Course Description

How can the cholera epidemic of 1832 and the Spanish Flu help us understand Ottawa’s response to the ongoing pandemic? How could a feminist sociological analysis help us make sense of the flannel that floods the Glebe every time the Ottawa Redblacks are playing? What is the relationship between the Cold War and the decades-long state surveillance of gay men and women in Ottawa?

In this course students will be introduced to and employ sociological ideas to make sense of Ottawa as both a dynamic “town” and as the national capital city and representation of the "crown". In this course, we will discuss Canadian identity and nation building, housing and homelessness, health and health crises, food security, childhood and youth, sexualities, gender, racialization, policing, sustainability, transit, sports, and other topics related to Ottawa.

I have designed this course to be as experiential as possible; the city will be our classroom. Methods of instruction will include field trips, walking tours, and guest speakers. Students will get hands-on research experience by completing research projects on Ottawa neighbourhoods that require both archival research in the “Ottawa Resource Room” at the MacOdrum Library, and the use of observational research methods.

Assignments and in-class activities will allow students to develop these critical academic skills: notetaking, studying, sociological research, academic writing, and planning and delivering oral presentations.