with or tackle course material, took no care with readings, and was sloppily presented.

Writing skills: At the very least, your writing should demonstrate correct spelling and grammar. I strongly urge you to visit the university’s writing lab if you know you have problems in this area.

Contesting Grades

If you wish to contest the grade assigned, you will need to indicate why in writing. Using the grading rubric described above, support your argument with examples from your paper of how you believe you satisfied the criteria better than your grade reflected.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. 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.

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 his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes. Please check the website at least once a week for announcements.
Format for Written Assignments

Assignments should be submitted through Avenue to Learn. Please do not submit assignments by email; they will not be accepted in this form.

Be sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double spacing.

Deadlines and Extensions

Assignments are to be submitted during the class period on the due date (see weekly timetable below). Late submissions will be penalized at 3% per day up to one week past the due date, after which time late submissions will not be accepted unless an extension has been granted.

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 note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015.

Required Text:


Note: Given that this is an applied research methods class, students will be required to access additional readings directly from McMaster’s e-journal portal. You will need your McMaster username and password: [http://library.mcmaster.ca/ejournals](http://library.mcmaster.ca/ejournals)

Please note that additional required readings not included in this outline may occasionally be announced on Avenue to Learn. Additional readings will be announced at least 2 weeks prior to the lecture for which they are required.

Readings

Please see the weekly schedule provided below.
Weekly Readings

Week 1:

September 5th - Course Introduction

The first class will be devoted to discussing students’ goals and expectations, providing an overview of the course, and reviewing course assignments and readings.

September 7th - What is Indigenous Research Methodology?


Week 2:

September 12th - Identifying an area of interest

David and Sutton (p. 4-28)

* Concept Mapping Exercise: In this class, I want you to start brainstorming in groups of 3-4 about your potential research interests and topic as well as the research methods and overall research design that you are thinking of using for your final poster presentation.

September 14th - Using the literature review to define your topic and refine your research question.

David and Sutton (p. 54 - 73)

Literature Searching and Reviewing - Using McMaser’s e-portal to search and review published literature. Class will meet at 1:30pm at the Mills Library, Wong e-classroom (L107) - 1:30 - 2:20

* You will be required to hand in your worksheet from this session
Week 3:

September 19th - Decolonizing Methodologies


September 21st - Guest Lecture, Rachel Bomberry, PhD Candidate, Department of Health, Aging and Society, McMaster University - “Exploring Cultural Practices for Promoting Health with Indigenous Youth living in Six Nations of the Grand River”

Week 4:

September 26th - The Challenges of Field Work & “Doing” Indigenous Research


Guest Speaker: Dr. Amanda Lavallee, Research Coordinator, University of Saskatchewan.

September 28th - “Putting Together an Academic Poster”

Guest Speaker: Amy Wright, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Nursing, McMaster University
Week 5:

October 3rd - Relationships, Partnerships & Research Ethics

David and Sutton (p. 29 - 53)


Guest Speaker: Alicia Powell, PhD Candidate, Department of Health, Aging and Society, McMaster University.

October 5th - Quiz #1

* Please read David and Sutton (p. 146 - 161) in preparation for the field research project the week of October 17th.

Week 6:

October 8th & 14th - FALL BREAK

Week 7:

October 17th & 19th - Field Research Project

Week 8:

October 24th - Community-Based Participatory Research, Ethnography and Participant Observation


**October 26th - Reflect on Field Research Project: Class Discussion**

**Week 9:**

**October 31st - Arts-Based Research Methods & Photovoice Assignment Overview**


**November 2nd - Photovoice Assignment**

**Week 10:**

**November 7th - Using Surveys in Indigenous Research**

David and Sutton (p. 239 - 270)


**Guest Speaker: : Dr. Nicole Goodman, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Brock University.**

**November 9th - Interviews, Focus Groups & Indigenous Research Frameworks**

David and Sutton (p. 118 - 145)


Week 11:

November 14th - Quiz #2

November 16th - Guest Speaker: Victoria Bomberry will facilitate a poster group work session.

Week 12:

November 21st - In this class, I will moderate a focus group where you will complete the process of identifying common themes or sub-themes that reflect the significance of and meanings embedded in the photographs from the photovoice project.

November 23rd - Data Analysis

David and Sutton (p. 319 - 337)


Week 13:

November 28th - Activism and Public Roles for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Researchers


November 30th - Disseminating Results & Knowledge Translation/Poster Group-Work

David and Sutton - Part 4: Presenting Research

Week 14:

December 5th - Poster Presentations and Course Wrap-Up