

History and Memory in Gentrifying Saint-Henri

HIST 390 – Urban History Laboratory

Winter 2021

Mondays, 11:45-2:30PM



Photo: Abandoned Canada Malting plant, seen from the grain silo. Credit: Daniel Guilbert

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 1-2PM via Zoom.

Course Description:

This seminar will investigate the competing historical narratives and systems of memory at play in the working-class yet rapidly gentrifying Southwest Montreal neighbourhood of Saint-Henri. Once the heart of industrial production in Canada, Saint-Henri experienced a brutal deindustrialization process in the second half of the twentieth century and is now at the centre of the storm of speculative real estate development sweeping the city. As working-class and poor communities fight for their right to remain in the neighbourhood, they also have to resist the historical erasure of their political struggles and ways of life.

This course will be a collaboration with neighbourhood groups the [POPIR-Comité Logement](#), [Solidarité Saint-Henri](#) and the [À Nous la Malting Collective](#), as well as the transnational research partnership on Deindustrialization and the Politics of Our Times (DePOT). Using a variety of

digitized archives, interviews, fiction, film, and secondary sources, students enrolled in this seminar will produce original, public-facing research and research-creation projects that will help to advance the campaign to create an industrial heritage and working-class history museum as part of a broader community development project on the site of the abandoned Canada Malting plant. Finally, this course will also be an exercise in the use of social media for public history education. Each student in the class will take a turn managing social media profiles set up for this project, to share their research and reflections on history and memory in Saint-Henri.

History and Colonialism:

Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous territory. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today, and Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Settler colonial racism, however, is not confined to the past – Indigenous people in Montreal are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, discrimination, and police violence, and Concordia is one of the city's many institutions that continues to benefit from land theft and dispossession. While most of the course material is focused on the settler population, the displacement of deindustrialization and gentrification needs to be contextualized within the broader history of dispossession on these lands.

Doing History in a Pandemic:

Normally, a course like this would be an opportunity to do oral history work, engage in face-to-face conversation with local groups and with each other, and learn directly from community members. While this is obviously less possible in the current context, I will do my best to make it an interesting experience! Source materials will be made available to you through Moodle and the project's basecamp. There will also be a few downloadable audio-walks assigned during the course – for some of you this will perhaps be a welcome opportunity to get out of the house, but you should also feel free to listen to them at home and follow along on Google Street View if you are more comfortable with this option.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you have a medically recognized disability and are registered with Concordia's Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.concordia.ca/students/accessibility.html>), you are eligible for a variety of accommodations and services. If you have access needs that don't fit these parameters, please do get in touch and we can discuss how to best make the course work for you.

Assignments and Grades

All written assignments should be submitted via Moodle in Microsoft Word format, 12pt, Times New Roman font, and use Chicago Style for footnotes and bibliography.

Biographical statement (Monday, January 16 at 5PM – 5%)

Please submit a short (100-300 word) biographical statement. Where are you from? What motivated you to study history, or to take this class? What is your connection, if any, with the Southwest of Montreal? Please also indicate your level of fluency in French, and if you wish, your preferred pronouns [please note that bilingualism is not strictly necessary for the class, although it will certainly be helpful. Having a sense of your abilities will also help me direct you in your research].

Participation (20%)

Peer review and presentations

We are in strange times, and everyone has a variety of levels of comfort and ability with online learning and discussion. There will be no participation points assigned for most of our class discussions throughout the semester (although obviously your active engagement is encouraged and desired). However, this class *is* oriented around public engagement, so it is mandatory that you be present to share your work in class and provide feedback on that of your colleagues, as well as being present for the final public presentations of the efforts of our class this semester.

Term projects for this class will be public documents and will be part of the overall proposal for the creation of a working-class and industrial heritage museum in Saint-Henri, so it is important that we produce quality work. Each student will be responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on other students' work (details below).

History and Social Media

In a pandemic context, social media has become an even more important means of communicating ideas and arguments. Each student in the class will be responsible for curating the social media presence of the class (Facebook and Twitter) for a period of 48 hours, either in English or in French (or both!). You will need to introduce yourself and your interests, and present your historical reflections to the public. These can be based on the course material (primary or secondary sources), your research project, or broader insights on history, memory, and public discourse about the past. Following your 48-hour curation, you will then have another 24-hour window to submit a 250-word reflection on your experience in the basecamp forum for the course. Students are also encouraged to engage with and promote their colleagues' work through their own social media profiles.

Life Stories Assignment (Monday, March 1 at 11:45AM – 25%)

Using one of the pre-recorded interviews in the database, you will become an expert in one person's life story. Watch and listen to the interview, taking notes. Who is this person? What did they go through? What is their relationship to the neighbourhood? What stands out to you in their memories? Do elements of their life story align with or diverge from what you've read in the secondary sources? Why do you think this is? Write a 5-7-page analysis of the interview reflecting on these questions, referencing at least 3 of the secondary sources available on Moodle.

Community and Scholarly Engagement and Reflection (Bonus marks – 5%)

Throughout the semester, I will be sharing events organized by community groups in Saint-Henri, (mostly in French) as well as public, on-line conferences of the Deindustrialization and the Politics of our Time research partnership (mostly in English). You have the option of attending one of these events, and then posting a 250-word reflection on what you learned on the basecamp forum for the course.

Term Research Project (50%)

As low-income communities are pushed out of the neighbourhood by condo development and rent hikes, working-class history and memory are also erased. Each student (or in groups of up to 3 people, if you so choose) is responsible for producing a major public research project that can contribute to the À Nous la Malting collective's project of creating an industrial and working-class history museum. This project can be on any building, event, struggle, or other topic related to the history of Saint-Henri that interests you, based on your research in the provided archive materials and primary and secondary sources available to you through the Concordia library and other reputable online databases. Your project can take one of the following three forms:

Option 1: Research Paper and Proposed Museum Exhibit

Each student will write an original, 20-page (30 for groups) research report and exhibit proposal on the topic of their choice related to history and memory in Saint-Henri. You must demonstrate understanding of the topic and make an argument for why it is significant for a working-class museum. In addition, you will need to propose a theme for the potential exhibit, as well as a detailed list of twenty potential items (photos, artefacts, maps, interviews – it's all fair game) that could make up the eventual display, with accompanying explicative text (100-150 words per item).

Option 2: Research Paper and Interpretative Panel

Each student will write a 15-page (20 for groups) research report on an event, location, or struggle from Saint-Henri's past with a spatial fix (eg. a site of deindustrialization, gentrification, protest, etc.). You must demonstrate understanding of the topic and make an

argument for why it should be remembered and brought to the public's attention. In addition, you will need to design a bilingual interpretative panel, based on archival material, that explains in accessible language the history of the event/location/struggle you have chosen. The text should be no more than 150 words in each language, and the panel should feature 2-3 key images. These panels will become part of a future public exhibit around the neighbourhood.

Option 3: Research Paper and Research Creation

Based on your research in the provided archival materials and in other online databases, either as an individual or in groups, students will create an artistic/creative output that reflects in some way on history and memory in Saint-Henri. This can be in the form of music, art, graphic novels, or other visual media – it is really up to you! Your research creation project should be accompanied by a 15-page (20 for groups) research report that explains your chosen topic and its relevance for understanding working-class history and memory in the neighbourhood. Please also explain your creative process, and your vision for the public diffusion of your creative work.

These reports and their accompanying projects will be public documents that will form part of the overall proposal of the À Nous la Malting project for its industrial and working-class heritage museum, so it is important that you produce quality work. It is a three-step process:

Step 1: Proposal (needs to be approved by professor – 10%)

Submit a 1-2-page research proposal and bibliography of primary and secondary sources (**Monday, February 8 at 11h45AM**) identifying your option, your site, and, if you're working in a group, your team.

Step 2: In-Class Presentation (10%)

Prepare an in-class presentation of 10 minutes (if an individual) or 20 minutes (if a group) on the draft paper, interpretative panel, or creative output (**April 12/19**), allowing the rest of the class to provide feedback. Presentations will be grouped by the option chosen. Classmates will provide peer review editing of two papers/interpretative panels on their off-week (when not presenting). These reviewers will be assigned projects to review. Your draft paper must be uploaded onto basecamp by noon on the Friday before (at the latest) to give classmates the needed time. The text for the interpretative panels will be translated by bilingual classmates (who can translate two panels instead of providing peer comments on two draft papers).

Step 3: Research Report/Interpretative Panel/Creative Output (30%)

Finalize your individual and group projects and submit them by **Monday, April 19 at noon**. Final presentations of your research reports and creative outputs will be on **Wednesday, April 21** (details TBD).

SCHEDULE

January 18: Introductions and beginnings

[Read any two of the following four documents]

- Doreen Massey, "Places and their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995): 182-192.
- David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12, 2 (1978): 101-131.
- Solidarité Saint-Henri, "Portrait du quartier Saint-Henri d'après des données du Recensement de 2016 de Statistique Canada," available at <https://www.solidarite-sh.org/sites/solidarite-sh.org/files/portraitsthenri2016.pdf>
- Collectif à Nous la Malting, "À Nous la Malting! Dossier de projet, Mars 2020." <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1es24mTXIxJsrxDD3uQEhk8UDaIWtAvKC/view>. Pages 82-93.

January 25: Settler Colonialism and Industrial Development

[Read any two of the following three documents]

- Robert Lewis, "A City Transformed: Manufacturing Districts and Suburban Growth in Montreal, 1850-1929," *Journey of Historical Geography* 27, 1 (2001): 20-35.
- Gilles Lauzon, "Cohabitations et déménagements en milieu ouvrier montréalais: Essai de reinterprétation à partir du cas du village St-Augustin (1871-1881)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 46, 1 (été 1992): 115-142.
- Daniel Ruëck, "When Bridges Become Barriers: Montreal and Kahnawake Mohawk Territory," in *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal*, eds. Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais, 228-244 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

February 1: Work and Labour Conflicts

[Read any two of the following four documents]

- Terry Copp, "The Rise of Industrial Unions in Montreal, 1935-1945," *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 37, 4 (1982): 843-875.
- Denyse Baillargeon, "Textile Strikes in Quebec: 1946, 1947, 1952," in *Madeleine Parent: Activist*, edited by Andrée Lévesque, 59-69 (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2005).
- John Willis, "Cette manche au syndicat: La grève chez Dupuis Frères en 1952," *Labour/le Travail* 57 (Spring 2006): 43-91.
- *Les gens du Québec I: Saint-Henri* (Montréal: Éditions Québécoises, 1974). Pages 41-59.

February 8: Deindustrialization and Urban Change

[TERM PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE, 11:45AM]

- Canal audiowalk. Download at http://postindustrialmontreal.ca/audiowalks/canal-2013?_ga=2.34397417.913729360.1607201111-449121981.1607201111.

[Read one of the following two documents]

- Piyusha Chatterjee and Steven High, “The Deindustrialisation of our Senses: Residual and Dominant Soundscapes in Montreal’s Point Saint-Charles District,” in *Telling Environmental Histories*, edited by K. Holmes and H. Goodall, 179-209 (Palgrave MacMillan: Palgrave Studies in World Environmental History).
- Claude Larivière, “Analyse du phénomène des fermetures d’usines,” in *St-Henri: L’univers des travailleurs* (Montréal: Les Éditions Albert Saint-Martin, 1974). Pages 87-106.

February 15: Listening to Oral History Interviews

- Alessandro Portelli “What Makes Oral History Different,” in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader* (Second Edition) (New York: Routledge, 2006), 32-42.
- Stéphane Martelly, “‘This thing we are doing here’: Listening and writing in the ‘Montreal Life Stories’ project,” in *Beyond Women’s Words*, edited by Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki, and Franca Iacovetta, 201-217 (NY: Routledge, 2018).
- Choose one interview from the available selection (can be the same as the one you’ve chosen for your assignment). Take notes and come prepared to discuss the experience.

February 22: The Making of (White) Francophone Saint-Henri

- EITHER Gabrielle Roy, *Bonheur d’occasion* (Montréal: Boréal, 2009), Chapters One and Two + Winfried Siemerling, “Jazz, Diaspora, and the History of Black Anglophone Montreal,” in *Critical Collaborations: Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Ecology in Canadian Literary Studies*, edited by Smaro Kamboureli and Christl Verduyn, 199-213 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2013).
- OR “À Saint-Henri le 5 Septembre” [NFB documentary]: https://www.onf.ca/film/a_saint-henri_le_cinq_septembre/ (English version here: https://www.nfb.ca/film/september_five_at_saint-henri/) + Émilie Nicolas, “Maîtres Chez l’Autre,” *Liberté* 326 (Winter 2020): 42-46.

March 1: READING WEEK [Life Stories Assignment Due at 11:45AM]

March 8: Gentrification and Displacement

[Read any two of the following three documents]

- Neil Smith, “Gentrification and the Rent Gap,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, 3 (1987): 462-465.
- Amy Twigge-Molecey, “Exploring Resident Experiences of Indirect Displacement in a Neighbourhood Undergoing Displacement: The Case of Saint-Henri in Montréal,” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 23, 1 (Summer 2014): 1-22.
- Fred Burrill, “Health, Wellness and Class Domination in Gentrifying Saint-Henri, Montreal,” *Niche: Network in Canadian History and Environment*, 5 March 2020, available at: <https://niche-canada.org/2020/03/05/health-wellness-and-class-domination-in-gentrifying-saint-henri-montreal/>.

March 15: Resistance

- Patricia Viannay, “Les Luttres pour le droit au logement depuis la pénurie de 2001,” *Nouveaux Cahiers du socialisme* 10 (2013).
- *D’une lutte à l’autre: Le POPIR-Comité Logement a 50 ans!* [documentary film]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acYX2uFOGaM&t=1391s>.
- Audiowalk: *Talking Violence: Oral Histories of Displacement and Resistance in Saint-Henri*. <https://soundcloud.com/fred-burrill/talking-violence-oral-histories-of-displacement-and-resistance-in-saint-henri>.

March 22: Industrial Heritage – Possibilities and Pitfalls

- Steven High and Fred Burrill, “Industrial Heritage as Agent of Gentrification,” *National Council on Public History*, 19 February 2018, available at: <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/industrial-heritage-as-agent-of-gentrification/#0>.
- Cathy Stanton, “Displaying the Industrial: Toward a Genealogy of Heritage Labor,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History* 16, 1 (2019): 151-170.

March 29: In-Class Presentations

April 5: EASTER

April 12: In-Class Presentations

April 19: Preparation for Public Launch/Final In-Class Presentations [FINAL PROJECT DUE AT NOON]

April 21 (EASTER MONDAY SCHEDULE): Public Launch (Details TBD)

Academic Integrity

Concordia University places the principle of academic integrity, that is, honesty, responsibility and fairness in all aspects of academic life, as one of its highest values.

Instructors, students and administrators are expected to be honest and responsible in their academic conduct and fair in their assessment of academic matters.

Please, if you're uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, verify with the professor!

<https://www.concordia.ca/conduct/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html>