

Three people are standing against a light green background. On the left, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark top and a scarf, holds the left side of a large white sign. In the center, a man with short grey hair, wearing a brown sweater over a collared shirt, holds the top edge of the same sign. On the right, a woman with dark hair, wearing a grey jacket, holds the right side of a second large white sign. The signs contain text and logos.

MCGILL COMMUNITY FOR  
LIFELONG LEARNING



**McGill**

School of  
Continuing Studies

FOR  
THE JOY  
OF IT.

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## WELCOME TO THE MCGILL COMMUNITY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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Run by members for members, the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning provides a wonderful opportunity for you to experience the joys of intellectual discovery without the pressures of a formal academic environment. This handbook has a dual purpose:

- 1) to help you to feel at home in your own learning community by informing you about the MCLL and answering many of the questions you may have;
- 2) to suggest ways in which you might become involved in addition to becoming a member and signing up for a study group.

The McGill Community for Lifelong Learning is member led in all its aspects - educational, social, and administrative – and your participation and commitment will help ensure its continued success.

### INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning (MCLL) is to enable older adults to pursue intellectual interests, and to explore new areas of learning in the company of their peers.

MCLL offers, administers, and conducts non-credit study groups for its members with an emphasis on participation and peer learning.

Membership is entirely open and there is no age requirement. There are no pre-requisites, no exams, and no grades. Members are not required to provide information on their education or income level. (Year and date of birth are required for registration on McGill's registration system.) A high level of volunteer participation ensures a low-cost program.

While the primary purpose of MCLL is intellectual pursuit, we also provide a social environment for our members and there are scheduled social events.

**LINKS WITH MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

From the beginning, the links between MCLL and its host, McGill University, have been close and cordial. Originally conceived by McGill's School of Continuing Studies (formerly known as the Centre for Continuing Education), MCLL is one of a growing number of similar bodies whose purpose is to provide a daytime non-credit alternative for seniors. MCLL was established in 1989. The basic framework featuring participant learning in small groups was derived from an analysis and review of existing programs for seniors at UBC, UCLA and in particular at Harvard.

MCLL is a self-administered unit within the McGill School of Continuing Studies (SCS). MCLL continues to benefit from the University's advice and support, from its academic resources and physical facilities. Most importantly, the Community's association with McGill University gives MCLL its academic credibility.

The ongoing enthusiastic participation of adult Montrealers shows how MCLL meets an important community need. Fortunately the Community's links with the McGill School of Continuing Studies have allowed the physical facilities to keep pace with the growing enrollment. Originally dispersed in various McGill campus buildings, MCLL now has its own

premises, especially designed for its use, and conveniently located at 688 Sherbrooke St. West.

**MEMBERSHIP**

- Membership is open to any adult.
- New members are registered at the beginning of each term.
- A full member is a person registered for a minimum of one term in each twelve-month period.
- Full members may participate in all MCLL activities but must pay the prescribed fee for each term in which they attend a study group. Members may take as many study groups per term as they wish. However, first and second choices are dealt with first for ALL members and only after that will additional requests be handled. (These membership rules apply equally to moderators.)
- Full membership entitles members to attend lectures in a term when they are not participating in a study group, provided that they have participated in a study group in either of the two previous terms.
- Members have access to the McGill libraries and to the Internet.
- Members receive copies of the calendar and other mailings, either electronically or by regular mail.

- Members stay on the mailing list for one full year.

Those people who have been members but are unable to commit themselves to study group attendance may become associate members and pay a nominal fee for each term. Associate members have all the privileges of full members except attendance at study groups.

Associate members may resume full membership at any time.

**MCLL PEER LEARNING CONCEPT STUDY GROUPS**

When you register in MCLL you register for a study group. In the study group structure members meet in groups of between ten and twenty-five members to study a subject of common interest. The groups are led informally by peer moderators who are themselves members of MCLL. Most study groups meet for a term of ten weeks (two hours per week per subject) in the fall, winter and spring. There are a few study groups which meet for less than 10-week periods.

The two cornerstones of learning in MCLL are peer learning and active participation. It is these concepts which differentiate the study groups from traditional courses and classes.

In its ideal form the study group is completely member-led and all members

participate fully and equally. In practice there are a great many variations and the study group concept is flexible. There are some groups where the moderators see themselves more in the traditional teacher role and others where they see themselves as facilitators, organizers, or animators. But no matter what the style of moderator, passive learning is contrary to the spirit of the study group structure. You must be prepared for some form of active participation.

The expected form of participation may vary according to the subject matter and to the form of participatory involvement chosen by the moderator. Participation may range from presentations or papers based on research on the selected topic, to reports on cultural events, or the sharing of life experiences. There are a few study groups where only participation in discussion is expected. In the registration program the study groups are categorized according to what is expected from members. In most cases some form of group discussion provides the basis of the study group experience.

**MEMBERS' ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following are a few suggestions to help you participate in discussions as a study group member:

- Listen carefully to others.
- Help keep the discussion on track.
- Speak your mind freely but don't monopolize the discussion.
- Help involve the more reticent people.
- Address your remarks to the group as a whole rather than to the moderator or other individuals.
- Don't be afraid to engage in friendly debate, but don't allow the discussion to become personal or acrimonious.
- The goal is always polite and reasoned discussion

Your responsibilities as an active participant in a study group also include a commitment to regular attendance. If you find that you are unable to attend because of illness or an emergency, you must inform the moderator. This is particularly important if you have been scheduled to make a presentation. Anyone who misses two sessions without explanation may be dropped from the group.

*What should I do if I sign up for a study group and then find I don't like it?*

Don't just give up. Your first step should be to talk to the moderator and discuss the difficulties you are having. If that doesn't help, speak to the Administrative Coordinator in the MCLL office to see if you can still be fitted into an alternative study group. A good way to avoid this situation is to find out more about the study group by contacting the moderator before you register.

**MODERATORS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The moderator's role is key to the character and quality of MCLL learning experiences. This role is illuminated by the use of the term moderator rather than teacher. If you are thinking of becoming a moderator, you should understand that it is the policy of MCLL to encourage active learning through member participation. The moderator acts as guide and resource person.

- In most cases the moderators determine the subject, objectives, and scope of the study group. They suggest the texts or activities. They help the group remain on target, clarify areas of confusion, and fill important gaps.
- Moderators should be particularly well prepared for the first meeting in the term. Enough time should be allowed for

introductions and making people feel comfortable with each other.

- A study outline with suggested topics for research and exploration inspires a feeling of confidence in the group. This does not mean that the outline can't be changed should the group members so desire. The study group experience is a cooperative venture.
- The cooperative aspect might be emphasized when encouraging group members to volunteer for presentations in subsequent sessions. Moderators are responsible for scheduling the presentations, proposing time limitations and making sure that the presentations deal with issues of substance. They should also help group members define their topics and find suitable resource material.
- To facilitate group discussion the moderator should try to draw out reticent people, prevent any one person from taking over, solicit give-and-take without arousing hostility, and try to discourage private conversations.
- Moderators should urge group members to look beyond the structures of the study group itself in making use of the University's libraries and attending lectures open to the public. Moderators should also encourage group members to avail themselves of the cultural resources of the city to widen and enrich the scope of the group topic.

- Since moderators are in direct contact with the membership, they may also be called upon to convey information about upcoming events and activities to their study group, when the need arises.
- Moderators are strongly advised to appoint one member of their group to act as an assistant or co-moderator. Assistant moderators can take care of administrative details such as taking attendance, supervising the evaluation procedure, and making announcements. An assistant moderator can prove an invaluable help and colleague.
- Moderators are encouraged to look for innovative ways of engaging participants with subject matter through new technologies, debates, simulations and role-playing activities.

*If moderators don't get paid and don't receive any special privileges, why would anyone wish to become a moderator?*

Fortunately, there are always people who want to do more. To be a moderator is to participate in the learning experience more deeply. Also being a moderator brings its own rewards, the most important of which is the fun of leading a group of interested, appreciative people, and sharing with them topics of particular interest.

*What kind of special qualifications should I have in order to become a moderator? Is it necessary to be an expert or a teacher?*

Some teachers become moderators when they retire in order to help them make the transition, but they don't necessarily make the best moderators. The peer learning concept obviates the need for teachers and experts. All you need in order to become a moderator is enthusiasm and interest together with the willingness to become a leader in the learning experience.

*I'm interested in becoming a moderator, but I'm nervous – I've never done this before. Would I receive any help and support?*

The Curriculum Committee arranges special workshops for new and potential moderators. Also you will have a special mentor assigned to you, someone who is familiar with your subject area.

*I have a great idea for a study group and I'd like to become a moderator. How do I go about it?*

All proposals for study groups should be submitted to the Curriculum Committee so make yourself known to a member of this committee. Their names are usually posted on one of the notice boards in the hallway, or you can ask the office for the name of the Chairperson. The

Committee welcomes new moderators and is always willing to help with study group proposals. Proposal forms are available at the office and are distributed to all members by e-mail in preparation for the upcoming term.

**LECTURES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

In addition to study groups, MCLL offers a growing and popular program of extracurricular and other social activities throughout the year. Amongst the most popular events are: Friday lectures, Saturday afternoon movies or musical events and summer Wednesday lectures.

**MEMBER-LED ADMINISTRATION COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND OFFICE**

The MCLL is member-led by volunteers in its governance as in its educational activities. In partnership with the McGill School of Continuing Studies, it is self-administered by an elected Council whose members include the Chairs of the various committees.

**COUNCIL**

As the governing body of the MCLL, Council manages the operations and finances of MCLL and ratifies policy decisions, It is responsible to the membership to which it has to report once a year at the Annual Meeting.

The Council consists of fifteen members: the president, vice-president, treasurer, and the chairs of the communications, curriculum, development, membership, newsletter, planning, and special events committees. The information technology coordinator, the volunteer coordinator, the representative of the School of Continuing Studies, the secretary of Council and the immediate past president also sit on Council. The Council normally meets once a month. Members may attend Council meetings.

The president and vice-president are each elected for a one-year term. Other councilors are elected for two-year terms. The term of office for councilors begins on June 1st.

**COMMITTEES**

Most of the organizational work ensuring the smooth running of MCLL takes place behind the scenes and is accomplished through the various committees to which many members contribute their talents. There are usually between three and five members on each of the committees, but there is no limit to how many members there may be. The committees are briefly described below so that you can see where you might contribute your own talents.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Is responsible for all aspects of internal and external communications, acting both as an originator of communications content and as a facilitator of content creation and publication for other MCLL committees. It also has the task of maintaining the content of all MCLL electronic communications platforms including the website and a Facebook page.

**CURRICULUM**

The Curriculum Committee establishes the study group programs offered by the MCLL. It receives or initiates new study group proposals. It also seeks out and recruits new moderators, provides guidelines, and maintains liaison with and between moderators. The Curriculum Committee is largely responsible for maintaining a balanced, challenging and enjoyable program.

**DEVELOPMENT**

The Development Committee works closely with SCS Administration and the Council to solicit financial support for MCLL activities and assists with setting fundraising targets and support of fundraising events.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Working closely with the Communications Committee, the Membership Committee conducts activities designed to reach potential new members and encourage them to join. It obtains lists of current and former members from the office and conducts interviews and surveys to establish why people leave and the satisfaction level of those who remain.

**NEWSLETTER**

The Newsletter Committee is responsible for the MCLL newsletter, the *Courier*, which is published three times a year. The *Courier* keeps members informed of our programs and upcoming special events. Members are encouraged to make contributions to the newsletter with letters, articles or member profiles.

**PLANNING**

The Planning Committee reviews and evaluates the activities, organization, and financing of MCLL Acting as the research arm of Council, it concerns itself with the broad picture. The Committee looks in depth at issues determined by Council for the purpose of identifying possible problems and developing a plan of action.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Special Events Committee organizes the social, cultural, and educational events for the whole membership. There is usually one of these events per term, for example the holiday party in December, the Spring Fling, etc.

**INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR**

Oversees the administration of computer related activities and makes recommendations to Council with respect to the use and purchase of computer equipment. Works closely with the Administrative Coordinator and SCS Administration to ensure registration and administration are handled efficiently. This is an area of rapid change and we have been active in using new technology to enhance our learning experience. On-line registration is now available. We have dedicated equipment in our "Music Room" and computer projection equipment in our other classrooms. We are also communicating more and more with our members electronically and hope to continue this trend. Our website is a good source of information for potential members.

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

The Volunteer Coordinator identifies volunteers to serve on standing committees and recruits and supervises volunteers to assist with ad hoc activities such as special events and taking registration for lectures.

**MCLL OFFICE**

**Administrative Coordinator**

The Administrative Coordinator ensures that the office is appropriately managed and staffed and that proper training is given to volunteers. She or he ensures that membership application forms, study group data, other pertinent registration information, such as class lists for moderators, are made available as required.

*I have some free time, some experience and would like to serve on one of these committees. But I don't know quite where to place my energies. Is there anybody I can talk to?*

The best person would be the Administrative Coordinator or the Volunteer Coordinator who would know where the need is greatest and where you would best fit in. You could also speak to the Chairperson of the committee which most interests you.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Calendar/ Registration Procedures**

There are three 10-week terms. The fall term begins mid- September, the winter term mid-January, and the spring term in mid-April. Study groups meet for two hours once a week. Some study groups run for less than 10 weeks.

If you have attended a study group within the past 12 months, you will be on our mailing list to receive the calendar for the upcoming term, including full details of the registration procedures and an application form. As study groups are limited to about 20 members, it is important to apply as early as possible.

The membership fee entitles you to attend as many study groups as you wish. Normally members take either one or two groups in any given semester. You will be asked to indicate on the registration form up to four choices in case your first choices are already full (see page 5 for further details).

**Fees**

The fee per term for full members, the fee per term for associate members, and the fees for Friday lectures, Saturday movies, and Wonderful Wednesdays are set by the MCLL Council. Visitors accompanying a member may attend Friday lectures, Saturday movies, and

Wonderful Wednesdays if space is available. They must pay at the door.

It is the policy of MCLL that no one be denied access to membership for financial reasons. There is a limited scholarship fund for this purpose. Confidential applications may be made at the office.

**Library Privileges**

McGill Library membership is included in the MCLL fee. You may obtain your library card without further charge by presenting your MCLL membership card at the Circulation Desk in the main foyer of the McLennan Library. Membership cards are available upon request at the MCLL office. In addition, all MCLL members are given a McGill e-mail address which provides access to the McGill Library's electronic resources.

**Newsletter**

The MCLL Newsletter, the *Courier*, is published three times during the academic year by and for MCLL members. The Newsletter Committee is responsible for much of the content, but you are invited to submit contributions.

**Physical Facilities**

MCLL has its own quarters on the 2nd floor at:

688 Sherbrooke St. West  
Suite 229  
Montreal QC H3A 3R1

Telephone: (514) 398-8234  
Fax: (514) 398-2757  
E-mail: mcll.scs@mcgill.ca  
Website: www.mcgill.ca/mcll

The space comprises four classrooms, a lounge, an office, and a kitchenette. Take the escalator up from the McGill entrance of the building.

The MCLL premises are easily accessible by public transport. The 24 bus which goes along Sherbrooke St. stops at the door. Metro access is also direct from the McGill metro station via 2001 University – follow the signs for 680 Sherbrooke.

The premises are wheelchair accessible. An access card for the elevator may be obtained from the office for a nominal deposit.



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