

**IBH 1BB3**  
**Insight and Inquiry: Questions to Change the World**  
**Fall 2022 Course Outline**

**DeGroote School of Business**  
**McMaster University**

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***COURSE OBJECTIVE***

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*This course will help students understand the value of critical thinking and strengthen their ability to ask and explore insightful questions about the world around them. Students will be introduced to a diverse range of ideas and tools that will benefit them in both their university and professional careers.*

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***INSTRUCTORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

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**INSTRUCTOR**

**Dr. Alpha Abebe**

[abebea@mcmaster.ca](mailto:abebea@mcmaster.ca)

Office Hours: By Appointment

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:**

Natasha Malik

[malikn25@mcmaster.ca](mailto:malikn25@mcmaster.ca)

**LECTURE INFO:**

Location: Burke Science Building (BSB) 138

Tuesdays 3:30-4:20pm (in person lectures)

Thursdays 2:30-4:20pm (usually the group work slot)

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***COURSE ELEMENTS***

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|                     |                   |                 |                       |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Credit Value: 3     | Leadership: Yes   | IT skills: No   | Global view: Yes      |
| A2L: Yes            | Ethics: Yes       | Numeracy: No    | Written skills: Yes   |
| Participation: Yes  | Innovation: Yes   | Group work: Yes | Oral skills: Yes      |
| Evidence-based: Yes | Experiential: Yes | Final Exam: No  | Guest speaker(s): Yes |

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## ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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*In a world of smartphones and Google, it seems we can find answers in an instant. However, the greatest challenge is to ask the right questions, recognizing that how we ask a question determines the nature of the answers available to us. Effective leaders are constantly formulating creative questions and explorations about themselves and about the world around them. Students will focus on how to ask good questions about specific issues, how to collect and analyse information, and how to apply these insights in different ways. Students will be introduced to an insight and inquiry process that challenges them to think critically and methodically in their pursuit of knowledge and understanding. The skills students acquire in this course will apply to other university courses and the world beyond, including business, government and community.*

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## ***LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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As a result of taking this course...

1. You will be able to define Humanities and articulate how the study of Humanities disciplines can complement the study of business and speak to real world issues.
2. You will recognize the importance and value of asking questions in all aspects of life, school, and work. You will be able to assess the quality of questions and identify how framing questions in different ways leads to different types of answers.
3. You will be challenged to think critically about your position and identities in society, and how this impacts the way you see and examine the world.
4. You will learn the value of empathy and humility, and ways to practice this when encountering and exploring perspectives and experiences that are different from your own.
5. You will have a broad understanding of the research cycle and will be able to identify a topic, define a question, and articulate a problem for any given research project.
6. You will become familiar with a variety of information sources and be able to both find them and evaluate their quality and utility. You will have been exposed to techniques for organizing and keeping track of your sources.
7. You will be provided with a variety of tips and strategies for succeeding in your university and professional careers.
8. You will learn and implement best practices for working in a group. You will work together in a group to gather and synthesize information as well as present your findings.

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## ***COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS***

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1. Web-based platforms used in this course (note: additional online tools and/or platforms may be introduced during the course):
  - **Avenue to Learn** (A2L) for course readings, announcements, assignment submissions and grades: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>
  - **Zoom** in the event we need to pivot to a virtual lecture and/or group work: <https://zoom.us/>
  - **Microsoft Teams** for recorded lecture uploads, in class activities, and some announcements (invitation/code for the class team will be provided).

There is no textbook for this course. Electronic copies of all required readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn (A2L) and MS Teams. Below is a list of the readings that will be assigned. See lecture schedule below for further details regarding the required reading for each week:

- The Value of Humanities (2015). In. Holm, P., Jarrick, A., & Scott, D. *Humanities world report 2015*. Springer Nature.
- How to Engage Constructively in Courses that Take a Critical Social Justice Approach. (2017). In O. Sensoy, & R DiAngelo, *Is Everyone Really Equal? An introduction to concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press.
- Evaluating Statements and Identifying Sources. (2021). In. Kilcrease, B, *How to Think, Read and Write in the Twenty-First Century*. University of Toronto Press.
- From Topics to Questions. (2016) In. Boothe, W.C.; et al., *The Craft of Research, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Perreault, G., & Paul, N. (2018). An image of refugees through the social media lens: A narrative framing analysis of the Humans of New York series 'Syrian Americans'. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 7, 79-102.
- How to Decide Upon a Methodology. (2009). In. Dawson, C. *Introduction to research methods: A practical guide for anyone undertaking a research project* (pp. 14-26). Hachette UK.
- Critical Analytical Writing. (2017). In. Cottrell, S. *Critical Thinking Skills - Developing Effective Analysis and Argument* (pp. 147-169). Macmillan Education UK.
- Remington-Doucette, S. (2013). Wicked Problems and their Resolution. In *Sustainable World: Approaches to Analyzing & Resolving Wicked Problems* (pp. 43-80). Kendall Hunt Publishing.
- Tilley, S. (2016) *Theorizing Data*. In 'Doing Respectful Research' (pp. 163-171).

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT**

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### **COURSE CONTENT DELIVERY:**

| Activity          | Delivery              | Description  | Tool(s)   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Lectures          | Synchronous in Person | Lectures will be led by the Instructor and will also include in-class activities and discussions.  | In Person (via Zoom if there is need to switch to virtual delivery) |
| Recorded Lectures | Asynchronous          | Lectures will be recorded and available to view for the entirety of the course   | Uploaded to Microsoft Teams weekly.                                 |
| Announcements     | Asynchronous          | Important course information, material, and announcements will be shared on both A2L and MS Teams. Please ensure you have notifications and/or email alerts enabled for both of these platforms. | A2L and Teams   |

| GRADE COMPONENT              | WEIGHT | DESCRIPTION  |
|------------------------------|--------|--|
| CLASS ENGAGEMENT             | 10%    | Short weekly reflection entries (1-2 paragraphs each)  |
| CRITICAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT | 15%    | Multi-part written assignment  |
| HONY REFLECTION PAPER        | 15%    | Written assignment (800-1000 words)  |
| GROUP PROJECT                | 35%    | Group deliverables = 25% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points based on research notes</li> <li>• 10 points based on knowledge translation product</li> <li>• 5 points of grade based on class presentation</li> </ul> 10% of grade based on peer evaluations |
| FINAL REFLECTION PAPER       | 25%    | Written assignment (1000 words)  |

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***COURSE DELIVERABLES***

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**1. CLASS ENGAGEMENT (10%)**

Learning Objective:

Ensuring you get the most out of this course by regularly attending class as often as possible, reviewing the assigned readings, and reflecting on course material and discussions.

Task:

Actively engaging in class is critical to gaining the most out of the course content and experience and succeeding academically in the overall course.

Students will be responsible for submitting weekly reflection entries on A2L (1-2 paragraphs long) and this will serve as evidence of your engagement in the course. In these entries, you will be invited to reflect on something that stood out to you, challenged you, surprised you, sparked a particular emotion, and/or expanded your thinking from that week's lecture, discussions and/or readings. The writing does not have to be polished, and point form is fine as long as your thoughts are fully articulated.

Entries will not be graded individually; however successful completion of these entries will impact your grade in two ways:

1. These weekly entries will serve as very useful raw material for your final reflection paper. In the past, students who took the time to write consistent and thoughtful weekly reflections had the strongest final reflection papers – by far!
2. The successful completion of these weekly reflection entries will also count towards 10% of your final grade. This will be evaluated based on: a) how many entries you submit; b) whether or not you submit these weekly or rush them in at the end of the term; and c) overall evidence that your reflections demonstrate you are meaningfully engaging with and thinking through the course content.

## 2. **Critical Analysis Assignment** (15%)

Learning Objective:

Practice crafting effective research questions and develop strong critical analysis and writing skills.

Task:

This assignment is designed to help you learn how to effectively move from a topic of interest, to good research questions, to critical analysis. You will start by identifying a topic relevant to the intersection of business and humanities.

- A. In the first part of the assignment, you will be tasked with an exercise where you brainstorm various issues or elements related to your topic, and then generate 10 potential research questions that could lead to deeper analysis of this topic. A 1-page template will be provided for this brainstorming exercise. Part A of this assignment will be worth 5% of your final grade.
- B. In the second part of this assignment you will select one of the research questions and conduct academic research into that topic. You will then select two academic articles (from peer reviewed journals) that explore different perspectives/dimensions of that topic. Your task will be to write an analytical paper that brings these two articles and perspectives into conversation. This will involve

briefly summarizing both papers and then evaluating and critically analyzing their arguments and ideas in relation to your research question. Part B of this assignment (e.g. the analytical paper) should be 500-750 words and will be worth 10% of your final grade.

### 3. **Humans of New York (HONY) Reflection Paper (15%)**

#### Learning Objective:

Using photography and social media to think critically about how to examine, frame and represent the world and people around us.

#### Task:

Humans of New York (HONY) is a photoblog launched by Brandon Stanton in 2010. It includes portraits and interviews collected on the streets of New York City, which are then posted on social media for public consumption and engagement. HONY has over 20 million social media followers and the HONY photo book is a New York Times bestseller.

HONY has gained a reputation for images that ‘humanize’ people from all walks of life by offering an intimate glimpse into their struggles, hopes and dreams. This intimacy is achieved both through the visual details of the image itself, as well as the text that accompanies each photo. While we rarely think about Brandon Stanton when looking at HONY, it is important to remember that each image represents a series of conscious and unconscious decisions about how to frame, focus, and position the subject and details in each photo. In addition, the ways in which these images are consumed and interpreted is also determined by individual and societal factors that shape how we perceive various issues and people.

In this assignment, you will be tasked with selecting and analyzing 3-5 HONY images (and their accompanying stories). The images you select should have something in common either because they portray a common experience, social issue, or demographic group. You should begin by reading the Perreault & Paul (2018) reading to understand how to think critically and deeply about the content and narratives of HONY images.

Your paper should be 800-1000 words. You are free to write about general reflections and thoughts about HONY, however a significant portion of your writing should address the following questions:

- What do your selected images have in common? What specific experience, social issue, or demographic group are they focused on? How are they similar and different from each other?
- How does the way that Brandon Stanton frames, lights, and otherwise captures the human subjects in these images affect the way that you perceive them?
- Do these images reinforce or challenge existing mainstream narratives about this experience, social issue, or demographic group?
- Reflecting on Brandon’s positionality, how might this have affected the nature of these images and the personal stories that were told to him?
- Do you think you would shoot these images and tell these stories differently if you were the photographer, why or why not?

### 4. **Group Project – Knowledge Translation (35%)**

## Learning Objectives:

Building effective teamwork skills. Learning how to apply the insight and inquiry process outside an academic setting and communicating ideas to different audiences.

## Tasks:

The class will be randomly assigned into groups that will work together on this project. As a group you will select a pressing social issue (local or global) and will conduct academic research (10-12 articles) to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes and potential social, political or economic actions that could alleviate or solve this issue. Once you gain a deeper understanding, your task will involve identifying a relevant stakeholder (either government body, public interest group, or private sector actor) that you believe has the mandate or potential to take action on this issue. In your groups, you will work to translate the academic and scientific knowledge from your research to this stakeholder in a language and format that is tailored to this audience and is designed to be both accessible and compelling enough to encourage them to take meaningful and effective action on this issue.

The graded deliverables for this group assignment include the following:

- A. Research notes that breakdown your research (a template will be provided). For each of your 10-12 sources you will submit a 1 page research notes template that summarizes the article/study's background, methods, results, data, conclusions, relevance, etc. This will be worth 10 points and it will be graded as a group.
- B. A knowledge translation (KT) product, which is generally a document or graphic product that takes key information and findings from your research and summarizes, translates and tailors it to a specific audience/stakeholder. For this assignment you can choose one of the following KT products: policy brief (1-2 pages), infographic (1-2 pages), or a webpage. This will be worth 10 points and it will be graded as a group.
- C. A 10-minute in-class presentation that will be a simulated pitch to the stakeholder you have identified. This will include a presentation of the importance and relevance of the issue you identified, key insights from your research, what your key recommendations are for action, and a presentation of the KT product you developed. This will be worth 5 points and it will be graded as a group.

(All together, the group deliverables will be given a score out of 25 points, and this will also count towards 25% of your final grade)

- D. Finally, 10% of your individual group project grade will be calculated based on the average score from peer feedback surveys where team members anonymously evaluate you based on your share of the workload and the quality of your contributions. A link to a Google Form evaluation questionnaire will be provided at the end of the term.

## **5. Final Class Reflection Paper (25%)**

### Learning Objective:

Synthesizing and thinking critically about the material and ideas you have encountered in the course, and how they have impacted you.

Tasks:

In this assignment, you are to submit a paper reflecting on the entirety of the course. You are encouraged to practice reflexive writing, and talk about how your thoughts and perspectives were challenged, reinforced, or otherwise impacted by the class material, reading, lectures, discussions, activities, etc. You are expected to refer to some assigned readings from the class in your paper, however this is not an academic research paper. You will be encouraged to draw on content from your weekly reflection entries, however this should not be a simple regurgitation of the entries, but rather, a summary and analysis of them.

The paper should be 1000 words in length. Further direction on this assignment may be provided closer to the end of the course.

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***COURSE POLICY ON MISSED WORK, EXTENSIONS, AND LATE PENALTIES***

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Unless otherwise stated, all written assignments are due by 11:59pm on the due date indicated on the course outline.

Late assignments will be subject to a 3% per day late penalty (includes weekends and holidays) for up to seven (7) days. After this date, no assignments will be accepted and a grade of zero (0) will be applied.

Extensions for course work that will not incur a late penalty must be approved by the Instructor before the due date. Extensions are generally only granted for illness, emergencies, and extenuating circumstances. Note that this is distinct from the **McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)** submission process.

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***COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK***

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Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. Instructors are required to provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #9 in the term. Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

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***ACADEMIC INTEGRITY***

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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.



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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy*, located at: [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

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### ***ONLINE COURSE COMPONENTS***

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In this course we will be using A2L, email and MS Teams. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure.

If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

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### ***REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK***

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Students may request relief from a regularly scheduled midterm, test, assignment or other course components. Please refer to the policy and procedure on the DeGroot website at the link below;

<http://ug.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/misled-course-work-policy/>

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### ***STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES***

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Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca).

For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

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

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Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, Indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request, including the dates/times needing to be accommodated and the courses which will be impacted, to their Faculty Office normally within 10 days of the beginning of term 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.

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### ***POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE***

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The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. There may be changes to the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

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### ***RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS***

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All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

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### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES***

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Your enrolment in IBH 1BB3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand

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## ***COURSE SCHEDULE***

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**NOTE:** The Instructor may modify elements of the course, including the schedule below, and will notify students accordingly both in class and on the course platforms.

Most weeks, the Tuesday lecture slots will be dedicated to group project work time.

| WEEK | DATE         | TOPIC   | DEADLINES & INFO | READINGS  |
|------|--------------|---|------------------|---|
| 1    | Sept 6 & 8   | Introduction: Syllabus overview, course expectations, and understanding ‘insight and inquiry’.                                  | N/A              | N/A   |
| 2    | Sept 13 & 15 | Foundational knowledge and skills for this course and university: critical thinking, study hacks, understanding ‘humanities’    |                  | ‘The Value of Humanities’ (2015). by Holm, P., Jarrick, A., & Scott, D.                                     |
| 3    | Sept 20 & 22 | ‘Where do you know from’ <sup>1</sup> : reflexivity, social location, and critical analysis                                     |                  | ‘How to Engage Constructively in Courses that Take a Critical Social Justice Approach’ by Sensoy & Diangelo |
| 4    | Sept 27 & 29 | Fundamentals of inquiry and research: evaluating information sources, research process and methods, and library research skills |                  | ‘Evaluating Statements and Identifying Sources’ (2021). by Bethany Kilcrease<br>&                           |

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://maifeminism.com/where-do-you-know-from-an-exercise-in-placing-ourselves-together-in-the-classroom/>

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|---|---|---|---|--|
|   |   |   |   | Watch McMaster's 'How Library Stuff Works' video tutorials:<br><a href="https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/how-library-stuff-works">https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/how-library-stuff-works</a> |
| 5 | Oct 4 & 6   | The anatomy of a question: narrowing a topic to a research question, developing strong research questions, and research ethics<br><br>(Oct 6 lecture slot will be taken over by the IBH welcome social) |   | 'From Topics to Questions' by Boothe et al.  |
| 6 | <b>Mid-term Recess: October 10-14</b><br>(No classes) |   |   |  |
| 7 | Oct 18 & 20   | Exploring, understanding and representing the world through the arts  | <b>DUE:</b> Critical Analysis Part A (Oct 17) | 'An image of refugees through the social media lens' (2018) by Perreault & Paul.   |
| 8 | Oct 25 & 27   | Understanding qualitative and quantitative research: How are these methods used to tackle big questions? How do they differ and/or complement each other?   | <b>*Guest Lecturer</b>                        | 'How to Decide upon A Methodology' by Catherine Dawson.  |
| 9 | Nov 1 & 3   | Interpreting data: understanding theoretical frameworks, different traditions and approaches to making sense of data.   | <b>DUE:</b> HONY Reflection Paper (Nov 4)     | 'Theorizing Data' (2016) by Susan Tilley.  |

|    |                |  |   |   |
|----|----------------|--|---|---|
| 10 | Nov 8 & 10     | Communicating a message: constructing an argument and mastering storytelling       |   | 'Critical Analytical Writing' by Stella Cottrell              |
| 11 | Nov 15 & 17    | Wicked problems: how can we use information to tackle society's 'wicked problems'? | <b>DUE:</b> Critical Analysis Part B (Nov 18)   | 'Wicked Problems and their Resolution' by Remington-Doucette. |
| 12 | Nov 22 & 24    | ★ <i>Group Presentations</i> ★   |   | N/A   |
| 13 | Nov 29 & Dec 1 | Course wrap up, review and reflections<br>★ <i>Group Presentations</i> ★           | <b>DUE:</b> Group Project Deliverables (Dec 2)  | N/A   |
| 14 | Dec 6 & 8      | TBA  | <b>DUE:</b> Final Reflection Paper (December 8) | N/A   |