

Ryerson University – Faculty of Arts

SSH 502: Community Action Research

Mondays, 8:10am to 11:00 am – Kerr East 323A

Instructor: Prof. Paul S. Moore
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Office Hours: Mondays, 11:10 am or by appointment

I will normally reply to E-mail or phone messages within 48 hours. E-mail is best used as business communications. To discuss ideas and the substance of lectures, assignments, or activities, it is best to meet with me in person during office hours or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course connects the classroom with the community to explore questions at the forefront of social research and community development. Students will volunteer with local organizations. They will be introduced to ways of thinking and scholarship that cut across disciplines, combine theory and practice, encourage collaboration, and work with the ambiguities of the real world. Students will strengthen their self-awareness, leadership skills, and capacities to research and communicate effectively about complex social issues.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course will focus on Ryerson-on-Yonge in Historic Context, working with the Ryerson Library and Archives to interpret the social and cultural significance of their new building on Yonge at Gould. In the course, you will learn about collaborative action research, about community-based observational research, about combining multiple research methods for cultural interpretation. You will help conduct a community survey of Ryerson's relation to its downtown neighbourhood. You will relate that present-day survey to historical research about Yonge-Dundas, and you will compose a report interpreting your research, which Ryerson may use to promote the new Student Learning Centre on Yonge.

Component	Format	Value	Due Dates
Seminar Participation	Participation in weekly class discussion of readings	20%	Weeks 3 to 10, Weekly
Research Fieldnote Reflections	Three 2-3 page summaries of the research process so far, in relation to theories and methods	15%	Any three of Weeks 4 to 9
Group Project Reports	Interpretive Presentations and Reports related to the project	40%	First Ideas (Week 6) Framework (Week 7 or 8) Draft (Week 11) Final (Week 13)
Synthesis Essay	10-12 page written analysis of theoretical work, methodological process and research content	25%	Due Fri. April 22, strictly by 5PM

Weekly Reflections and Class Discussions..... 20%
 In Weeks 3 to 10, we will have an in-depth class discussion relating a theoretical or historical common reading. Come prepared to participate by composing a 1-paragraph reflection (to be shared with class), or other assigned activities applying theory and method from readings.

Research Fieldnote Reflections..... 15%
 Any three times during Weeks 4 to 9, submit a 2-3 page (about 750 word) summary of your personal role in the group research done to date, drawing upon theories and methods discussed.

Group Project “Ryerson on Yonge in Historic Context”..... 40%
 In Weeks 4 to 10, small groups will plan and work toward composing a research project for the Ryerson Library website, in connection with the building of the new Student Learning Centre. The class as a whole, and each group, iteratively and collaboratively decides how to develop the theme, method, research, and writing for their project.

First Ideas, presented and discussed with class Week 6
Interpretive Framework, presented and discussed with class Week 9 or 10
Draft Report, presented and discussed with Ryerson Library..... Week 11
Formal and Final Presentations Week 13

Synthesis of Research and Reflection Essay (10-12 pages; Due April 22, 5pm) 25%
 Individually you will compose an essay incorporating reflection on (1) the “action research” process of the group and overall class; (2) the content and analysis of the specific group report; (3) the overall theoretical discussion of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As in all courses, you are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct. Read about the Code, issues around proper citation, cheating, and plagiarism, and consider your student rights and responsibilities at the following Ryerson website: www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity

ACCESS CENTRE

Students requiring assistance and accommodations for their circumstances should introduce themselves to me *immediately* to discuss a plan for the course.

Schedule of Activities, Readings, and Lectures

Week 1 – Jan 10: Introductions, Ryerson-on-Yonge, Past, Present, and Future

Introductions, First look at the archive, on the street, planning for the future

Week 2 – Jan 17: Cities and Modernity / Action Research Process

Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *On Individuality and Social Forms* (University of Chicago Press, 1971)

Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” from *The Work of Art and other Writings on Media* (Belknap Press, 2008)

Senge and Scharmer, “Community Action Research,” in Reason and Bradbury, eds., *Handbook of Action Research* (Sage Publishing, 2001)

[Workshop on group norms, getting to know others in class better, forming groups, first discussions of how groups working schedules, strengths and weaknesses]

Week 3 – Jan 24: Walking in the City through Cognitive Mapping

Jameson, “Cognitive Mapping,” in Nelson and Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 1988)

De Certeau, “Walking in the City,” from *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 1* (University of California Press, 1988)

[Meeting with Library administration, their goals and needs for our research, their vision of the future of campus. A look at Ryerson history.]

Week 4 – Jan 31: Poverty and Downtown / Social Surveys and Surveillance

Rupert, *The Moral Economy of Cities: Shaping Good Citizens* (University of Toronto Press, 2006)

Valverde, “Racial Purity, Sexual Purity, and Immigration Policy,” in *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (McClelland and Stewart, 1991)

[Report back about Cognitive maps of campus-downtown relations; further workshop and discussion of how to organize group research, what is possible?]

Week 5 – Feb 7: Sexuality and Downtown / Walking in the City

Maynard, “Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures in Toronto, 1890-1930,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1994).

Strange, “Good Times and Bad Girls,” in *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (University of Toronto Press, 1995)

[Still fixing details: Visit with a community group off campus, possibly Regent Park Revitalization Project, and a walking tour about “housing” issues in the area.]

Week 6 – Feb 14: Consumption and Downtown Department Stores

Barth, “Department Store,” in *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture* (Oxford, 1980)

Monod, “The Development of the Mass Market,” in *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (University of Toronto Press, 1996)

[First Ideas, initial presentations and discussions of group projects]

Week 7 – Feb 28: Mass Entertainment and Downtown Theatres

Nasaw, “Palaces for the People,” in *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (Harvard University Press, 1993)

Peiss, “Dance Madness,” in *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Temple University Press, 1986)

[Still fixing details: talk with professionals and professors working in community service, or visit to another social service site, such as a food bank, shelter, or settlement agency]

Week 8 – March 7: Utilities and Food Downtown and at Home

Nye, “A Clean, Well-Lighted Hearth,” in *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (MIT Press, 1997)

Zukin, “Gentrification, Cuisine, and Critical Infrastructure,” from *Landscapes of Power From Detroit to Disney World* (University of California Press, 1991)

[Still fixing details: talk with professionals and professors working in government, business and management, or visit to a site such as city hall or police headquarters]

Week 9 – March 14: Traffic and Transit: Getting Around and Downtown

McShane, “The Origins and Globalization of Traffic Control Signals,” *Journal of Urban History* 25, no. 3 (1999).

Norcliffe, “The Cycling Crowd,” from *The Ride to Modernity: The Bicycle in Canada, 1869-1900*. (University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[Half the groups present their Interpretive Framework for project, discuss what remains to do]

Week 10 – March 28: Circulation of Objects

Straw, “Spectacles of Waste,” in Boutros and Straw, eds., *Circulation and the City: Essays on Urban Culture* (McGill-Queen’s, 2010)

[Half the groups present their Interpretive Framework for project, discuss what remains to do]

Week 11 – March 28: Interim Reports and Discussion with Ryerson Library management.

Week 12 – April 4: Workshop and planning for final reports, and for individual essays.

Week 13 – April 11: Group Reports formally presented to Ryerson Library management