# ARTSSCI 4MN1 / Local Explorations: Patterns of Social Connection in the City

## 2022-23 – Term 1 (Fall 2022)

**Instructors:** Jackie Brown (brownji@mcmaster.ca) and Rosalind Pfaff (pfaffrc@mcmaster.ca)

### Course Dates and Times

* **Saturday, October 22, 10:00am–4:30pm**
	+ Meet at Studio 303 at 401 Richmond Street W in Toronto at 10:00am
	+ Depart from Evergreen Brick Works at 550 Bayview Ave in Toronto at 4:30pm
* **Sunday, October 23, 10:00am–3:30pm**
	+ LRW-3001, McMaster University
* **Wednesday, November 2, 7:00–9:00pm (presentations)**
	+ LRW-3001, McMaster University

### Course Description

Loneliness has been described as one of the biggest public health issues of our time. While the urban environment is densely populated, social isolation is pervasive. Furthermore, cities have long been characterized by economic and racial segregation, reinforced by urban planning frameworks and policies. This course will explore the concept of “connection” in cities through the lenses of urban planning, public health, and sociology. It will also examine foundational questions and thinkers on loneliness as part of the human condition.

This is an experiential, place-based course. You will be introduced to a variety of historical and contemporary case studies to learn about patterns of polarization and segregation, as well as efforts to foster more connected communities. Through site visits to several Toronto-based projects, neighbourhood walking tours, seminar-style discussions, and reflective exercises, you will be challenged to bridge theory with practice and to relate course themes to your own experiences.

### Course Objectives

1. Promote critical thinking about the past and present of socio-spatial segregation and social isolation in cities.
2. Introduce students to examples of community-based projects that address issues related to housing, the environment, arts and culture, and more.
3. Engage students in experiential learning through site visits to initiatives that highlight course themes.

### Course Materials and Readings

All course materials and readings will be sent to students by email by October 3. You do not have to purchase or obtain any materials yourself.

### Course Outline

#### Session 1: Introduction

In the introduction to this course, we will explore two different but related understandings of connection in the urban environment. The first touches on an individual’s relationships with others and the loneliness that is often experienced in their absence. The second refers more broadly to the social connectedness of a city on the basis of factors such as age, income, and race. We will briefly look at ways in which connection is studied, from measuring social capital to mapping spatial inequalities. We will also review several urban planning frameworks that have played a large role in the evolution of North American cities. The pandemic has further disrupted interpersonal interaction and we expect that the implications of COVID-19 for cities will come up in discussion.

#### Session 2: Making Space for Culture

In this session, we will explore the challenges of creating and preserving arts and cultural spaces in cities. Using the community hub 401 Richmond as a springboard, we will look at innovative policy tools and projects to combat profit-driven development. Topics for consideration include adaptive reuse, community ownership of projects, long-term sustainability, and the role of gentrification in displacement.

#### Session 3: Socio-Spatial Segregation

The first part of this session will focus on the segregation of North American cities by income, race, and ethnicity. We will also examine how urban planning has exacerbated (and tried to rectify) socioeconomic divisions through case studies of the Regent Park neighbourhood in Toronto and the Pruitt-Igoe social housing project in St. Louis, Missouri.

The second part of this session will explore how wealth disparities in the Global South often manifest in physical divisions between the urban core and informal settlements on the periphery. We will look at efforts to foster connectivity in cities such as Medellín, where the municipal government has committed to a strategy referred to as “social urbanism.”

#### Session 4: Cities and Nature

In this session, we will look at the complex relationship between cities and the environment. Using Toronto’s ongoing project to “renaturalize” the mouth of the Don River as a case study, we will discuss how attitudes toward planning with and for nature have changed dramatically over time. Historically, altering natural landscapes was seen as a tool for urban growth, and we will examine how this sometimes led to environmental injustice and other repercussions. The session will then explore the movement to reintegrate nature through landscape connectivity, ecosystem restoration, and renewed human connections to green spaces and waterways. We will conclude by highlighting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts at the city level to protect against extreme weather events such as heat waves and flash flooding.

#### ​​Session 5: Housing (Un)Affordability

This session will explore the global housing crisis and its implications for social integration and inclusion. We will look at affordability challenges, with a particular focus on Toronto and Hamilton, and examine the ways in which patterns of rent hikes, evictions, and financialization affect the most vulnerable. We will conclude by looking at local solutions, like inclusionary zoning and non-profit housing cooperatives, as well as innovative international models, like Vienna’s social housing system.

#### Session 6: Social Infrastructure

Sociologist Eric Klinenberg defines social infrastructure as “the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact” and argues that its collapse is a key cause of isolation and polarization in public life. This session will explore examples of social infrastructure, including libraries and parks, as well as “third places” such as coffee shops.

We will also examine the impact of social infrastructure on a community’s capacity to deal with shocks and stresses. In particular, we will look at the role of neighbourhood spaces and organizations in responding to climate events like heat waves as well as mutual aid systems for coping with economic struggles. Discussions of social infrastructure will be contextualized within the growing movement toward a “social and solidarity economy” built on principles of self-reliance, care and community-building.

### Methods of Evaluation

This class has 3 components graded on a pass/fail basis. Students must pass all components to pass the course.

**Presentation:** Working with a partner, prepare a presentation related to an aspect of the course material. More details will be provided during the course. Presentations will take place on **Wednesday, November 2 from 7:00pm–9:00pm**.

**Personal Essay:** Write a 3-4 page reflection (double-spaced) on a topic covered in one of the course sessions that was of interest to you. Write about why you found a particular idea or initiative to be thought-provoking. Bring in at least one external source from your own research. Feel free to discuss the topic in the context of your personal experiences. The essay will be due by email to instructors on **Monday, November 14 at 11:59pm**. Late submissions will only be accepted based on prior discussion with instructors.

**Participation:** Active participation in class discussions is expected and encouraged.

## **SENATE-APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS**

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [*Academic Integrity Policy*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf)*,* located at [https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures- guidelines/](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-%20guidelines/).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* improper collaboration in group work.
* copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/personal/rbishop_mcmaster_ca/Documents/www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

**Some courses may** use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### ONLINE PROCTORING

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [*Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [*Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Accommodations-Policy.pdf) policy.

### REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [*Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Requests-for-Relief-for-Missed-Academic-Term-Work-Policy-on.pdf).

### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done either by the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### NOTES FOR ALL ARTS & SCIENCE COURSES

1. Some of the statements above refer to a “Faculty Office”; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list.
3. For additional information regarding requests for accommodation, relief for missed term work (e.g. MSAF), deferred examinations, etc., students should read carefully the [Requests](https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/) and [Resources](https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/) pages on the Arts & Science Program website.