INQUIRY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCE 1SS3 C06
THEME: “THIS IS(N’T) AMERICA”
McMaster University Winter 2019

Class Meets: Tuesdays, 2:30pm-5:20pm in LRW 1056

Instructor: Dr. Jessica Braimoh
Email: braimoja@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm
Office Location: KTH #208

WHAT IS INQUIRY?

Inquiry is the process of developing skills to arrive at understandings of a problem, an issue, or a phenomenon, through the process of asking good questions, searching out good evidence, and arriving at well reasoned conclusions. The process of critical inquiry promotes self-directed learning, helping you to develop the skills necessary to acquire and reflect on new knowledge and understanding. The development of inquiry based skills will be invaluable to your participation and success in other university courses as well as your personal and professional life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Inquiry courses are designed to teach students how to learn and how to share academic knowledge. The courses are skill-driven, rather than content-driven, with a focus on the skills required to perform effectively in university. These transferable skills and approaches to learning will be useful in other university courses, and beyond. Students will engage in a process to begin to learn how to formulate good academic questions, gather and interpret scholarly evidence, draw reasoned conclusions, and communicate these conclusions, using as content, topics central to research in the Social Sciences (e.g., social identity, globalization, health, and gender).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course you will have valuable experience in:

- Developing a researchable question and refining it;
- Demonstrating the ability to obtain relevant information to answer this question;
- Critically evaluating the validity and relevance of academic research;
- Communicating a reasoned response to the researchable questions; and
- Critically reflecting on your learning process.
DEVELOPING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:

You will work on developing academic skills that are transferable to your other university courses as well as to the workforce. These skills include: question formation, critical reading and thinking, communication (oral, written, and visual), self and peer evaluation, research skills, and group work skills (Vajoczki, 2010).

COURSE THEME:

While the focus of this course is on the process of inquiry, the theme “This Is(n’t) America” will provide the content that we will use to develop analytical and critical thinking skills. As revealed through our course theme, we will take a comparative sociological approach towards investigating social phenomena across societies, time-periods, and/or social groups. To do this, we will start by reviewing key sociological concepts. From here we will consider how sociologists embark on comparative analyses. Then, we will turn to five particular topics that exemplify a comparative approach. Specifically we will consider the topics of: culture, mass incarceration, health and illness, education, and food insecurity. Throughout this course, students will have the opportunity to learn about and practice many skills that are important for studying at McMaster University and lifelong learning, more generally.

REQUIRED READINGS:


All other required readings are available via the library databases at McMaster. During class the instructor will provide instructions on how to locate these readings. It will be the student’s responsibility to download the articles or read these articles online. Students are not required to print these articles. Please contact the instructor ASAP if you are unable to, or have difficulty accessing these readings.

EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Research Topic &amp; Question</td>
<td>Jan 22, 2019</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Reading Reflections</td>
<td>Jan 29, Feb 5, and Feb 12</td>
<td>5% each, total 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Feb 26, 2019</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Test</td>
<td>Mar 12, 2019</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Presentation</td>
<td>Apr 2 or Apr 9, 2019</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Apr 16, 2019</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>
Library Test
The library test will test your understanding of 11 online modules dealing with information literacy. The total viewing time for all 11 modules is approximately 70 minutes. These modules are to be completed outside of class time as homework and are mandatory.

Modules can be found here: https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/online-tutorials.

COURSE POLICIES:

Submission of Assignments
All written assignments must be submitted on the day that they are due. All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, and use 12 point Times New Roman font. The pages must be numbered and have 1 inch margins. Unless otherwise noted in the instructions, please include a title page in APA format. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be reflected in the mark for the assignment. Additional information about the assignments will be provided in class and will be made available on Avenue to Learn.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)
The McMaster Student Absence Form (http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean’s Office (KTH Room 129). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

IMPORTANT: Any consideration that may be provided for missed work is the decision of the instructor. Failure to follow these instructions may result in no consideration given for missed work.

Review of Grades
Assignments will be returned in a timely fashion. The instructor will not discuss any grades over email. Review of papers will not take place within the first 48 hours of assessments being returned. To request a review of a mark, please write a short paragraph describing your concern regarding the marking error. You may submit your requests via email to Dr. Jessica Braimoh. A meeting will then be scheduled.
to discuss your concerns. You may submit requests for a review of grade no later than two weeks after assignments/test grades have been handed back to the class.

**Policy of Missed, Late Work, or Extensions**

There is a 5% per day (including weekends) deduction for late submission of assignments. Late submissions will not be accepted after 5 days (25% deduction).

To time-stamp the submission of your late assignment, please submit it to dropbox in Avenue to Learn and send an email (using your McMaster account) to the instructor indicating that you have submitted your assignment. **Please see the specific assignment details for further instructions.**

Administrative Staff in the Faculty of Social Sciences will not date-stamp assignments or monitor the submission or return of papers.

**Do not** submit written assignments under the instructor’s office door.

**Do not email assignments.**

**Extensions will only be granted prior to the stated deadline of assessments.**

Make up library tests will be scheduled outside of regular class time.

**Academic Dishonesty**

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 [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](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.
Originality Checking
In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students’ assignments will be checked automatically through Turnitin.com. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must submit a hard copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

Office Hours
The instructor will hold regularly scheduled office hours on Tuesdays from 1pm-2pm (unless otherwise posted on Avenue to Learn). These scheduled office hours will be by appointment only to ensure that adequate time is allotted for students. If the instructor is available, students may request an appointment to meet outside of these scheduled hours. If you are unable to keep the appointment, please send an email a.s.a.p. If you do not let the instructor know and fail to attend your appointment, the instructor may not arrange any additional appointments with you.

Course Webpage
This course uses Avenue to Learn to post course material including the syllabus, lecture outlines, additional readings, assignments, and grading rubrics. It will also be used as a way to keep you up to date on issues related to the course – for example, class cancellations, office hours, and course reminders. Go to http://avenue.mcmaster.ca to log on. 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 and Communication
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.

Email the instructor with any questions or concerns you have about the course. Please allow for 48 hours for a response. Please put the course code in your subject header when emailing the instructor. Please adhere to proper email etiquette.
There is a technical difference between the Mail feature in Avenue to Learn and the McMaster email services including UnivMail. Please avoid sending email messages through Avenue to Learn.

**Computer and Electronic Use**
Computers are permitted in the class. However, electronic behaviour including cell phone use, checking email, playing games, surfing the internet, or listening to music will not be tolerated as this interferes with your other students’ ability to learn.

**Classroom Management and Equity**
This class seeks to create a learning environment that encourages participation, through the inclusion of multiple voices and diverse perspectives. In this class we will explore topics that may be personal or difficult for some people. Please recognize and reflect on how your comments may exclude or demean your others diverse and intersecting identities. **Disrespect will not be accepted in this class**.

**Accessibility**
The instructor is committed to creating a learning environment that is equitable and accessible so that learning occurs for all students. Every effort will be made to support students in an appropriate and confidential manner. If you require accommodations (instructional, curricular, or test) please approach Student Accessibility Services (https://sas.mcmaster.ca/). While every effort will be made to support students, it is the student’s responsibility for arranging these accommodations.

**Religious, Indigenous and 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 requiring a RISO accommodation 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.

**Course Modifications**
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.
### DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Inquiry Skill</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Library Workshop</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
<td>Information Literacy Using library search engines Asking Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>What is comparative sociology?</td>
<td>Rezaev et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Different Types of Writing</td>
<td>Draft Research Topic &amp; Question (5%)</td>
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<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Comparative I: Culture</td>
<td>Watson (2017)</td>
<td>Thinking Critically</td>
<td>Critical Reflection #1 (5%)</td>
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<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Comparative II: Mass Incarceration</td>
<td>Wacquant (2000)</td>
<td>Paraphrasing &amp; summarizing Taking multiple choice tests</td>
<td>Critical Reflection #2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Comparative III: Health, Illness, and Healthcare</td>
<td>Cites &amp; Sources: An APA Guide <em>Please review this entire book. In class, we will discuss in detail.</em></td>
<td>Evaluating evidence Citations and sourcing</td>
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<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>READING WEEK – NO CLASSES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Comparative IV: Food Insecurity</td>
<td>Note: There will be additional time allotted in class to do this reading.</td>
<td>Dealing with counter-evidence</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (15%)</td>
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<td>Groups 1-3: Power et al. (2015)</td>
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<td>Groups 4-6: Tarasuck et al. (2014)</td>
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<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Comparative V: Education</td>
<td>Jerrim &amp; Vignoles (2015)</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Critical Reflection #3 (5%)</td>
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<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Writing Workshop – I</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
<td>Doing an analysis Constructing arguments Thesis statements</td>
<td>Library Test (15%) (held during regular class time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Writing Workshop – II</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
<td>Peer review Writing conclusions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Note: Please bring all of your research material and writing to class</td>
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<td>Mar 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 2</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
<td>Grammar &amp; citations review</td>
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<td>Apr 9</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
<td>Self evaluation</td>
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<td>Note: this is our last class meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Final term papers are due via dropbox in Avenue to Learn by 11:59pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Paper (30%)</td>
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## DETAILED LIST OF ASSIGNED READINGS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
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</table>
*Note 1:* please read to the start of the section titled “Research Problems and Hypotheses” on page 151.  
*Note 2:* This article has been posted on ATL. |
Please locate and bring to class any discussion of a comparative health issue (e.g., health, illness, or health care). You may locate academic sources, media sources, or other cultural texts*. Class time will be provided to do this.  
*Note:* Dr. Braimoh will provide additional instruction in class. |
| Feb 26 | **Group 1-3 please read:**  

**Groups 4-6 please read:**  