

# HLTHAGE 2A03 - RESEARCH METHODS IN HEALTH AND IN AGING I

Fall 2019

September 3rd to December 4th, 2019

**Instructor:** Dr. Yvonne LeBlanc  
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**Lecture:** T34 103 Mon 12:30-1:20, Tues 1:30-2:20 pm, Thurs 12:30 – 1:20 pm

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**Office Hours:** Friday 2-3 pm or By Appointment

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## **Classroom Location & Scheduled Time**

Classes are currently scheduled in T34 room 103, and will take place on Mondays 12:30 pm – 13:20 pm and Tuesdays 1:30 pm- 2:20 pm. Please note that classes will also be held on Thursday during week 1 and possibly on subsequent Thursdays during the term if deemed necessary (for example, for make up tests or additional tutorial support). Students should not schedule other activities (work etc) in the Thursday time slot. Students will have ample notice of any scheduling changes. These will be announced in class and posted on Avenue.

## **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the foundations of social research. During the term, students will be introduced to philosophical issues, research orientations, basic concepts, and tools of social research that make the investigation of social phenomena possible. Central topics include the importance of theory and ethics in conducting sound social research, and the fundamentals of research design, including quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (non-numerical) measurement, sampling, and data collection. Key social research methods that students will be introduced to include surveys, structured interviewing and questionnaires, ethnography, and qualitative interviewing. Through a selection of research studies, students will also be introduced to how quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to study social aspects of health and aging.

## **Course Objectives**

The central objective of the course is to introduce students to the fundamentals of social science research methodology (frameworks) using both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (non-numerical) approaches. This knowledge forms a basis for understanding and critiquing current health and aging research and for more advanced practice in the planning and design of health and aging research studies.

**Learning Outcomes-** The learning outcomes of this course are consistent with [McMaster's Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf).

URL:<http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>.

These connect to several of the undergraduate degree level expectations that include developing a depth and breadth of knowledge of social science based research methodologies and their applications in the study of the social aspects of health and aging .

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Explain the fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches
- Identify and explain basic concepts and terminology used in quantitative and qualitative research approaches

- Describe the principles of ethical research practice and recognize ethical concerns when conducting research with human participants
- Explain key issues and goals that researchers consider when designing quantitative and qualitative studies
- Describe central principles, strategies, techniques, and steps used in designing sound quantitative and qualitative research instruments
- Apply knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in evaluating the quality of health and aging research papers
- Advance skills in critical thinking, group work, research design, the use of academic databases, and the writing of literature reviews

## **Required Materials and Texts**

### **Required Textbook (available through the McMaster bookstore)**

- Bryman A. and E. Bell. (2019). *Social Research Methods* (5th Canadian ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

### **Additional Required Readings**

Listed below is a selection of additional required readings. You will be able to access PDF's of book chapters on 'Avenue to Learn' and can access the journal articles through the McMaster on-line catalogue. These readings should be completed prior to the scheduled class or tutorial (refer to course schedule). Have a hard or an electronic copy of the reading with you for discussion.

- Creswell, J. (2003). The purpose statement. In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed., pp.87-98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Del Baso, M. & Lewis, A. D. (2012). Finding and refining the topic. In *First Steps: A Guide to Social Research* (5th ed., pp. 45-71). Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd.
- [Furlotte, C., Gladstone, J. W., Cosby, R. F., & Fitzgerald, K. \(2016\). "Could we hold hands?" older lesbian and gay couples' perceptions of long-term care homes and home care. \*Canadian Journal on Aging\*, 35\(4\), 432-446. doi: DOI:10.1017/S0714980816000489](#)

URL:<https://searchproquestcom.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/docview/1845974894/fulltextPDF/EAC64CF6E530481EPQ/1?accountid=12347>

- [Novek, S., Shooshtari, S., & Menec, V. H. \(2016\). Comparing the overall health, stress, and characteristics of Canadians with early-onset and late-onset dementia. \*Journal of Aging and Health\*, 28\(6\), 1016-1037. doi: 10.1177/0898264315615575](#)

URL:[http://resolver.scholarsportal.info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/resolve/08982643/v28i0006/1016\\_ctohsacweald.xml](http://resolver.scholarsportal.info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/resolve/08982643/v28i0006/1016_ctohsacweald.xml)

## **Class Format**

Lectures will reinforce required readings, and involve power-point slides, in-class exercises, and occasional guest speakers. Power-point presentations, will be posted on Avenue to Learn immediately prior to the scheduled lecture. The power point slides are provided to facilitate note taking and will not be a replica of all that is discussed in lecture. This is not a distance education course, therefore lectures will not be podcasted and regular attendance must be a central priority. Lectures will augment the required reading but will not cover all content presented in the text. Required reading should be completed prior to class on Monday and students should be prepared to actively participate in class.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Midterm Exam - 25% Oct 21<sup>st</sup>
2. Drafting a Purpose Statement Assignment – 5% -due Oct 28<sup>th</sup>
3. Term Assignment- Research Plan and Design Assignment – 25% - due Nov 25
4. Tutorial Attendance and Participation – 10% - on going
5. In-class Attendance & Participation 5% - on going
6. Final Exam – 30% - scheduled by the registrar

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Midterm Exam (25%) October 21<sup>st</sup>**

The midterm will be based on all course material including lectures, tutorials, assigned readings, audio-visual materials (i.e. documentaries, video clips, images), and in-class discussions up until the scheduled date of the midterm. The exam will take place in class and will consist of approximately 30-40 multiple-choice questions. You will have 50 minutes to write the exam.

### **Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will be based on all course material including lectures, tutorials, assigned readings, audio-visual materials (e.g. documentaries, video clips, images), and in-class discussions occurring after the midterm. The final exam will consist of approximately 80-100 multiple-choice questions. You will have 2.5 hours to write the exam. The date of the final exam will be determined by the Office of the Registrar.

- Please note that to pass this course students must complete the term assignment, the midterm exam, and the final exam.
- Further details on examinations will be reviewed in class

### **Drafting a ‘Purpose Statement’ Assignment (5%) Due Oct 28<sup>th</sup>**

To gain practice in thinking about and explaining the aims and objectives of a proposed research study, you are required to draft two ‘purpose statements’ (see Creswell 2003). Using a health and aging topic (or topics), one statement should propose to use a quantitative research design and the second statement should propose to use a

qualitative research design. (Either of these may serve as a basis for your final term project).

Your statement should outline a direction for the proposed research, including the identification of a research question or problem (and hypothesis, if appropriate) as well as outline in brief the methods and sampling strategy to be used in the research. Each purpose statement should be 3 to 5 sentences in length.

In addition, your assignment should outline the list of articles that you plan to use to write the literature review for your full assignment. Your assignment should include a paragraph that summarizes, as a whole, how you think that you will use these references to write your literature review. In accordance with APA formatting ([See McMaster University Library](#)) this assignment should be double-spaced, written in 12-point Times New Roman font, and approximately 2-3 pages in length. Further guidelines will be posted on Avenue to Learn and will be discussed in tutorial.

### **Term Project: Research Plan and Design Assignment (25%) Nov 25<sup>th</sup>**

You are required to complete an assignment that provides a detailed account of your plan to undergo a study on a health & aging topic. You are required to include a brief introduction as well as a 'purpose' statement that explains why you wish to conduct the research and what you hope to achieve by completing it. A 'purpose' statement outlines the focus and direction of the proposed research (Creswell 2003). Students are also required to identify a research question, provide a brief literature review, and discuss the research design and sampling strategy. The assignment should be 5-6 pages in length and must be written in university-level English. Assignments must be properly formatted using the APA Style Guide. Therefore, the assignment should have a title page, all pages should be numbered and have 2.54 cm (1 inch) margins on all four sides. All text should be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman Font. Carefully follow the manuscript formatting with respect to in-text citation references, reference page formatting, and manuscript writing style. [See McMaster University Library](#) URL: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/citing>.

Grading will depend on your assignment's content, accuracy, structure, grammar, and writing style. **The assignment must be submitted electronically in a WORD document to the appropriate Avenue to Learn drop box no later than the end of class on the date that it is due;** hardcopies or emailed copies will not be accepted. More detailed instructions on the assignment and a grading rubric will be posted on Avenue and reviewed in class

### **Tutorial Participation & Attendance (10%)**

Each student must attend regularly a weekly tutorial session run by a Teaching Assistant. Tutorials will provide you with the opportunity to discuss course material, complete small group activities and assignments to facilitate learning, participate in discussions about completed research studies using different methods discussed in lecture, and receive help with course assignments and exam preparation.

If you are unable to attend the tutorial section in which you are registered, you can request to be moved to another tutorial session. However, it may not be possible to grant all of these requests due to tutorial enrolment, room size, and fire code regulations. Please be mindful that it is mandatory that you attend all scheduled tutorial sessions; make-up assignments will not be prepared for conflicting schedules or other forms of competing obligations. Teaching Assistants are not responsible for informing individual students about material that was discussed during missed tutorial sessions.

Your tutorial participation grade will be assigned by your Teaching Assistant taking into consideration your attendance record and individual contributions to your tutorial session. Tutorial attendance is worth 5% and tutorial participation is worth 5% for a total of 10%. You will be rewarded if you participate in tutorials in a relevant, respectful, and contributory manner on an on-going basis throughout the semester.

To assess tutorial attendance, roll call will be taken regularly by your Teaching Assistant. Tutorial participation will be assessed after each tutorial by your Teaching Assistant. You can also accumulate credit by completing small tasks assigned by the Teaching Assistant during or in advance of tutorial. These small assignments will not be assessed for accuracy but for completeness and will be used by your Teaching Assistant to provide general feedback to the class. The Teaching Assistant will look for evidence that you were intellectually and thoughtfully engaged with the tutorial assignment. Completed assignments will result in the accumulation of participation credit for this course.

Teaching Assistants reserve the right to downgrade your tutorial participation mark (a maximum of 5 points) for negative class tutorial participation and an attitude that is disrespectful towards the course, Professor, or Teaching Assistant. Activities considered negative class participation include: irregular class attendance, talking to classmates about material that is not related to the course, inappropriate use of computers or electronic devices (i.e. facebook, twitter, texting, surfing the internet, playing games), sleeping, listening to ipods or mp3 players, coming to class late or leaving early, etcetera. Laptops should only be used to take notes; evidence of inappropriate computer usage or other behaviour may result in a Teaching Assistant asking you to leave tutorial.

### **In-class Attendance and Participation (Worth 5%)**

Regular in-class attendance and participation in a variety of in-class class based activities are important to optimizing your learning in this course. Such activities include individual and/or group mini assignments, practice quizzes, and discussions on course material.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Tues Sept 3rd , Thurs 5th )**

**Topic: Introduction to the Course**

Readings: Course Outline

**Week 2 (Sept 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Research Orientations & Theoretical Paradigms**

Readings: Text Introduction & Chapter 1

Notes:

Complete required readings prior to class

Tutorials: No Tutorials

**Week 3 (Sept 16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Quantitative & Qualitative Research Designs**

Readings:

Text Chapter 2

Del Baso and Lewis 2012 (PDF) on Avenue

Notes:

Complete Del Baso & Lewis Reading prior to Scheduled Tutorial

Tutorials Begin: Selecting a Research Topic & Writing a Literature Review

**Week 4 (Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Research Ethics**

Readings:

Text Chapter 3

Notes:

Tentative Guest Lecture: McMaster Research Ethics Board

Tutorials: Research Questions & Hypothesis Writing

**Week 5 (Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, Oct 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Topic: Quantitative Research**

Readings:

Text Chapter 4 & Novek, Shooshtari, & Menec (2016)

Tutorials: Measurement Exercise: Scales & Indices

**Week 6 (Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Qualitative Research**

Readings:

Chapter 9 Qualitative Research

Furlotte, & al. (2016)

Notes:

Tutorials: Midterm Review Oct 1<sup>st</sup>

**Week 7 (Oct 14<sup>th</sup> to Oct 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**No Classes Midterm Recess**

**Week 8 (Oct 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

**Mon Oct 21<sup>st</sup> - Midterm Test**

Readings:

No required readings

**Tues Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> -In-class Tutorial: Drafting a Purpose Statement Assignment**

Readings:



Creswell (2003)

Notes:

Tutorials: No Scheduled Tutorials this week

**Week 9 (Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Sampling**

Readings:

Text Chapter 12

Notes:

Tutorials: Sampling Exercises

\* Purpose Statement Assignment Due Oct 28<sup>th</sup>

**Week 10 (Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Survey Methods & Other Quantitative Data Sources**

Readings:

Text Chapter 5 & Chapter 8 pp 149-159

Notes:

Tutorials: Review of Term Assignment

**Week 11 (Nov 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Survey Questionnaire Construction**

Readings

Text Chapter 6

Notes:

Tutorials: Survey Question Design Exercises

**Week 12 (Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Interviewing in Qualitative Research**

Readings: Text Chapter 11

Tutorials: Interview Guide Exercises

**Week 13 (Nov 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Conducting Fieldwork & Other Qualitative Data Sources**

Readings: Text Chapter 14, Chapter 8 pp 139-148

Notes:

Tutorials: Review for Final Exam

Term Assignment: Research Plan & Design Assignment Due Nov 25<sup>th</sup>

**Week 14 (Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

**Course Wrap Up**

Readings :Text Chapter 15

Notes:

Tutorials: No Tutorials This Week

## **Course Policies**

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Without approved excuses, you must make arrangements directly with me to hand in the assignment. Assignments will be marked down 10% if turned in late on the day it is due, and an additional 10 percentage points for each day it is late after that; this includes weekend days and holidays. If an assignment is due at the start of a class, it will be considered one day late any time after the end of class that day.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

All reasons for illness, injury and family emergency must be addressed through the office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences who will notify the Professor of your absence. The policy contains the following requirements:

1. If you are seeking relief for missed academic work because of an absence lasting up to 3 days in duration, you must use the McMaster Student Absence Form. The course work you have missed must be worth 24% or less of your grade.
2. You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your Instructor immediately (NORMALLY WITHIN TWO WORKING DAYS) regarding the nature of the accommodation.
3. If you are absent for reasons other than medical reasons, for more than 3 days, or exceed 1 request per term you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out immediately when you are about to return to class after your absence. Additional requests for relief of academic missed work must be reported to your Faculty's Associate Dean's Office (Be prepared to submit appropriate documentation. Relief for missed academic work is not guaranteed).
4. MSAF is now available in MOSAIC Student Center (in the drop down menu under Academics)

5. You should expect to have academic commitments Monday through Saturday but not on Sunday or statutory holidays. If you require an accommodation to meet a religious obligation or to celebrate an important religious holiday, you may use the McMaster Student Absence Form or contact your Faculty's Associate Dean's Office.
6. In deciding whether or not to grant relief for missed work, factors such as the following may be taken into account: the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation.
7. You are responsible to contact your Professor(s) promptly to discuss the appropriate relief.
8. It is the prerogative of the Professor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in his/her course.

See the Faculty of Social Sciences web page on [Student Absence Information](https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/current-students/absence-form)  
<https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/current-students/absence-form>

### **Email**

Send all emails to my McMaster email account: leblanyl@mcmaster.ca. Please consider email equivalent to any other form of written communication. Students who write to their instructors are expected to follow rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In addition, please include a proper greeting, such as "Dear Dr. LeBlanc," and a closing that includes your full name, such as "Sincerely, John Smith." Email failing to meet these standards may be returned unanswered. Emails that require a very short reply will be answered within 4 working days (I will generally not respond to emails over the weekend). Email questions requiring a more detailed response will only be answered - in person - during office hours or by appointment.

### **Use of Mobile Devices**

Mobile devices, specifically laptops and tablets, may be used in this course for educational purposes only (i.e., learning directed related to the course). At times I may direct you to use your mobile device to complete an activity or task, other times I may ask you to close your laptop or turn off your tablet to focus your attention on other course related tasks. Off-task use (e.g., Facebook, texting, other) will result in your device being confiscated for the class and/or being asked to leave the classroom for all or part of the class.

### **Release of Grades**

Assignment grades will NOT be given out over the phone or by email. Final exam grades will not be released by the instructor. Final course grades will be released through the Registrar's Office.

### **Review of Marks**

I will be diligent in marking all assignments fairly and accurately. However, occasionally students disagree with the marks they receive. If this occurs, the instructor will be happy to review the mark of any assignment or exam, if the procedure outlined below is

followed. Please note that when a mark is reviewed, the new mark may be lower than the original.

To request a review of a mark, write a 1-page typed memo describing in detail the nature of the perceived marking error. Submit this memo (in person, not e-mail), with the original marked assignment, to the instructor. You may submit requests for review no sooner than 48 hours, and no later than 1 week after the assignment feedback is distributed via the Avenue drop box.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Course information will be posted here throughout the term. Please check this site often to keep informed of assignment instructions, links to course resources, important announcements, and interim grades. It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of all information posted on Avenue to Learn.

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.

### **Step 1: Make sure you are in the Avenue to Learn system.**

If you officially registered for the course, you were automatically enrolled in the Avenue To Learn system. Go directly to step 2. Students who registered late for this course need to be added to the Avenue to Learn database before they can perform the next step. The best way to do this is to make sure that you are officially registered for this course.

### **Step 2: Logon to Avenue to learn. Go to <http://Avenue.mcmaster.ca/>**

All the information you need for logging on to the site, for configuring your web browser, and for adding this course to your account are available here.

### **Step 3: Support**

If you are interested in viewing the support for Avenue to Learn, including quick help guides and other resources please visit <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/help/>

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Assignments for this course should be uploaded in the appropriate digital drop-box on Avenue to Learn prior to the assignment deadline. When you upload your assignment to the digital drop-box on Avenue to Learn your assignment will be automatically forwarded to Turnitin.com to be checked for

academic dishonesty. To see the [Turnitin.com Policy](#), please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a hard copy of the assignment to their TA. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit their work to Turnitin.com.

If you would like additional feedback or just to talk about your assignments I strongly encourage you to meet with me. As your instructor, I am available to meet in person by appointment.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior 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 behavior 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 credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

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](#).

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

If you require this course outline in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: [hasdept@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hasdept@mcmaster.ca)).

### **Accommodations**

I am committed to making appropriate accommodations for students' observance of religious holidays. Please contact me as early in the term as possible to make individual arrangements.

I am also committed to working with students with disabilities to make individualized accommodations according to your specific needs. All such arrangements must be made through Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Please drop by my office at the beginning of the term to review individual arrangements. All such arrangements will remain confidential.

Student Accessibility Services: For information about academic support services, contact SAS at MUSC B107 (ext. 28652) or <http://sas.mcmaster.ca>.

### **Support Services and Accommodations**

The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office (\*formerly, the Centre for Student Development) offers group and individual consultation about effective learning strategies, essay writing, and study habits; accommodations, assistive technology, advocacy and support for students with disabilities. Personal/group counseling is offered at the Student Wellness Centre (SWC). If you believe these services may be helpful to you, contact:

#### **\*Student Accessibility Services (SAS)**

**Phone**

(905) 525 9140 x 28652

**Teletypewriter (TTY)**

(905) 528-4307

**Email**

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

**Website**

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>

**Location**

MUSC B107

#### **Student Wellness Centre (SWC)**

**Medical and Counseling Services**

(905)-525-9140 x 27700

**Wellness Education**

(905) 525-9140 x 23312

**Email**

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

**Website**

<http://swc.mcmaster.ca/>

**Location**

MUSC B101, 107, and 106

### **Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change 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 his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.