

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY

FYSM 1107 A

Fall 2026

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University

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Winter seminar will be taught by another instructor. (Details to follow.)

Brightspace:

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/450005>

1. Course Description

This seminar course blends critical urban geography theory with field work, hands-on assignments, skill-building activities and conversations with practitioners. We will study the various relations of power that shape urban life including capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, racism and ableism. Exploring urban social movements, community-based initiatives and creative projects, we will examine how people organize to achieve socio-economic and environmental justice in Ottawa and other cities.

The course is also geared towards helping students gain confidence within the university environment. To this end, students will begin to develop skills in writing, critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative inquiry. They will improve on verbal communication skills by presenting their ideas in the classroom; develop problem-solving skills; and learn the challenges and benefits of collaborative approaches to learning. Students will be invited to become aware of their own social location in relation to the themes studied in class.

Course Format

This course is delivered in person. Seminars meet Fridays, 11:35 a.m.–2:25 p.m. One session (October 2) is asynchronous (no in-person class); several sessions include mandatory off-site components (field trips), as noted in the Course Calendar below. Students should monitor Brightspace and emails for logistical and other updates.

2. Prerequisites

None.

3. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply critical urban theory to real-world contexts and opportunities;
- Critically examine different approaches to analyzing and building social justice in the city;
- Demonstrate academic skills including reading, writing, presenting, conducting research, and critical analysis;
- Identify and engage with opportunities for social justice work on campus and in the city of Ottawa; and
- Identify services and programs that support their academic careers at Carleton University.

4. Texts & Course Materials

Students are not required to purchase textbooks for this course. Unless otherwise indicated, all assigned readings for the fall term are available at no cost on Brightspace through ARES, Carleton's electronic course reserve system. Full citations and links for each reading are provided in the Course Calendar below. A list of required readings for the winter term will be provided at the start of that term.

Students are required to have a paper notebook for in-class, reading-based journal writing exercises (approx. cost: \$3–\$5 at the University bookstore or any retailer; price may vary). There are no restrictions preventing the use of a second-hand, reused, or already-owned notebook — any standard notebook is acceptable. Journal entries will be photographed/scanned and uploaded to Brightspace at the end of each class (see Evaluation, below).

*Course content may be modified at the instructor's discretion; ***students should monitor email and Brightspace for updates.***

5. Course Calendar — Fall 2026

Date	Topics / Activities	Readings / Assignments Due
September 11	Introduction to course.	Course syllabus
September 18	Social justice and the university <i>*Assignment 1 due before class on Brightspace.</i> <i>Reading journal entries begin this week (see Evaluation).</i>	hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. Introduction, pp. 1–12. https://www.are.na/block/1974627 Kadi, J. (1996). "Stupidity Deconstructed." In Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker. South End Press, pp. 39–57. https://www.writingwithmovements.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Kadi-Stupidity-Decon.pdf
September 25	The Right to the City	Merrifield, A. (2017). "Fifty years on: The Right to the City" in The Right to the City: A Verso Report. Pp. 15–37. Case study: Horizon Ottawa
October 2	Asynchronous (no in-person class) <i>Truth and Reconciliation experiential learning activity (details to follow).</i> <i>*Experiential Learning Exercise 1 — 5%</i>	<i>Assignment details and readings will be posted on Brightspace.</i>
October 9	Housing justice <i>*Mandatory field trip (details forthcoming)</i> Guest speaker: Faizal Deen	August, M. (2020). "The financialization of Canadian multi-family rental housing: From trailer to tower." Journal of Urban Affairs, 42(7), 975–997. https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1080/07352166.2019.1705846

	*Experiential Learning Exercise 2 — 10%	Case study: Renoviction in Old Ottawa South (details to follow)
October 16	Transit Justice <i>*Experiential learning activity (mobility mapping)</i>	Enright, T. (2019). "Transit justice as spatial justice: learning from activists." <i>Mobilities</i> , 14(5), 665–680. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1607156 Case study: Untokening — https://www.untokening.org
October 23	Field trip: Carleton University Art Gallery <i>(details to follow)</i>	<i>[Topic/readings to be confirmed by instructor]</i>
October 26–30	Fall Break — no classes	
November 6	Food justice <i>Library visit (second half of class)</i>	Tornaghi, C. (2017). "Urban Agriculture in the Food-Disabling City: (Re)defining Urban Food Justice, Reimagining a Politics of Empowerment." <i>Antipode</i> , Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 781–801.
November 13	Policing and criminalization <i>Guest speaker: TBD</i>	Maynard, R. (2020). "Police Abolition/Black Revolt." <i>Topia</i> , Vol. 41(1), pp. 70–78. Podcast: https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/freedom-dreams/id1588988853?i=1000605344617
November 20	Disability Justice	Piepzna-Samarasinha, L.L. (2018). "Care Webs: Experiments in Creating Collective Access." In <i>Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice</i> . Arsenal Pulp Press. Case study: https://sinsinvalid.org
November 27	Student-led content <i>(TBD)</i>	TBD
December 4 <i>Last day of classes for this course.</i>	Final projects due – 20% <i>Final presentations and course review.</i>	No readings

6. Evaluation

a. List of Evaluation Elements (See detailed guidelines on Brightspace)

Element	Description	Weight
Contributions to the learning community	Active participation (regular attendance, contributions to class discussion and Brightspace discussion boards); participation in class activities, field trips, and off-site activities; class surveys and input on course content; peer support and collaborative work; interaction with guest speakers; consistent progress.	15%
Assignment 1: Your Learning Journey	Share the story of your journey as a learner in 500 words (see guidelines on Brightspace). Full marks for on-time submission according to guidelines. Due September 18, before class, via Brightspace.	5%
Fishbowl	Each seminar opens with a lively, informal, student-led "fishbowl" discussion of the assigned readings. Students sign up for one fishbowl slot by September 18 (sign-up sheet linked on Brightspace).	15%
Reading journal	Students will be guided through journal writing exercises in class starting September 18. Entries will be uploaded to Brightspace at the end of each class. Each entry is worth 5%. Your final mark will be made up of the best 6 entries submitted over the term, meaning students may miss up to 2 entries without penalty. Guidelines and prompts vary and are provided in class. <i>Late submissions will not be accepted.</i>	30%
Experiential learning exercises	Two mandatory experiential activities connect course material to lived experience and fieldwork: • Truth and Reconciliation activity (October 2) — 5% • Housing Justice activity (October 9) — 10%	15%
Final project	A small-group project due on December 4 (details to follow).	20%

Submission of Written Assignments and Late Penalties

Assignments must be submitted via Brightspace on the due date. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted. Late assignments are subject to a reduction of the overall mark at the rate of 5% per calendar day past the due date; assignments will not be accepted on Brightspace more than one week past the due date. Students facing extenuating circumstances must contact the instructor to discuss alternative arrangements (see Section 10, Requests for Academic Accommodations, below).

Reading journal entries are hand-written in class and must be uploaded to Brightspace by the end of class. No late journal entry submissions will be accepted.

b. Assignments, Tests and Examinations

This course has no midterm or final examination.

c. Final Grade Approval

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, letter grades in this course have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90–100	B+ = 77–79	C+ = 67–69	D+ = 56–59	F = Below 50
A = 85–89	B = 73–76	C = 63–66	D = 53–56	
A- = 80–84	B- = 70–72	C- = 60–62	D- = 50–52	

To be considered in good standing, students must receive a grade of D-. Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

7. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Unless otherwise stated for a specific assignment, students may not use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to generate content that is submitted as one's own original work. Copying or paraphrasing AI-generated content without disclosure and citation is considered a violation of academic integrity, as is any use of AI on the Reading Journal, Fishbowl, or Experiential Learning Exercises, which are intended to reflect the student's own voice and direct experience.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continues to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

8. Statement on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism: The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas, or works of others may be drawn include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet, and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (see Section 7 above);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- failing to acknowledge sources through proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotation marks.

- Re-use of prior work: Students may not submit substantially the same piece of work submitted elsewhere for academic credit for evaluation in this course.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of “F” for the course.

9. Statement on Student Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off-Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: 613-238-3311, or text 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

10. Requests for Academic Accommodations

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (<https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>).

Short-term extenuating circumstances (normally 5 days or less): You may be asked to complete the University's Self-Declaration Form (Academic Consideration for Coursework Form). Medical documentation is not required to support these requests.

Disability: Students requiring academic accommodation on the basis of disability must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) and request a Letter of Accommodation be sent to the instructor as early as possible each term.

Religious obligations: Students requiring accommodation on the basis of religious observance must submit a formal written request to the instructor, normally within the first two weeks of the term (and in no case later than the second-last week of classes), including suggested alternate dates or means of satisfying the requirement.

Pregnancy and family status: Students requiring accommodation on the basis of pregnancy or family status should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate academic accommodation.

11. Policy on Classroom Recording

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including discussions and presentations (including student presentations), are protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). Students may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Audio or video recording of class sessions by students is not permitted without the prior written consent of the instructor and, where applicable, of any students being recorded. Students approved for accommodated note-taking should contact the instructor to discuss arrangements.

Additional Course Policies

Communications

To avoid answering the same question multiple times, students are encouraged to post questions about assignments or course content on Brightspace. For questions of a personal nature, please email the instructor using your Carleton email account with “FYSM 1107” in the subject heading. The instructor may not respond to emails over the weekend. Email is appropriate for simple inquiries; if your question cannot be answered in a sentence or two, please schedule a meeting.

Drop Date

Please consult the Carleton University Calendar for the last day in the term to withdraw from a course with full fee adjustment: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Netiquette

All students are expected to adhere to Carleton University's Expectations of Student Behaviour Online while participating in Brightspace discussion boards. See <https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources/netiquette/>. Questions or concerns about online conduct may be directed to the Manager of Student Conduct and Harm Reduction, Dillon Brady, at DillonBrady@cunet.carleton.ca.

Services for Indigenous Students

The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (CISCE) supports First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis students, staff, and faculty by providing culturally safe spaces for dialogue and learning, and develops resources and training to educate the Carleton community about Indigenous histories, worldviews, and perspectives. Learn more at <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/cisce/students/> or email Indigenous@carleton.ca.