COURSE SUMMARY
This course provides a broad overview of racial/ethnic and class dimensions of place-based inequalities in urban neighborhoods. In order to understand how ‘place’ matters for individual life chances and group stratification, we will review the neighborhood effects literature and examine key theories of neighborhood and community social processes. Patterns and causes of neighborhood structural conditions such as racial residential segregation, racially-mixed neighborhoods, and concentrated poverty will be assessed. Finally, the empirical evidence on place-based social inequalities in health, crime and education will be examined. These issues will be evaluated primarily within the context of the United States, a pluralistic society where the coupling of race, class and place has endured. However, comparisons will be made with Canada and (to a lesser extent) Western Europe, where appropriate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Your overall course grade will be based on four components, as follows:

1. Participation – 30%
   • Attendance. Since the class only meets once a week, attendance is mandatory. Requests for excused absences may be granted by permission of the instructor only (not the TA). Note that excused absences are typically granted only in cases of medical emergencies (where a students’ own health is affected) or family emergency (i.e., death in the family). Contribution to participation grade = 10%.

   • In-class methodological activities. Methodological activities will be scheduled for the term. These activities are meant to give students practical hands-on experience in some of the common methods used in neighborhoods research. Contribution to participation grade = 10%.

   • In-class discussion activities. Students will be assigned into small discussion groups consisting of 8 students. Students will be randomly assigned to a group at the
beginning of the term and will remain in the same discussion group throughout the term for all discussion activities. Contribution to participation grade = 10%

Please note that it is not possible to “make up” missed in-class discussion activities. Students who are not in attendance during the in-class discussions will not receive points.

2. Neighborhood Project – 30%
Students will work in pairs for the neighborhood project. The project consists of comparing and contrasting the social life of two Montreal neighborhoods, one affluent and one working class. The neighborhood project will provide students first-hand experience in applying neighborhoods-based methods in research. Eligible neighborhoods will be announced in class and posted on MyCourses. The neighborhood project consists of three parts:
- 4 direct observations of social life (2 per neighborhood). Each direct observation must be a minimum of 2 hours in duration and completed on different dates. Sites must be chosen strategically and must help to illuminate the research question. Field notes from direct observations must be thick description (4 pages max, double space).
- 2 systematic social observations (SSO) (1 per neighborhood)
- Final report (6 pages max, double space)

Students can choose their own partners for the neighborhood project. Since this is a team effort, each team will submit only one neighborhood project.

4. Final exam – 40%
- The final exam will consist of multiple choice questions and one essay.
- Final exam will be scheduled during the regular exam week.

Evaluation: You will be evaluated on your knowledge of key terms, theories, and empirical research studies covered in the readings and lectures and your ability to critically analyze the concepts as they relate to issues of neighborhood inequality. Terms and concepts covered in the movies may also appear on the final exam.

REQUIRED READINGS
You are expected to read the assigned material before class.

Books
Four books are required for this class. They are available for purchase from the Bookstore. Copies (of non-electronic books) are also available on reserve in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library.

(Note: This book is available as an eBook from McGill library.)


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**Journal Articles**
In addition to the text books, we will draw on journal articles. All journal articles will be available for download as PDFs from MyCourses.

**POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**
Late assignments will incur a penalty of one full grade. Each additional 24-hour delay (including over the week-end) will incur another full grade penalty per 24-hour cycle. For example, if your reflection memo #1 is submitted 3 days late, and you earn a B on the assignment, your final grade—adjusted for lateness—will be C.

**PLAGIARISM**
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).

**SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**
*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.*

**COPYRIGHT MATERIAL**
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DETAILLED COURSE OUTLINE

**Neighborhoods, communities, and neighborhood effects – part 1**
January 10:


**Neighborhoods, communities, and neighborhood effects – part 2**
January 17:


**Methodological Reading:**

**Recommended:**

**In-class methodological activity: SSO of McGill ghetto**

**Racial residential segregation: causes and trends**
January 24:


Jan 31:


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**January 31st class:**
*Small group in-class discussion activity #1*

**In-class video:** Race, Power of an Illusion, episode 3 (25 mins)

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**Segregation and concentrated poverty**

February 7:


**Methodological Reading:**

**Recommended:**

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**In-class methodological activity: direct observation of public incivility**
Urban underclass debate
February 14:


**Recommended:**

**DUE: Fieldnotes from in-class methods activity - direct observation of public incivility**

Gentrification
February 21:


**DUE: Completed SSO inventories (1 per neighborhood; 2 total).**

Neighborhood racial/ethnic diversity: trends and causes
February 28:


**Recommended:**
Friedman, Samantha. 2007. "Do Declines in Residential Segregation Mean Stable Neighborhood Racial Integration in Metropolitan America? A Research Note." *Social Science Research*.
The Creative Class: socially engineering neighborhood diversity
March 14:


**DUE: First set of neighborhood observation fieldnotes (1 per neighborhood; 2 total).**

Examining neighborhood effects on health
March 21:


Recommended:


March 21\(^{st}\) class:
Small group in-class discussion activity #2

In-class video: Unnatural Causes - Place Matters (29 mins)
Examining neighborhood effects on educational attainment
March 28:


*Recommended*:

Examining neighborhood effects crime and violence
April 4:


*Recommended*:

**DUE: Second set of neighborhood observation fieldnotes (1 per neighborhood; 2 total).
Social policies to address neighborhood-based inequalities

April 11:


Recommended:

Polity, “What is Social Policy?”


April 11th class:
Small group in-class discussion activity #3