

McMaster University Discovery Program  
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**Plagues and the People of Hamilton**  
**A Social Sciences Inquiry Course**

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Saturdays, September 6 to December 14, 2014, 11 am - 3 pm, including lunch

Professor	Dr. Ann Herring	Email	<a href="mailto:herring@mcmaster.ca">herring@mcmaster.ca</a>
		Phone	905-525-9140, ext. 23915

Coordinator	Patrick Byrne	Email	<a href="mailto:byrnep@mcmaster.ca">byrnep@mcmaster.ca</a>
		Phone	905-525-9140, ext. 24066

Location Mills Library, Wong e-classroom, McMaster University

### **Course Description**

This course introduces you to the hidden history of epidemics in Hamilton. We will consider epidemics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and examine how the citizens of the city made sense of and responded to these distressing experiences.

You will

- learn about and experience places in Hamilton marked by epidemics
- see the city in a new way
- develop a framework for thinking about epidemics today
- strengthen your reading and research skills
- increase your skills in interpreting and evaluating works of history, art, and culture
- develop a project (for example, writing, drawing, photography, blogging, etc.) in which you express something that has touched you about Hamilton's experience with disease, past or present
- grow your creative expressions in writing, art, or in media such as photography or video

The course theme, “Plagues and the People of Hamilton”, examines how the people of Hamilton coped with major epidemics in the past. Understanding something about Hamilton’s past will give us a structure for thinking about current and future epidemics. We will look at histories of the city that provide background on

- why Hamilton was established here in the first place
- what some of its opportunities and challenges have been
- how the city continues to change

We will

- visit places, hidden and visible, where epidemics have left their mark on the social and environmental history of Hamilton, and on its people
- examine and reflect on stories that have been told about this city
- read books, watch films, study photographs, and engage with specialists as they discuss our subject
- take photographs of places we visit and share our interpretations of what those photographs mean to us

Along with exploring the ways in which epidemics have affected the people of Hamilton in the past, you will develop a project in class that gives voice to your new way of seeing the city and its people, in light of that history.

You might wish to develop your project on some aspect of

- the hidden history of your neighbourhood or another part of the city
- architecture in a certain part of the city
- a landmark or place that you now see differently, or appreciate in a new way
- a person, family or ethnic group in Hamilton’s history
- a personal experience that has taken on new meaning because of the course

You might do this by creating

- a story or poetry
- photographs, video, or artwork that illustrate your ideas
- a series of drawings, a map, or a graphic (cartoon-style) story
- a representation of your ideas in some other medium of expression

## **Purpose and Objectives of the Course**

Overall, this course aims to foster your creativity as you find different ways to give voice to the Hamilton you have come to know through exploring our subject matter. You will develop your own ideas and methods for revealing your perspective on Hamilton. Knowing the stories of a place and finding ways to weave a person's own stories into them is a powerful way to feel at home in that place. By creating different stories about Hamilton, you will be contributing to making Hamilton home for more people.

## **Class Format**

The class meets every Saturday for twelve weeks (September 6 – December 6, 2014) from 11 am to 3 pm. On Saturday, December 13 a graduation ceremony and celebration will be held, presided over by Patrick Deane, President of McMaster University. Our classroom is located at McMaster University in Mills Library, in the Wong e-classroom on the first floor. Lunch is provided by our wonderful team of volunteer cooks who donate their time to the McMaster Discovery Program.

11:00 am to 12:30	Lecture and discussions with the professor, Ann Herring.
12:30 to 1:30	Lunch
1:30 to 3:00 pm	Workshop led by the course coordinator, Patrick Byrne, and the student support team.

There are two parts to the course. During the first half of each class (lecture and discussion), Ann Herring will offer background information on the week's topic. During the second half of each class (workshop), Patrick Byrne and the support team of McMaster students will help you plan, organize, find materials for, and complete your projects. They will also lead small group discussions. They are a terrific team of resourceful people who are eager to help.

Occasionally, we will have guest experts visit the class or we will take field trips to places of significance to the course, such as to the Hamilton Steam Museum.

### **Instructor and Support Team**

Ann Herring is Professor of Anthropology at McMaster University and has been teaching here for 25 years. Her research and teaching center on historic epidemics. She is responsible for the overall structure and delivery of the course. Ann organizes the curriculum, visiting speakers, fieldtrips, and assigned readings, and she responds to the projects. She works in close collaboration with Patrick Byrne and the Student Support Team.

Patrick Byrne is Coordinator for the Discovery Program and teaches in the Arts & Science Program at McMaster. He leads the workshop portion of the course, works closely with the Student Support Team, and takes care of course logistics. Patrick will make sure that your caregiving and transportation needs are met. He is the person to speak with if you need to miss a class and want to make up the work. He will be available each week outside of class by phone and email, and for a drop-in time where you can visit and talk about the readings and assignments, your project, or work through any questions or concerns you may have.

## Student Support Team

This year's Student Support Team members are: Mythili Nair, Brandon Au, Clare MacDonald, and Varun Puri. They are exceptional students who have been selected to act as teaching assistants for the Discovery Program. They will run small group discussions, help you with your projects during the workshop sessions, and generally support your learning throughout the course.

They can be reached at:

Mythili Nair - [nairmh@mcmaster.ca](mailto:nairmh@mcmaster.ca)

Brandon Au - [aub2@mcmaster.ca](mailto:aub2@mcmaster.ca)

Clare MacDonald - [macdoca4@mcmaster.ca](mailto:macdoca4@mcmaster.ca)

Varun Puri - [puriv2@mcmaster.ca](mailto:puriv2@mcmaster.ca)

## Important Notes

### Attendance policy

The course will succeed only if you are committed to attending all classes. A good learning environment depends on students and teachers knowing each other and being able to depend on each other to be prepared for class and be ready to contribute to discussion. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If you miss a class, you will be expected to make up the work. If you miss more than 2 classes and haven't contacted the Coordinator to explain the reason you missed the class, you may be asked to stop attending the course.

### Feedback on assignments

You will not be assigned a grade for this course, but Ann Herring will provide written comments on your final projects once they have been completed.

**Working with and respecting one another**

Students, professor, coordinator, and student support team will all treat one another with courtesy. Everyone's voice is important and is to be respected. Obtrusive behaviour that interrupts, impedes, or belittles others' work in the course will not be allowed. If discourteous or disturbing incidents occur, you may be asked to stop attending the course.

**We will support you**

We want you to enjoy the course and grow through your experience with each other and the subject matter we are studying. Ann, Patrick, Varun, Brandon, Clare and Mythili are committed to ensuring that you are supported and encouraged on your way to success in the course. Tell us how we can help you!

## Class Schedule 2014

You are expected to come to lecture-discussions and workshops prepared to discuss the assigned readings that have been set for each week. This means that when you come to each day's class, you should have read all the materials assigned for that week.

The following schedule is meant to give you a guide for your weekly readings and class activities. Should we need more or less time on a given subject, we will be flexible in order to give the class enough time to discuss the material.

You should expect that homework for this course will take about an hour a day. Some weeks it will take more.

**11 am to 3 pm with lunch provided**

Week	Main Themes and special notes	Video/Visitor/Visits	Workshop	Reading and/or homework due today
<b>1. Sept 6</b>	Introduction to the instructional team and classmates; the concept behind the course; how we will learn; Hamilton as a place; and what is a plague?	Video: <b>The People and the Bay</b>	Discussion of the film; accessing the library; general discussion	
<b>2. Sept 13</b>	Archives and the making of history: where and how to find source materials, primary versus secondary sources.	<b>Visitors:</b> Nancy Bouchier and Ken Cruikshank, historians and writers <b>The People and the Bay</b>	Discussion of reading; last year's projects.	<b>Hamilton: A People's History</b> , chapters 1 - 4

Week	Main Themes and special notes	Video/Visitor/Visits	Workshop	Reading and/or homework due today
3. Sept 20	Plagues in history: the materials and frameworks we use to interpret their impact and meaning. Imagining Hamilton in the long history of the human encounter with epidemics.		Discussion of reading and preparing to take photos next week.	<b>Implementing Photovoice in Your Community</b> <a href="http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table_contents/chapter3_section20_main.aspx">http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table_contents/chapter3_section20_main.aspx</a>
4. Sept 27	The Hot Plague: Cholera	<b>Site visit:</b> Hamilton Steam Museum. <u>Bring a camera.</u>	<b>Note:</b> preliminary idea for project due next week.	<b>Cholera: Hamilton's Forgotten Epidemics, any article, but 8,14, 16 &amp; 17 are recommended</b> <a href="http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&amp;context=anthro_coll">http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&amp;context=anthro_coll</a>
5. Oct 4	The Hot Plague in Hamilton.  Discussion of Steam Museum visit, sharing photos, captions and reflections		brainstorming projects	<b>Preliminary idea for project due today;</b> Bring 1 .photo from the Steam Museum (printed or .jpg) with a caption and a 1-paragraph reflection on what the photo means to you.
6. Oct 11	<b>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING</b>			
7. Oct 18	The Forgotten Plague: the 1918 Influenza Pandemic	Video: The Last Days of Okak	Discussion of readings; consultations and feedback from Patrick and SST on project development.	<b>Hamilton: A People's History</b> , chapters 5-7



Week	Main Themes and special notes	Video/Visitor/Visits	Workshop	Reading and/or homework due today
8. Oct 25	The Forgotten Plague in Hamilton.	Visitor: Kate Patterson, archaeologist, and burying Hamilton's dead during the 1918 influenza pandemic	Work on projects with SST.	Any 2 chapters from <b>Anatomy of a Pandemic</b> <a href="http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&amp;context=anthro_coll">http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&amp;context=anthro_coll</a> Optional; visit: Ballinahinch, 316 James Street S.
9. Nov 1	<b>NO CLASS - MIDTERM RECESS</b>			
10. Nov 8	<b>Site Visit: Hamilton Cemetery</b> <u>Bring a camera.</u>		Discussion of readings, visit to cemetery; working through feedback on project plans.	<b>Hamilton: A People's History</b> , chapters 8 & 9
11. Nov 15	The White Plague: Tuberculosis in Hamilton	<b>Visitor:</b> Emily Cowall, anthropologist, and the Inuit Photographic Project	Discussion of readings; sharing photos from cemetery tour; work on projects	<b>Before 'The San'</b> , any chapter, but 13 & 14 are recommended <a href="http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&amp;context=anthro_coll">http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&amp;context=anthro_coll</a> Bring 1 .photo from the cemetery tour (printed or .jpg) with a caption and a 1-paragraph reflection on what the photo means to you.

Week	Main Themes and special notes	Video/Visitor/Visits	Workshop	Reading and/or homework due today
12. Nov 22	Reflection: Hamilton's visible and hidden history of epidemics. What has been revealed? What has been masked?		Work on projects	Compile your photos, captions, and reflections and think about what they mean to you, and what they express to others.
13. Nov 29	Thinking about a "coming plague"		Work on projects	
14. Dec 6	Presentations of final projects			
15. Dec 13	<b>Graduation Ceremony with President Patrick Deane. Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall 111.</b>			