

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

Fall 2020

September 8th to December 9th , 2020

Instructor: Dr. Yvonne LeBlanc
Email: leblanyl@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: Mon 5:30- 6:30 or by Appointment

Course Delivery: Virtual Class Session:
Fri 10:30 am – 11:20 am Via Zoom
TA Support Sessions
Mon (Groups 1 & 2) 8:30- 9:20 am Wed
(Groups 3 & 4) 8:30- 9:20 am

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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, the fundamentals of research design, including quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (non-numerical) measurement, sampling, and data collection, and an introductory overview of qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Key social research methods that students will be introduced to include surveys, structured interviewing and questionnaires, ethnography, and qualitative interviewing. From a social science perspective, students will be introduced to the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the study 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://cill.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf).

URL:<http://cill.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.

[Please go to the Campus Store website to access a copy of the Course Textbook](https://campusstore.mcmaster.ca/cgi-mcm/ws/txhome.pl?wsgm=coursematerial)

URL: <https://campusstore.mcmaster.ca/cgi-mcm/ws/txhome.pl?wsgm=coursematerial>

Additional Required Readings

Listed below are two additional required (book chapter) readings. You will be able to access the PDF's of these book chapters on the Content Page of 'Avenue to Learn'.

- 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.

Recommended Readings:

These are two examples of recent qualitative and quantitative research studies in health and aging.

[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](https://doi.org/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](https://doi.org/10.1177/0898264315615575)

URL:http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/resolve/08982643/v28i0006/1016_ctohsacweald.xml

Course Format & Delivery

There are 2 components to the format and delivery of the course:

Online Component

This is offered through the McMaster's online learning management system, Avenue-to-Learn (A2L). A2L is web-based and can be accessed from any internet connection. During the term, you are expected to do most of your learning via weekly self-directed modules. All course information including, power point slides with instructor lecture

notes, instructional videos, required readings, practice exercises/problems, assignment guidelines and grading rubrics, and any other applicable course resources can be accessed through A2L. A2L is also used for tests, assignment submission, and feedback on assignments.

Virtual Component

Each week I, (Dr. LeBlanc), will be available through the videoconferencing platform known as Zoom. Everyone registered in the course can access the virtual classroom through a recurring link that will be provided on Avenue to Learn. Initially you will have to register for a Zoom account using your Mac ID and password. The link to do this is provided on the Content Page of Avenue. The virtual class will take place each week on Friday from 10:30 am to 11:20 am. These sessions will provide you with the opportunity to discuss week's course content, raise questions and voice opinions. Please be aware that this is not a private discussion; it is open to all members of the course. Online Zoom etiquette, and ways that you will be able to participate in the Zoom sessions are detailed in the module week 1 pp lecture slides and will be reviewed during our first virtual session.

Teaching Assistant Support Sessions

Teaching Assistants (TA's) are a valuable part of the course delivery and will be available to support you in various ways. This includes assisting you with questions about the course, providing guidance as well as marking and providing feedback, on assignments, and conducting office hours virtually or via the Avenue 'real-time' Chat Forum. The name of your TA and his or her contact information will be posted on Avenue early in the term. During the term, the class will be randomly assigned into 4 groups. There are 2 TA's assigned to the course and each TA will be responsible for 2 groups of students.

Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames 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.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Test #1- 25% Oct 23rd
2. Test #2- 30% - Date TBA
3. Course Exercises X 10 (10%)
4. Research Outline and Annotated Bibliography (10%) Due Nov 14th
5. Term Assignment (25%) - Due Dec 5th

Course Evaluation – Details

Test #1 (25%) October 23rd

Test #1 will be administered on-line via the Avenue to Learn ‘Quizzes’ portal on October 23rd. The questions will be based on material from the text, and any other posted class materials and is worth 25% of your final grade. The test will consist of 40 questions that may encompass a combination of multiple choice & multiple selection questions, matching questions, and application/conceptual questions that will test your knowledge of the required readings and additional course material. To allow for equity and accessibility, the test will be available from 9:30 am to 11:30 am on the scheduled date but once you log on, you will only have 60 minutes to complete it. Adjustments will be made for students registered with SAS who have additional time for writing tests as part of their accommodations.

During the on-line test, you are not allowed to collaborate with your peers nor are you able to take screen shots, post photos, post questions online, access webpages for answers, or any similar behavior/activity etc., as doing so is a form of academic dishonesty. Read the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy in advance of the test. Strategies are in place to prevent academic dishonesty when writing the on-line test. Although you have access to your course material during the test, please remember that to be successful, you must keep up with learning course content on a regular basis and study in advance of the test.

Test # 2 (30%) Date TBA

At the end of the term, Test #2 will be administered online via the Avenue to Learn ‘Quizzes’ portal. The test may encompass a combination of multiple choice & multiple selection questions, matching questions, and application/conceptual questions that will test your knowledge of the required readings and additional course material weeks 7 to 13 inclusive.

During the on-line test, you are not allowed to collaborate with your peers nor are you able to take screen shots, post photos, post questions online, access webpages for answers, or any similar behavior/activity etc., as doing so is a form of academic dishonesty. Read the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy in advance of the test. Strategies are in place to prevent academic dishonesty when writing the on-line test. Although you have access to your course material during the test, please remember that to be successful, you must keep up with learning course content on a regular basis and study in advance of the test. Further details about the test will be posted on Avenue.

Course Exercises (10%)

During the term (weeks 3- 5 & weeks 7-13) you will be expected to complete short responses to assigned weekly activities/exercises. These are intended to reinforce your understanding of the course content. You will have the opportunity to work on these exercises in your randomly assigned groups during the TA supported virtual sessions. Although attendance is not mandatory, I strongly urge you to attend your scheduled

virtual TA support sessions, where you can interact with your peers and receive guidance and feedback on the exercises from your TA.

Students, who do not attend the virtual sessions can still submit their responses to the exercises individually, for credit. The assignments will be graded based on thoughtful completion rather than accuracy. Responses must be submitted to the 'Course Exercises' Avenue dropbox no later than Saturday at 11:59 pm, the week that they are due.

With respect to any extenuating circumstances, requiring assignment extensions, you must follow the course policy instructions regarding "Absences, Missed Work, Illnesses" outlined on page 13 of this document. Any one experiencing ongoing IT accessibility issues should contact me (Dr LeBlanc) directly, to discuss alternative options. Students with formal accommodations regarding absences and missed work (i.e.SAS, RISO) should also communicate with me directly.

Research Outline & Annotated Bibliography (10%) Nov 14th

To gain practice in preparing your final assignment, you will be expected to submit an outline of your proposed research that a) explains the goals and objectives of the research. To help you determine these you will draft two 'purpose statements' (see Creswell 2003). Using a health and/or 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 assignment).

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 a brief outline describing 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 provide an annotated bibliography of 4 sources that you plan to use to write the literature review for your full assignment. The annotated bibliography will include a paragraph about each source that summarizes, the key argument and findings of the sources and how you think you will use the reference to inform 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. Further guidelines and a grading rubric will be posted on Avenue to Learn. It is important that you work closely with your TA's in preparing your outline and final paper.

Term Assignment (25%) Dec 5th

You will complete an assignment that provides a detailed account of your basic plan to undergo a study on a health & aging topic. You are required to include a brief introduction as well as a statement that explains the purpose of your research (a purpose statement outlines the focus and direction of the proposed research), why you wish to conduct the research, and what you hope to achieve by completing it. You are also required to identify a research question, provide a brief literature review, and

discuss your 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](https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/citing) URL: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/research/citing>.

Grading for the assignment will depend on your assignment's content, accuracy, structure, grammar, and writing style. **The assignment components must be submitted electronically in a WORD document to the appropriate Avenue to Learn drop box no later 11:59 pm on the dates that they are 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 our 'virtual' class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Beginning Wed Sept 9th)

Topic: Introduction to the Course

Required Reading:

Course Outline

Notes:

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 2 (Beginning Mon Sept 14th)

Topic: Research Orientations -Theoretical Paradigms

Required Reading:

Text Introduction & Chapter 1- Research Orientations

Notes:

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 3 (Beginning Mon Sept 21st)

Topic: Research Designs

Required Reading:

Text Chapter 2 Research Designs

Del Baso & Lewis (2012) Read pp 46-49

Notes:

TA Support Sessions begin Week 3 (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Selecting a Research Topic

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 4 (Beginning Mon Sept 28th)

Topic: Research Ethics

Required Reading:

Text Chapter 3 Research Ethics

Del Baso & Lewis (2012) Read pp 48-59: How to use the library and internet; how to read monographs (books) and academic journal articles; how to plan and organize a literature review

Notes:

TA Support Sessions (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Research Questions & Hypothesis Writing

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Pre-recorded Guest Presentation: McMaster Research Ethics Board

Week 5 (Beginning Mon Oct 5th)

Topic: Quantitative Research

Required Reading:

Text Chapter 4

Del Baso & Lewis (2012) "The Literature Review" pp 59-67

Recommended Reading

Novek, Shooshtari, & Menec (2016). This is a quantitative scholarly research article.

Notes:

TA Support Sessions (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Measurement Exercise: Scales & Indices

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Resource: Preparing for Test #1 PP Slide Presentation

Week 6 (Oct 12th – 16th)

No Classes Midterm Recess

Week 7 (Beginning Mon Oct 19th)

Topic: Qualitative Research

Required Reading:

Chapter 9 Qualitative Research

Recommended Reading:

Furlotte, & al. (2016). This is a qualitative scholarly research article.

Notes:

TA Support Sessions (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Pre Test Support

NO Virtual Class

***Test #1 Friday Oct 23rd Based on Course Material Weeks 1-5.

Week 8 (Beginning Mon Oct 26th)

Topic: Sampling

Required Reading:

Text Chapter 7

Notes:

TA Support Sessions

Course Exercise: Sampling Exercise

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 9 (Beginning Mon Nov 2nd)

Topic: Capturing the Research Process: Practical Aspects of Doing Research

Required Reading:

Text Chapter 16

Creswell, J. (2003) Read pp 87-98

Notes:

TA Support Sessions (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercises: Writing a Research Purpose Statement & Preparing an Annotated Bibliography

Week 10 (Beginning Mon Nov 9th)

Topic: Survey Research

Readings:

Text Chapter 5

Notes:

TA Support Session (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Survey Question Design Exercise

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

***Research Assignment Outline & Annotated Bibliography Due in Avenue Drop box Saturday Nov 14th at 11:59 pm

Week 11 (Beginning Mon Nov 16th)

Topic: Qualitative Research: Conducting Fieldwork

Readings:

Text Chapters 10

Notes:

TA Support Session (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Naturalistic Observation Exercise

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 12 (Beginning Mon Nov 23rd)

Topic: Qualitative Research: Interviewing

Required Reading

Text Chapter 11

Notes:

TA Support Session (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Preparing an Interview Guide

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

Week 13 (Beginning Mon Nov 30th)

Topic: Unobtrusive Research

Readings

Text Chapter 12 Content Analysis

Notes:

TA Support Sessions (Mon Groups 1 & 2; Wed Groups 3 & 4)

Course Exercise: Content Analysis Exercise

Virtual Class Friday 10:30- 11:20 am

***Term Assignment Due Dec 5th 11:59 pm

Tentative: pre-recorded- guest presentation – applying research skills

Week 14 (Beginning Mon Dec 7th)

Topic: Course Wrap-up

No required reading

Notes:

***Test #2 TBA as scheduled by registrar; course material weeks 7-12

Course Policies

Assignments

Detailed instructions and grading rubrics for assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments for the course should have a title page, all pages should be numbered and have 1-inch margins on all four sides. All text should be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman Font. Assignments must be properly formatted using either the APA 6th or 7th edition Style Guide. Carefully follow the manuscript formatting with respect to in-text citation references, reference page formatting, and manuscript writing style. URL : <https://libguides.mcmaster.ca/APA>. Writing assignments will be submitted into the Avenue Assignment drop box. You can access all assignment submission folders by clicking on 'Assessments' on either the Course Announcement or Content Page of Avenue. Under 'Assessments' click on "Assignments". You will also find a direct link to each specific assignment drop box in the weekly module that the assignment is due.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
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

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. Without formal accommodations, no assignments will be accepted 1 week after the due date.

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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity), located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Copyright And Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using 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.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any 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.

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 2 business days (I will generally not respond to emails over the weekend). Emails requiring a more detailed response will be answered during virtual office hours or by phone.

University Policies

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation 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.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.