

SOUSA

## NEWSLETTER

## Tackle Finals

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## STUDY TACTICS

With final exams coming up, it can be a stressful time especially for first year students who may be taking a university-level final exam for the first time. Learning how to study for university classes and navigate its tests can be an invaluable tool that will not only guide you to a fruitful first year but serve you throughout the rest of your academic career. With the right set of strategies, test-taking skills and mindset, you'll be building a foundation for success in no time.

## 1. Get Started, NOW

One of the biggest challenges to effective studying is overcoming the mental block and opening that first page of notes. Even if you can only stomach a few pages right off the bat, simply starting can take off the pressure of what seems like an insurmountable task and encourage you to keep going in the following days. Find out when your exams will take place (final exam schedule found here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/home-page>) and set a schedule to plan the amount of studying you can realistically achieve each day.

## 2. Find Your Study Space

Whether it is in the comfort of your bedroom or in the isolation of a library corner, look for a place that you can dedicate to studying that is relatively free from distractions, well-lit, and comfortable. Clean any clutter and organize your study space for better attention and focus.

### 3. Review Regularly

Create good habits of reviewing your notes as soon as you can after class and annotate to fill gaps in understanding or jot down questions to ask next session. For some students, making edits to their notes involves listening to recordings again if available while others integrate information from the textbook to supplement their notes. At the end of the week, review all your notes and condense them into an outline that emphasizes key concepts and main ideas that you can easily pull out before an exam for review.

### 4. Build a Problem Set

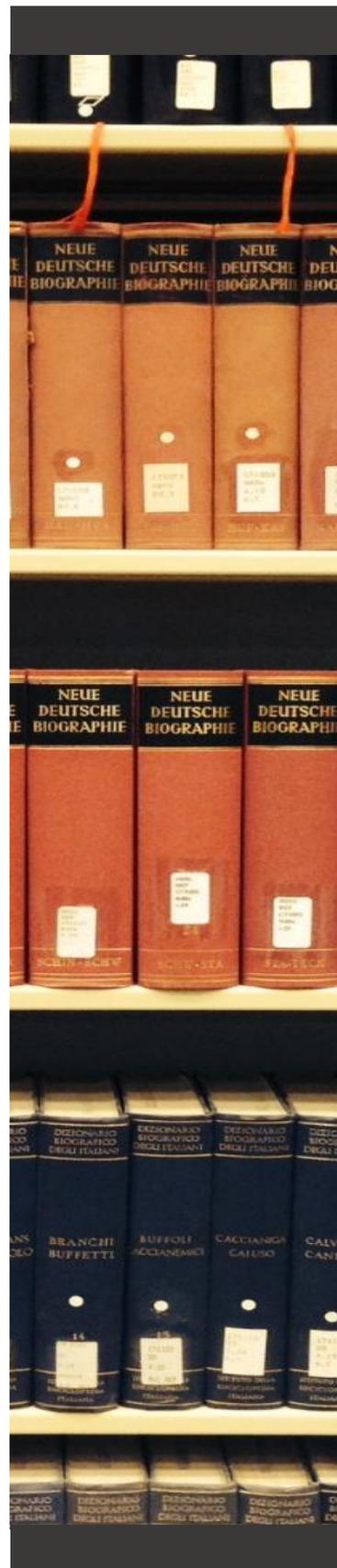
For many first year courses, the professor will often assign practice problems from a textbook. Be sure to pace yourself and do those problem sets even if they are not for marks. Add extra practice by assigning yourself similar questions or ask the TA for recommended problems to solve. It may also be helpful to attend tutorial sessions as TAs will go over solutions and provide explanations. In addition, check to see if you can find old exams (check out <http://www.mcgill.ca/library/find/courses/eexams>) for the style of questions that will be asked and go to viewing sessions of your midterms to analyze errors you made.

### 5. Active Studying

Engage in your studying by verbalizing the material, using flow charts and visuals to associate with certain terms or concepts, teaching it to a friend or answering questions you can form on blank sheets of paper. Use flash cards to help you memorize key terms, equations, formulas, dates, and miscellaneous information. Study groups are a great option to exchange notes, look at the material from a different perspective, quiz each other and stay motivated.

### 6. Stay Motivated

Remind yourself of your short and long-term goals and remember that each night of studying brings you a step closer to that goal. Take 10-15 minute breaks in between chunks of studying and get out of your chair and move around to revitalize your energy. Reinforce good study habits by rewarding yourself with something that you'll look forward to whether it's taking a walk or listening to music. Remember to always stay positive and believe in the work you've been putting in.



- By Huachen Guo

## THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

### *Tips for writing the exam*

**There's no time left to study; you're sitting in an unfamiliar room and an exam booklet is passed to you. It's now or never. You've already filled your brain with as much knowledge as you could. Now, how do you maximize your time, effort, and comfort to write the best exam you can write, and get that great grade you've already worked so hard for?**

### Arrive on time!

It never hurts to set two alarms: especially if you have a 9:00 AM exam and you were too nervous to sleep. Give yourself some extra time to get ready in case you hit any snags. If possible, leave yourself enough travel time that you could walk or call a cab if something happens to the Metro system or your bus. You'll feel more comfortable and confident if you arrive early: bursting in at the last minute out of breath and disoriented will add to your stress and hurt you in the end. If you are early, it might help to avoid your classmates' anxious conversations about how terrible the exam will go. Just put on some music and try to stay calm.

### Bring what you need!

You may have forgotten your ID or frantically asked to borrow an extra calculator for your midterm, but during final exams, you have to step up your game. Don't leave anything behind! Pack all you can the night before. (Once I forgot my scientific calculator for a Stats exam, and I ended up frantically searching for one in the malls downtown, finally getting a terrible deal on a non-scientific calculator.

## TO BRING LIST

### You definitely need:

- Your McGill ID
- A writing tool & eraser (sharpened pencil for multiple choice and bring back up ones!)

### Depending on the exam, you may need:

- A calculator (check requirements: usually programmable or graphing calculators are banned, and sometimes only a certain model is accepted).
- Your "cheat sheet" if permitted. Make sure it meets all the requirements.

### You may also want to bring:

- A filled water bottle.
- Your glasses instead of your contacts (If your eyes are open a lot looking at the exam, contacts may dry out and irritate you.)
- A translation dictionary, which is often allowed.
- A ruler, highlighters, different-coloured pens, etc. (Especially good when you have to draw graphs.)

### Consider not bringing:

- Valuable items that you can't keep on you: your phone, laptop, or iPad. Even expensive coats have been known to go missing during a large exam.
- Your notes: studying right before an exam can stress you out, and checking the answers afterwards may lower your confidence for your next exam.

I barely made it to the exam on time, and the exam took forever since I didn't have exponent or root functions!

## Filling out your information!

You may have a chance to start filling out your information before the exam starts. Ideally, you should also double-check this information at the end before handing in the booklet. After all that studying, there's nothing quite as stressful as being told your exam can't be found. (Once I forgot to fill in my student number for an Org. Chem exam, and I had to find the anonymous answer sheet in a pile of hundreds. Then I had to email my professor several times throughout the summer to get my grade corrected. Not worth it!)



### General tips

- ✓ Quickly look through the whole exam to get an idea of how you will allocate your time.
- ✓ Make sure you finish all the easy questions first before moving on to the ones you have to think about for a long time. Otherwise you may run out of time, and you will have thrown away some guaranteed marks!
- ✓ Think about the professor's mindset when they wrote the question. What knowledge are they testing? What did they think was important?
- ✓ Double-check your answers after you've finished. Make sure the questions are associated with their respective answers.

### Multiple Choice

- ✓ Read the question carefully: watch out for important words like NOT, LEAST, GREATEST, TRUE, FALSE, etc.
- ✓ Go through the exam once, circling answers you know are right and eliminating wrong answers. Then go through again, and choose between remaining options.
- ✓ Your first guess is often right, unless you misread the question!



- By Jon Reid

### Short Answer

- ✓ Time management is crucial, so check the mark value of each question when making time allocation decisions.
- ✓ Invest in a pen that writes smoothly and is comfortable to hold. The pressure required to write with pencil can make you slow down.
- ✓ Make sure you're answering the question that was asked. Read it carefully before you start and make sure you understand it. Extraneous information may be given to throw you off; the best defense is paying attention!

**If you studied hard, these tips should help you ace your exam.**

**Good luck!**

## Deferred vs. Supplemental Exams

**What happens if you fall ill on the day of the final exam? Or is there any way to possibly improve your final grade if you received D, F, J, or U? These are times when deferred and supplemental exams may be viable options for certain students. Meet with your SOUSA adviser to help you make the best decision. But first, what are the differences between them?**

### SUPPLEMENTAL

These are exams which may be written by students who did write the final exam but received a final grade of D, F, J, or U in the course. An important point to take into consideration is that the format for the supplemental exam may not be identical to the regular final exam for the same course. The grade you get from this exam will in most cases count for a larger percentage of your final grade, but you must know that this **does not replace your previous final grade**. Both your initial grade and your new grade will still appear on your transcript and **both will be used to calculate your CGPA**. To find out your eligibility: visit [http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university\\_regulations\\_and\\_resources/undergraduate/gi\\_final\\_examinations#booknode-3974](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_final_examinations#booknode-3974).

For more information about deferred and supplemental exams, visit:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/supdefer>;  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/general/exams>.

Both these options are serious matters that may create additional stress for you next semester. If you ever find yourself considering writing a deferred exam or a supplemental exam, **we strongly recommend you to speak to your SOUSA adviser beforehand**. You can discuss your situation with them and decide together whether or not it is the best option for you. To speak to an adviser, you can attend their drop-in sessions (listed here:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student>) or email them to make an appointment directly.

The supplemental exam application is done on Minerva (deadline will be posted on <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/dates>) and there is an application fee.

### DEFERRED

You may be eligible to write a deferred final exam if you are unable to write the exam on the original scheduled date due to medical illness or other extenuating circumstances. In this case, you must apply for a deferral, and if your application is accepted (on the basis of valid documentation such as a doctor's note), you are able to write the final exam during the next deferred exam period. If you defer a final exam from the Fall semester, you are expected to write it during the deferred exam period after the Winter semester, which typically occurs at the beginning of May. For Winter exams, this usually happens in August.

Keep in mind that this is **an additional exam after your usual exams** scheduled for that semester so it will require more work and commitment on your part to do so. The application can be completed on Minerva for Science and Arts and Science students which is due on **January 15<sup>th</sup>** (for fall term courses) and **May 15<sup>th</sup>** (for winter and full-year courses). The required documentation must also be submitted to Service Point by this date as well.

- By Jollee Fung

## SOUSA'S Guide to McGill Support Services

### Achooooooooooooo!



**Winter is here upon us and as we enter the season-long marathon of -20°C, it is important to remind ourselves that we must take care of our mind and body before tackling the finals season. The combination of stress and sleep deprivation can take a toll on our health so be sure to familiarize yourself with the following services offered at McGill if they ever become necessary.**

### McGill Student Health Services

Located in the Brown Building, McGill Student Health Services are eligible for use by all registered students who have paid the Student Services Fees. Suddenly feeling sick? They offer walk-in clinics from Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm which operates on a first-come first-served basis. Tip: to get an appointment, you must be present **in person**, so try to get there as early as possible to get a spot! (People even line up before opening hours!) Before you go, remember to bring your McGill ID card as well as either your provincial health care card or the McGill Blue Cross Health Insurance Card.

If your medical concern isn't urgent, you can schedule an appointment for services such as prescription renewals, contraceptives, and routine physical exams. Note that appointments can only be scheduled by phone at (514) 398-6017, usually on the 15th of each month for the following month. Since their phone lines open at 8:00am, again call as soon as you can to secure a time!

For more information:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/studenthealth/see-doctor/clinic>

Tel: (514) 398-6017

Did you know that Student Health Services also include **McGill Dental Clinic**? They are now located on 752 Sherbrooke Street (corner of McGill College Avenue). The dental clinic is open from Monday to Friday 9:00am - 4:30pm. If you overindulged in candy from Halloween, it is probably time to visit the dentist so call (514) 398-3155 to make an appointment!

**De-stress with therapy dogs** at the Counselling Service! Check their website for more information.

McGill embraces the definition of health by World Health Organization by offering many kinds of health services on campus. Just as there are clinics for physical well-being, there are several services for those who may find themselves in need of mental support.

**“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” — World Health Organization, 1948**

Also located in the Brown Building, **McGill Mental Health Services Clinic** aims to help students with your mental health concerns in a non-judgmental and confidential manner. Psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists can be seen by making appointments made either in person, via email ([mentalhealth.stuserv@mcgill.ca](mailto:mentalhealth.stuserv@mcgill.ca)) or on the phone (514-398-6019). Note that in order to see a psychiatrist, a physician's referral is required. For urgent cases, drop-in sessions are available on Monday-Friday from 9:00 to 3:30pm. Visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/mentalhealth/home> for more information.



**McGill Counselling Service** offers psychological support at a different level. This service may be optimal for students who are dealing with personal and academic stressors. Other than individual counselling sessions, available workshops include those that help you with achieving academic success, and developing wellness and life skills. Importantly, the counselling service and most workshops are offered free of charge. They also have a crisis drop-in service which operates Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. To learn more about counselling at McGill, visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/services>.

Finally, sometimes all we need is to talk to someone, like another student. **McGill's Peer Support Network** offers exactly this

– a free one-on-one confidential session with trained Peer Supporters. These are students who have gone through substantial training on listening to and helping students with issues like stress, mental health, personal relationships and if they can't help you, they will refer you to someone who can. Drop-in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 5-7pm in the Brown Students Services Building Room 2100 and email [mcgillpsn@gmail.com](mailto:mcgillpsn@gmail.com) if you have questions!

**At stressful times like during finals, it is easy to become overwhelmed. SOUSA advisers are here to help you. But never forget to reach out to those who are closest to you – your family and friends. It's important to not underestimate the power of social support and often this is what gets us through hurdles in life!**

– By Jollee Fung

## Researching Summer Research (& Internships)

Getting started on the hunt for opportunities in science

**Midterms just finished and finals are around the corner! When will you ever have time to find that awesome summer research experience or that internship you want so badly? The best time to get started is now—it's never too early to start, but sometimes it may be too late. But don't worry; we've got the details here for you!**

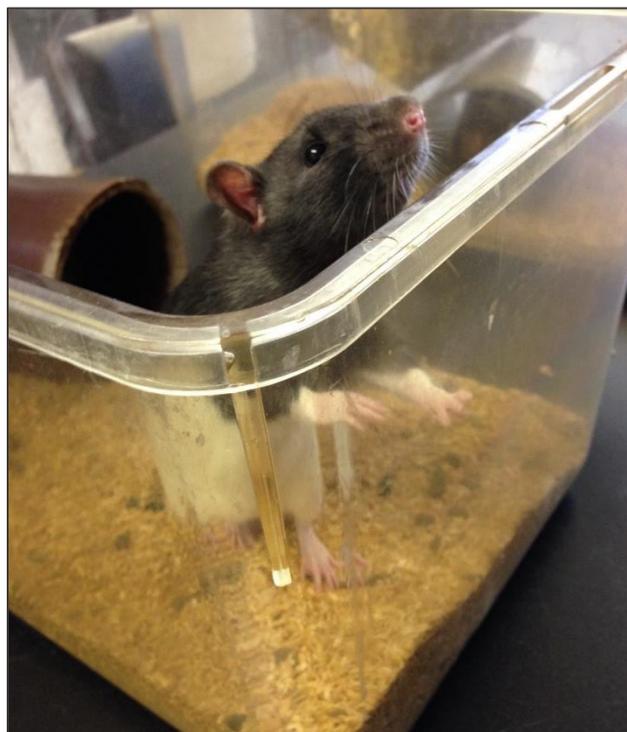
### Research: Why should you do it?

There are many benefits to having experience in research. Most importantly, it's a great chance to test-drive grad school and a career in research if these interest you. Also, you can make money working a job relevant to your interests, apply knowledge from class, network with important figures in academia, and get an experience or reference for your job hunt or grad/professional school application.

### Looking for a lab...

At this stage, the world is your oyster (well, at least the university is!) So think about what you've learned in your classes or elsewhere that most interests you. Now you want to find researchers who work in that field. You can talk to the professor who taught the material you liked and ask him about which labs to look up; alternatively you can start looking online. McGill's departments and teaching hospitals will often list faculty members on their site. You can check out Physiology research here for example:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/physiology/directory/research-labs-affiliated-centres>.



Other universities have similar information online. If traveling is an option, it might even help to Google your favourite topic and see where the current experts in the field work.

### Making contact

Once you've found several labs of interest (maybe ten or twenty to start), you can prepare for sending out emails. Start by reading up on their lab's work to show your interest. Ideally, you should look through one of their publications:

search the researcher's name on the McGill website, PubMed (for life sciences; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>), Google Scholar, and if you're using McGill's Wi-Fi you should be able to access their articles. Don't hesitate to ask a librarian for help. Send the researcher an email with these points in mind:

- **Make every email individualized. A professor will be much more interested if they can see you've taken the time to tailor a message specifically for them.**
- **Write why you're interested in the researcher's work, and mention any articles you've read.**
- **Keep your writing succinct, so the email does not overwhelm the reader (which may influence them to ignore it)**
- **Write why you want to work in the person's lab: even if your motivation is an entry on your CV, explain your interest in doing research in the first place.**
- **If you want to be paid, mention any grants or student awards for which you might be eligible. This could make a researcher more interested in working with you (see below).**
- **End with a call to action. Ask to set up a meeting with the researcher, to see the lab and what they're working on, and to discuss potential opportunities. Be clear about what you're looking for: Part-time, full-time, paid, volunteer, or any of the above? Also mention that if there aren't currently any opportunities, you'd be interested in getting in touch with the person's colleagues who are looking for students!**
- **Use a polite tone, and thank them at the end for reading.**

### **Office for Undergraduate Research in Science**

**Did you know McGill has an office specifically for undergrads interested in research? At <http://www.mcgill.ca/science/research/ours>, you will find plenty of resources, such as guides on how to get involved, and a listing of opportunities and awards. You can contact Victor Chisholm (he prefers phone and in-person meetings) at 514-398-5964.**



## **Funding**

Research awards add entries to your CV, dollars to your bank account, and prestige to the lab. It's a great idea to apply for awards if you're interested in research. Most application deadlines are early next year, but they will approach faster than you expect so make sure you start planning now! Mention the awards you plan to apply for in your interview with a researcher. Consider these avenues for finding awards:

- **The NSERC USRA is offered by the Canadian government, and can be held at any Canadian university. It entails 4 months of full-time research work in the summer. More information is available here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/science/research/ours/nserc>.**
- **The SURA is offered by McGill (<http://www.mcgill.ca/science/research/ours/sura>). Although similar to the NSERC USRA, one important difference is that international students may apply.**
- **McGill has some research opportunities available through the Work-Study program (<http://www.mcgill.ca/studentaid/work-study>).**
- **Look for funding offered by groups that support the field of research you're interested in. For example, if you're interested in allergies, you could seek out a lab that has a project for you and apply for the studentship here: [http://www.allergen-nce.ca/Training\\_and\\_Careers/Funding\\_and\\_Training\\_Opportunities/Undergraduate\\_Summer\\_Studentships.html](http://www.allergen-nce.ca/Training_and_Careers/Funding_and_Training_Opportunities/Undergraduate_Summer_Studentships.html). Make sure you use multiple search terms, such as "award", "studentship", or "grant".**

## Some words of encouragement

- Remember to look at your first search for research as a fact-finding mission, where you can ask what skills are needed to get a position, what courses you should take to improve your chances, and how to go about the whole process in the first place!
- It's okay if your first position is volunteering in a lab that may not fit your interests perfectly. Getting a foot in the door now and making valuable contacts through networking will help you when you do your next search!
- Don't get discouraged if you get a lot of "no's" from professors. More than 50% of McGill's undergrads finish their degree with research on their transcript. It just takes time and perseverance.

**Remember to check out Victor's presentation for SUS Academia week on January 28! Keep an eye out on the OURS website for the location and time.**



- By Jon Reid

### What is an internship?

You've probably heard the term internship used to refer to many different types of opportunities. This article is about science internships, which are *paid positions in science outside of academia*. That's right! You'll be making money and working in industry! It also goes on your transcript. McGill's most popular internships are 4-month summer internships, but 8-, 12- and 16-month internships are also available. Remember, the goal of an internship is to get you doing something new, so a lack of experience is NOT a disadvantage!

### Why should I do one?

Don't get me started! How about the chance to try on a career related to your field of study, make some cash, network with important figures in industry, learn professional skills that just can't be taught in school, and maybe even get an offer for a job once you graduate!

### OK, sounds amazing, what do I do?

November is an ideal time to start looking for a placement. There's no general official deadlines, but sooner is better.

- The first thing to do is to perfect your CV and cover letter writing skills. There are many wonderful resources for this purpose at <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/>.**
- Now you are ready to begin the hunt. A good place to start is CaPS myFuture (<https://csm-caps.mcgill.ca/students/>), which has tons of listings to browse through.**
- Don't limit yourself. Search company websites and employ your cold-calling skills (which CaPS can help you sharpen). That means contacting an employer with no previous context. Just reach out and show your interest, ask if there are any opportunities and find out how you can apply for them!**
- Check out <http://online.goinglobal.com/default.aspx> and <http://myworldabroad.com/>. They are great resources for those who wish to pursue international internships.**

### Why Internships are so exciting?!

After a student finishes their internship, it's not uncommon for the company to call them back for the same opportunity next year! It's also possible that the company will want you to start working for them as soon as you graduate, giving you the rare advantage of having a job waiting for you once you finish your degree. If you're not sold on internships yet, check out the McGill website for science internships here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/science/programs/internships> and keep an eye out for presentations from the lovely Martine Dolmière!

## WINTER 101 – McGill Edition

### Brrr! Tips to Survive Winter in Montreal

– By Huachen Guo

The winter season in Montreal can be a big change for many first-year students from out of town who are used to milder climates. Appropriate clothing and planning ahead are essential to staying warm and dry.

**Dress in layers so you will stay warm outside while preventing overheating inside a classroom. Keep in mind there are usually three layers of material that should be worn from the innermost to outermost layer: wicking, insulating and outerwear.**

A **wicking layer** prevents sweat and moisture from being trapped against your skin and allows quick evaporation through the material instead. Look for manmade materials such as polyester although some natural fibers are also effective at wicking moisture such as wool and silk. Cotton however will retain moisture, keeping you cold and clammy especially in the chilly wind.

The middle layer is an **insulating layer** designed to retain as much heat as possible by trapping air against your body. Look for wool and fleece sweaters, sweatshirts, vests, pullovers and pants.

The **outer layer** is a protective layer to shield you from wind, rain and snow. It should be breathable letting some of your perspiration escape while being waterproof. Look for a coat lined with down feathers (or a hard shell jacket if you will be in wetter conditions) as well as a hood and a collar that is able to cover the lower half of your face. When buying down, check the tag for the number of “fills”, the higher the number the higher the quality of down and degree of warmth.

A pair of **winter boots** are also a must since Montreal sees plenty of heavy snowfalls over the season. For warmth and comfort, look for lined or insulated boots and be sure to try them on in

socks you will be wearing to make sure there is enough room in the toe space. Look for water resistant material such as waterproof leather or waterproof laminate boots to keep dry and light weight rubber with cross hatching threads in soles for a good grip while keep snow from clogging the bottom. Use winter accessories such as a warm scarf, a tuque, and gloves and mittens to protect yourself from the wind and low temperatures.

Besides appropriate clothing, keep in mind some additional tips to protect yourself from the cold weather. Check the weather forecast regularly to plan your route ahead of time and avoid being caught in the middle of a blizzard or other extreme conditions. Eat a nutritious breakfast and keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water; use body lotion and lip balm to keep moisturized.

#### Attention, International First Years!

For international first year students, McGill offers a **Winter Coat Project** where students can come to pick out lightly worn items of winter clothing, hats, mittens, scarves and boots. This project is open to students from October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015 on Mondays and Tuesdays from 2:15pm-5:00pm and Fridays from 12:00pm-4:00pm and is located in the Montreal Presbyterian College at 3495 University Street.



## What's Up, Montreal!

Your first winter here can be an exciting and eye-opening time to experience the city in ways you've never seen it before. The whole other world of sights and sounds highlighted by a bevy of activities proves once and for all that the chilliness of the season brings out the liveliest and most vibrant atmosphere of this unique city.



Skating at Fire On Ice



### Fend off the chill: Explore the Underground City

If you would rather stay away from the frigid temperatures that accompany all the outdoor events, take a walk through the Underground City (La Ville Souterraine/RÉSO), a series of malls and complexes linked by walkways and tunnels underground and at street level. With an expanse of 4 million square metres in area, it traverses for 32 kilometres linking together metro stations, bus terminals, department stores, office buildings, movie theatres and restaurants. As well you can access the Olympic Park, Place des Arts, the Bell Centre, Place Bonaventure, Palais des Congrès de Montréal, and the Olympic Centre. Major shopping centers along the RESO include the Eaton Centre, Complexe Desjardins, and Les Cours Mont Royal. Check out a map of the Underground City: [http://www.stm.info/sites/default/files/pdf/fr/plan\\_montreal\\_souterrain.pdf](http://www.stm.info/sites/default/files/pdf/fr/plan_montreal_souterrain.pdf).

### Timeline

Now

November 29, 2014

### Ski across the slopes of Mount Royal

*November 29, 2014 to March 15, 2015 (approx.) 1260, ch. Remembrance, Montréal*

For the outdoor sports enthusiast, wintertime in Montreal offers some of the best slopes and hills for skiing and snowboarding without having to travel outside of city limits. Hit the slopes at Mount Royal Park which boasts a number of trails for 22 kilometres at various difficulty levels and offers snowshoeing, hiking, ice skating, snow tubing and horse-drawn sleigh rides. Mount Royal Park Evening Treks features a tour atop Mount Royal by snowshoe with magnificent views of Montreal at night and hot chocolate, truffles or wine to indulge along the way. Visit the Mount Royal Park website at [http://www.bonjourquebec.com/qc-en/attractions-directory/municipal-and-regional-park-nature-interpretation-centre/parc-du-mont-royal\\_5768516.html](http://www.bonjourquebec.com/qc-en/attractions-directory/municipal-and-regional-park-nature-interpretation-centre/parc-du-mont-royal_5768516.html).

Tip: The McGill Gym offers cross-country ski and snowshoe rentals! Check out [http://www.mcgillathletics.ca/sports/2012/11/1/GEN\\_1101121320.aspx](http://www.mcgillathletics.ca/sports/2012/11/1/GEN_1101121320.aspx) for more info.

### Skate by the light of fireworks: Telus presents Fire on Ice

*December 13, 2014 to January 3 2015, Saturdays at 8pm Quays of the Old Port*

Get in to the holiday spirit by coming down to the Old Port around Christmas time to watch the spectacular display of pyrotechnics set against a background of themed music while you skate under the brilliant night sky at the Old Port skating rink. Best of all, this event is free! In addition, keep an eye out for Christmas carolers on the nearby streets of Old Montreal, stop by local shops for holiday goodies, and take a horse-drawn carriage ride to admire the beautiful, quaint village by night. Visit the webpage for details at

<http://www.oldportofmontreal.com/telus-fire-on-ice.html>.

December 13, 2014

January 16 . 2015

## Dance the night away at Igloofest

January 16 to February 8, 2015

Jacques-Cartier Quay at the Old Port

Held at the Old Port of Montreal, this outdoor music festival brings thousands of electronic music fans together every year to dance into the night on some of the coldest days of the year. For four straight weekends, check out the house, techno and bass music scenes with programs from some of the best local and international DJs. Past lineups have included Matthew Dear, Sharam, Kid Sister, Eskmo, These Guys, James Holden and Joris Voorn. In addition to the music, partygoers can find relief from the cold with a stop at the igloo village which features ice sculptures, an ice bar, and fire pits. And don't forget to join the One-Piece Contest where contestants dressed in their best tackiest snowsuits have their photos taken onsite and battle it out in a best-dress showdown. One winner will be crowned each week by an online vote and will get to take home a Grand Prize. Check out the 2015 Igloofest website at [www.igloofest.ca](http://www.igloofest.ca) for lineups, activities and more!

- By Huachen Guo

## Getting Home for the Holidays

Is this the first time you've had to trek back home by yourself, or are you already a seasoned traveler? Is your family two hours away in Ottawa or on the other side of the world? Either way, here are some tips for traveling home from the SURPASS team.

### Choosing the Dates

- ❖ The first thing to do is consult the all-important final exam schedule, located here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/home-page>. Find out when your last exam is, and make sure not to leave before it! You may even want to give yourself a day or two in Montréal after your exam to pack, see your friends, or explore the city!
- ❖ Winter classes start on 5 January 2015. Ideally, you should return to Montréal a day or two before that to get everything in order before you get overwhelmed with classes.

### Choosing Transportation

- ❖ If you're traveling within ~1000 km of Montréal, you have many feasible options (in order from least to most expensive); bus, rideshare, train, or airplane. For farther trips, most students will opt for a flight due to the travel time involved.



- ❖ If faced with several options, consider how much travel time you can put up with, and what kind of comfort you need. A packed flight may be uncomfortable and loud, but is much shorter than a train trip with relatively more legroom and mobility.
- ❖ Consider cost: buses and rideshares (explained below!) are often the cheapest mode of transport, and they generally have many available departure and arrival times. Trains are more expensive, but they serve food on board and claim to offer more a more comfortable ride (I have taken both and I don't think the difference is that noticeable!) Plane travel is often the most expensive, but it is many times faster.

- ❖ Consider a mode of transportation that you can stick with: loyalty programs can help you save money by using the same carrier (transportation company) frequently.
- ❖ A general rule: you will get better deals if you book earlier. If finances are a concern for you, plan way ahead and save!

### Some Valuable Resources

- Megabus (<http://ca.megabus.com/>) is a bus carrier with very good rates. They have cool double decker buses with power outlets and Wi-Fi. Its low prices (especially if you book early!) are great for students. Their routes are limited though, so if your route isn't listed check out Greyhound (<https://www.greyhound.ca/>) which has more extensive routes. You could also transfer from a Megabus to a Greyhound at a city somewhere between Montréal and your destination.
- Via Rail (<http://www.viarail.ca/>) is Canada's passenger train service. If you think you'll use it multiple times, look into getting a pack of tickets at a discounted rate!
- The 747 is a Montréal city bus that goes from downtown to the airport, 24/7. It is cheaper than a cab (\$10, or free if you have an unlimited STM pass!) Check out the stops and schedule here: <http://www.stm.info/en/info/networks/buses/shuttle/more-about-747-aeroport-p-e-trudeau-centre-ville-shuttle>.

### What is a rideshare?

**There are always people driving from the city to reasonably close locations, such as Toronto, New York, and Ottawa. They often have extra seats in their vehicles, but they would much rather make use of that space. This eases the strain on the environment, and helps them and their passengers spread out fuel costs and save money. If you arrange to travel with someone advertising a rideshare, it will cost you an agreed-upon amount to cover fuel expenses and to compensate them for driving, but it is often cheaper than the least expensive alternative (usually bus). The other advantage is they may be able to drop you off close to where you need to go, so you can avoid waiting around at the bus station, train station or airport. You can search Montréal rideshare ads on Facebook, Craigslist/Kijiji or McGill Classifieds (<http://www.mcgill.ca/classified/rides/>).**

### Before You Leave

- ❖ Be aware of the baggage policy for your carrier. Airplanes have very specific requirements for what can be carried onboard, and taking extra baggage often means extra fees, especially if it's abnormally shaped like a snowboard or a musical instrument.
- ❖ Make a checklist of everything you need to pack. Don't forget your keys or your wallet! Check things off once they're packed.
- ❖ Bring a snack and a water bottle, especially on the bus! They may not have a scheduled stop for food.
- ❖ Set two alarms, especially if you have to leave early in the morning: give yourself lots of time to get to the station, in case any delays happen. Being rushed can also cause you to forget things.

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*SOUSA wishes you safe travels and happy holidays!*

- By Jon Reid