

GEOG 494: Urban Field Studie
Fall 2022
Tuesday 11:35-2:25 Burnside 426 and in the field

Instructor:

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Course Description

This course introduces students to human geography fieldwork in the urban setting. Using Montreal as our laboratory, we will explore current issues in social and cultural geography, urban studies, and planning. This is a hands-on course – you will learn by experience, and trial and error.

We will focus on understanding the urban environment through field visits, active observation, and field journaling. We will also look at various techniques: questionnaires, interviews, mapping, GIS, and photography. Much of our class time will be spent in the field, putting these techniques into practice.

Course Goals

- To draw upon students' general (geographic) knowledge.
- To gain skills and confidence in the use of geographic field methods, such as observation, questionnaires, mapping, and interviewing.
- To encourage students to become independent researchers.
- To appreciate the economic, social, and cultural processes that shape Montreal.
- To appreciate how knowledge is generated in human geography.
- To understand how to devise a research question, and select appropriate methods to answer that question.
- To develop team-working, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Texts

You must purchase a notebook for use as your field journal. A spiral-bound, plain paper notebook of A5 (8.2 x 5.8 inches) or similar size is the most appropriate. You'll need space to sketch maps as well as write notes. All required readings will be posted on *myCourses*.

Main texts:

Ward, Kevin (Ed.) (2014) *Researching the City*. London: Sage.

Flowerdew, Robin and David Martin. (Eds.) (2005) *Methods in Human Geography*. 2nd edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Northey, Margot, David Knight and Dianne Draper. (2012) *Making Sense – A Student's Guide to Research and Writing. Geography and Environmental Sciences*. 5th edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Assessment

Item	Weight	Due date
Field journal/Assignments	15%	October 4, Nov 29
Ethnography Paper	15%	October 14
Midterm Exam	25%	November 8
Group Research Project:		
<i>Fieldwork Plan/Research Proposal</i>	10%	October 25
<i>Oral Presentation</i>	10%	November 29
<i>Final Research report</i>	25%	December 6

Field Journal

Due: October 4th and November 29th.

The field journal is your record of thoughts, sketches, questions and ideas. You should use it to respond to the assignments for each excursion, as well as for additional thoughts and ideas that you come up with during the excursions.

Your field journal must be legible. However, do not attempt to make it a polished piece of work! Notes rather than complete sentences are fine. Half-finished ideas, rough sketches, musings and questions that you pose but do not answer fully are all part of the fieldwork process, and your journal is the place for them.

For ideas on what a field journal should include, see the following (posted on *myCourses*):

- Northey, Margot, David Knight and Dianne Draper, 2012, “Doing Field Work and Writing About It,” in *Making Sense – A Student's Guide to Research and Writing. Geography and Environmental Sciences*. 5th edition. Don Mills, ON, Oxford University Press. Chapter 11, pp 171-184.

Ethnography Assignment

Due: October 14, 5:00 pm

Group Research Project:

Fieldwork Plan

Due: 5pm, October 25th in the Drop Box, 7th floor, Burnside Hall

Word limit: 1000 words (approx. 3-4 pages), excluding bibliography

Your group’s fieldwork plan will provide the template for your field data collection efforts. It should set out your research question, discuss how that question sheds light on “bigger picture” issues, and show how you intend to answer that question. While your plan will almost certainly evolve as you proceed, it provides the starting point for your analysis. The fieldwork plan should include:

- A clear statement of your research question.

- Discuss why that research question is of interest. For example, does looking at gentrification on the Plateau contribute to theories of gentrification more broadly?
- What literature do you expect to use? Include a preliminary bibliography.
- Discuss what data you intend to collect and how. Further discuss why that approach makes most sense for your question.
- Discuss any challenges you expect to encounter.
- You will receive feedback on your fieldwork plan during individual consultation sessions during the week of October 26.

Research Report

Due: December 6th Word limit: 6,000 words (approx. 20 pages), excluding appendices

Your group's research report will organize and communicate the findings from your fieldwork, and place this in the context of the broader literature on the topic. The report should be structured as follows (see Flowerdew & Martin Ch. 17 for more details of what should go into each section):

- Title page and contents
- Abstract (about 250 words) – a succinct summary of the question and results
- Introduction – a broad overview that establishes the importance of your question, draws the reader in, and sets out your research questions and overall approach
- Literature review – places your work in the context of previous research on the topic
- Methods – explains and justifies your choice of methods, and details your data collection and analysis procedures
- Results and discussion (can be separate sections or combined) – presents your analysis, summary tables, charts, maps, statistical tests and interpretation
- Conclusion – presents your overall findings, answers the questions that you set out in the introduction, and offers ideas for future work
- References – a full list of all references, texts, and publications cited within the body of the report, using APA style (<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/library/APA.pdf>)
- Appendices - these might include questionnaires, interview questions and survey procedures, and tables and charts that amplify the summary results in the main text. This is a field course, so the emphasis must be on primary data (data that you collect yourself). However, you are encouraged to make use of secondary data from the census and other sources in order to complement your own data.

Oral Presentation

Nov 29

Time limit: 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes for questions (strictly enforced!)

Your group will present your research problem, methodology and findings to the class, using appropriate visual aids such as PowerPoint. All members of the group should participate in delivering the presentation.

Midterm Exam: November 8

The exam is worth 20% of your grade and focuses on the various methods we have learned for conducting urban field studies and the strengths and limitations of different approaches. The midterm exam will test students on concepts, theories, and terminology learned in class and through readings. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions as well as short answers.

Class Schedule

On most days, we will spend at least part of the class in the field – sun, rain or snow. You must come appropriately dressed, including comfortable footwear and waterproof clothing if necessary. You will need a pass or money for the Metro/bus for some outings.

On some days, we will meet in the field. **We will adjust the meeting time slightly if necessary so everyone is able to make it to the meeting point on days we meet in the field.** We will remain in the field until the end of class (2:25), so plan accordingly if you want to make arrangements for directly after class.

Team Formation

You will form groups of 4-5 for the purposes of taking field trips together, mutual support, and for the group project. Teams will be formed early in the term.

Safety

Safety is the most important priority. Do not take any risks to collect data, whether during class time or for your own projects. In particular:

- ALWAYS work with a partner or in your team when in the field. This includes the in-class assignments.
- If asked to leave by a business owner, do so immediately and without protest.
- Carry a mobile phone when in the field. If you do not have one, talk to the professor or the TAs.
- For real emergencies contact the SPVM (514) 393-1133 or call 911. My phone number is (514)709-7853.

Equipment

The Department of Geography has equipment that may be useful for your group project, including clipboards, clicker-counters, GPS receivers and florescent vests. Contact Paula Kestelman (paulak@geog.mcgill.ca or in Burnside 613). You can borrow digital cameras and recorders from Audiovisual (<https://home.mcgill.ca/collaboration/aa/>).

Late Submission of Assignments

If you miss a class, you will need to make up the in-class field assignment in your own time.

In the case of a group assignment, the request should be made by the affected student.

Ten percent will be deducted for every 24-hour period a piece of assessment is late. The first 24-hour period starts at the time the piece was due (e.g. if you submit something at 5.30pm when it was due at 5pm, that equates to a 10% deduction).

Let the instructor know if there are special or extreme circumstances that prevent you from handing in an assignment on time.

Important Notes

- As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.
- End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.
- In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.
- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).
- McGill is situated on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours and respects the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory on which we gather today.

GEOG 494 2021 Class Schedule

Please note: Readings (and excursions) are subject to change. All required (and optional) readings will be placed on the course myCourses page. Additional readings of specific interest to various research teams will also be provided.

Date	Location	Topic	Activity	Required Readings (posted on myCourses)
Sep 6	BH 426	Introduction. Why Fieldwork? Keeping a Field Journal	Excursion 1: Examining McGill's campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northey and Knight, "Doing Field Work and Writing About It" Jan Gehl excerpts
Sep 13	BH 426	Cognitive mapping Developing Research Questions	In class work and intro to auditing tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeisel, "Observing Physical Traces" Lynch, "Image of the City"
Sep 20	Field (various locations)	Auditing tools	Excursion 2: Various Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boarnet et al., "The Irving Minnesota Inventory to Measure Built Environments" Sallis et al (2015) Streetscape Audit tool
Sep 27	BH 426 and Field	Territories of Exclusion Defensible Space	Excursion 3: Guest Lecture and Site Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defensible Space: Merry Midveit
Oct 4	BH 426	Ethnography and ethics	In class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward Ethnography Chapter Schinazi Two Sides of the Fence
Oct 14	BH 426	Survey Design Qualitative GIS	Group formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knigge and Cope Grounded Visualization
Oct 18	Parc-X	Immigrant Spaces, Neighbourhood Change	Excursion 4 Parc X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Schinazi
Oct 25	Little Burgundy	Neighbourhood Change	Excursion 5: Little Burgundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deverteuil, "Changing Landscapes of SW Montreal" Bliek and Gauthier, "Lachine Canal" Twigge-Molency "Gentrification"
Nov 1	BH 426	Archival Research	Excursion 6: Visit to McCord Archives and Museum	Ward Archive Chapter
Nov 8	In class	Mid-term Exam	Meet with Prof and TA to discuss projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview Chapter 4
Nov 15	BH 426 and Underground City	Way finding Public/Private Space	Excursion 7 : Underground City and Chinatown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown, "Underground City" Chan, "Chinatown"
Nov 22	BH 426	Group Work	Work on Final projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward, Chapter 11 (Writing up)

			In field or consultation with Prof. and TA.	
Nov 29	BH 426	Final Presentations	Group Presentations (20 minutes)	