

# SOCI 625: Professional Development Seminar

**Location** Online through [Microsoft Teams](#) and Zoom

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Approximately every two weeks, 3:35–4:25pm Montréal time

**Time** (see schedule below for dates)

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Peter McMahan

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**Office hours** Mondays 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment

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**Syllabus** <https://soci625.netlify.com/>

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## Description

The purpose of this professional development seminar is two-fold: first, to acquaint incoming sociology graduate students with the department's graduate program (e.g., policies, expectations) and second, to familiarize students, more broadly, with the norms of the discipline.

There will be thirteen seminars held over the course of the 2021–22 academic year. Seven seminars will be held in the fall term and six in the winter.

## Expectations

Participants are expected to (1) attend the scheduled meetings and be familiar with the readings, (2) attend the Sociology Department's speaker series talks, and (3) attend at least one talk *outside* of the sociology department. Each of these expectations is detailed below.

## Attendance

(Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the seminar will be held *online*. See the [class Teams page](#) for the Zoom link.)

The success of the seminar will depend on the active and engaged participation of the graduate students. The seminar should provide a space for you to support and learn from one another as you continue through the graduate program. To this end, attendance at the seminar will constitute 75% of the evaluation for the course.

For students in the PhD program, attendance is expected at all thirteen seminars. Because some of the topics we'll cover will not be especially useful for students who are only planning to complete their masters degree (see, e.g., the entries marked with an hourglass ⌚ in the schedule), students enrolled in the masters program will only be expected to attend 8 of the seminars. Please get in touch with me if you cannot attend a meeting or will have regular difficulty accessing the meeting.

**Course materials:** Many of the seminars will also have a suggested reading from

the book *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum* (Calarco 2020). The library has access to one electronic 'copy' of the ebook, which you can also access through the course Teams site. Another useful resource is *Grad Skool Rulz: Everything You Need to Know about Academia from Admissions to Tenure* (Rojas 2011), available electronically online for a nominal fee or through the course Teams site.

## **'Talk' attendance**

All students will be required to attend the department's visiting speaker series. There are usually about six of these across the academic year, which will be announced in Teams.

In addition, each student will be expected to attend at least one sociologically relevant talk outside of the department. These can be from anywhere within McGill or outside of the university. We will discuss some good places to find external talks in class. Students should post a brief (3-5 paragraphs) summary and reaction to the external talk they attended in the "Talks" channel on Teams.

## **Accessibility and accommodation**

*Students who need accommodation or who are having trouble accessing any aspect of the course may contact me directly.* I will make every effort to accommodate individual circumstances—including religious, medical, or other personal circumstances.

Students with disabilities in need of formal accommodation are encouraged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>, phone 514-398-6009).

*Les étudiants qui ont besoin d'un accommodation ou qui ont des difficultés à accéder à un aspect du cours peuvent me contacter directement. Je ferai tout mon possible pour tenir compte des circonstances individuelles, y compris des circonstances religieuses, médicales ou autres.*

*Les étudiants handicapés ayant besoin d'un accommodation formel sont encouragés à contacter le Bureau des étudiants en situation de handicap (<http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/fr>, téléphone 514-398-6009).*

## **Academic integrity**

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 <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

*L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend*

*par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>).*

## **Language of evaluation**

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. (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

*Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).*

## **Schedule**

**Thu, Sep 2**

### **Welcome and introductions**

*We will use the first day to meet one another, discuss the seminar and its structure, and ask questions.*

#### **Reading**

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∴ Calarco (2020), *Introduction*

**Thu, Sep 9**

### **Applying for External Funding**

*What are you eligible for? ■ How many times can you apply? ■ When are the deadlines? ■ How should you prepare your application? ■ When, from whom and on what should you solicit feedback?*

#### **Reading**

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∴ Rojas (2011), *Chapter 3*

#### **Guests**

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∴ Ralph Chery (MITACS McGill Representative)

∴ Daniel Sailofsky (Graduate student)

**Thu, Sep 23**

### **Priorities and Program Timeline: What Should You Be Focusing On and When?**

What courses should you take and when? What do certain courses (e.g., reading and research, bibliographic methods) involve? ■ What should you be doing during the summer? ■ When can you expect to finish your program? ■ When should you begin the job search?

## Reading

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⋮ Calarco (2020), Chapter 5

## Thu, Oct 7

### Assistantships: Research and Teaching

What can you expect from an assistantship? ■ What's the point of an assistantship? ■ How do you balance your need for money and completing your degree? ■ What are your contractual obligations?

## Reading

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⋮ Calarco (2020), Chapter 6

## Thu, Oct 21

### Working Smarter not Harder: Tools for Efficiency

How do you manage all the 'tasks' entailed in academic life? ■ How can various software tools aid you in being efficient? (e.g., bibliographic software) ■ How can you organize, accessibly, all of the notes, data, etc. that you generate?

## Reading

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⋮ Calarco (2020), Chapter 4

## Thu, Nov 4

### Finding a Supervisor, Forming a Committee, Finding a 'Second Reader,' Etc.

How do you choose a supervisor? ■ What's the role of your supervisor? ■ What's the role of committee members, a 'second reader,' etc.? ■ How do you negotiate expectations?

## Reading

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⋮ Calarco (2020), Chapter 2

## Thu, Nov 18

### Balancing Academia and the Rest of Life

How do you cope with academic obligations and everything else? ■ How do you set limits? ■ How do you avoid burnout? ■ What can you do when faced with personal or family crisis?

## Reading

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∴ Calarco (2020), *Chapter 12*

## Tue, Jan 11

### Presenting Your Work

*How are conferences and workshops useful? ■ How do you choose a conference venue for your work? ■ How do you fund your conference attendance/presentation?*

## Reading

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∴ Calarco (2020), *Chapters 9 & 10*

## Tue, Jan 25

### Tips and Tricks to Academic Writing

*How do you structure your writing days? ■ When should you seek feedback on written work? ■ What if English is not your first language?*

## Reading

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∴ Calarco (2020), *Chapter 7*

## Tue, Feb 8

### Publish, Publish, Publish

*How do you co-author a manuscript, in practical terms? ■ How can you revise a research paper (for a class) into a publishable piece of scholarship? ■ Should you send out your manuscript and if so, where? ■ What are predatory presses? ■ How is writing book reviews valuable? ■ What is the average review time? ■ How do you respond to reviewers? ■ How do you deal with rejection? ■ How do you get a book contract? ■ Can more than one press/journal review your manuscript?*

## Reading

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∴ Calarco (2020), *Chapter 8*

## Tue, Feb 22

### Area Exams



*What are they? ■ What's the purpose of them? ■ What 'areas' are available in which to take an exam? ■ How should you prepare for an area exam? ■ What happens if you fail an area exam?*

**Tue, Mar 8**

**Doing a Dissertation**



*Why do a dissertation? ■ Should you write a monograph or an 'article-based' dissertation? ■ What does a dissertation proposal involve? ■ How should you go about preparing it? ■ What does the doctoral defense involve?*

**Tue, Mar 22**

**myPath (Goal-Setting)**



*What is the purpose of creating an annual IDP (Individual Development Plan)? ■ How do you identify your areas for development? ■ What is important for your success and wellbeing in graduate school? ■ How do you decide what goals to prioritize in graduate school? ■ How do you manage and track your goal progress?*

## **References**

- Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2020. *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. Princeton University Press.
- Rojas, Fabio. 2011. *Grad Skool Rulz: Everything You Need to Know about Academia from Admissions to Tenure*.