

SOCIOLOGY 2Z03-C01

Introduction to Sociological Research (Online)

Fall 2020
Day and Time of Classes: Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to the methods that sociologists use to conduct research. You will learn how to generate and frame research questions, measure concepts, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various existing research findings and methods.

This is an online course offered through Avenue-to-Learn (A2L, Avenue). Students will work through weekly online modules to complete the course. There are no in-person lectures or tutorials.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Address sociologically-informed research questions
- 2) Derive research hypotheses from existing sociological theory
- 3) Find peer-reviewed sociology journal articles using a proper database
- 4) Properly measure the concepts/topics of your interest
- 5) Discuss ethical concerns in conducting social research involving humans
- 6) Explain challenges in collecting a sample that best represents the population of your interest
- 7) Describe various sociological research methods (e.g. survey research, qualitative interviewing, field research, non-reactive research)
- 8) Explain in detail the methods used in academic sociology journals
- 9) Critically evaluate the methods and findings from existing sociological research.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course addresses six [University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](#):

- 1) This course introduces you to various methods used in sociology to conduct social research, which will **expand your depth and breadth of knowledge**.
- 2) This course helps you develop skills in formulating sociological research questions and selecting appropriate methods to address your questions. In so doing, you will gain **knowledge of methodology**.
- 3) You will learn how to critically evaluate the quality of evidence from existing sociological research in writing. In so doing, you will gain **application of knowledge and communication skills**.
- 4) You will learn strengths and weaknesses of each sociological research. This will help you gain an **awareness of limits of knowledge**.

5) This course encourages you to consider ethically responsible sociological research involving humans. This will enhance your **autonomy and professional capacity**.

REQUIRED READING

Babbie, Earl, Jason D. Edgerton, and Lance Roberts. 2020. *Fundamentals of Social Research Fifth Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Cengage. Paperback, ISBN10: 0-17-689595-7; ISBN13: 978-0-17-689595-2.

- MindTap (accompanying e-resources) will not be used in this course, and therefore, you are not required to purchase the textbook that comes with MindTap instant access.
- You may use the 4th edition as a substitute of the 5th edition. However, other earlier editions (1st- 3rd eds) cannot be used for this course.

TOPICS AND SCHEDULES

Reading assignments for each module can be found on Avenue.

Module	Dates	Topic
Module 1	Sept 8 – 13	Introduction
Module 2	Sept 14 – 20	The nature of social science research
Module 3	Sept 21 – 27	Causality and hypothesis testing
Module 4	Sept 28 – Oct 4	Conceptualization, operationalization and measurement
Module 5	Oct 5 – 11	Research ethics
Module 6	Oct 26 – Nov 1	Sampling
Module 7	Nov 2 – 8	Survey research
Module 8	Nov 9 – 15	Quantitative data analysis
Module 9	Nov 16 – 22	Qualitative interviewing & Field research
Module 10	Nov 23 – 29	Non-reactive research
Module 11	Nov 30 – Dec 6	Conclusion

Other important dates, Fall 2020

- September 16 (Wed): Last day for enrollment (registration) and changes (drop/add)
- November 13 (Fri): Last day for cancelling courses without failure by default
- Note: This is not the complete list – for other important dates, please go to: <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=8636>

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Grade Breakdown

Class participation (2% * 10)	20%
Mid-term test (Oct 21)	25%
Assignment (due: Dec 4)	25%
Final Exam (date: TBA)	30%
Total	100%

Class participation

- From Module 2 to 11, your class participation will be evaluated either in the form of online quizzes (20 multiple choice/ true or false questions) or online

discussions moderated by the Teaching Assistant. Each weekly participation activity is worth 2% of the final grade, for a total of 20%.

- Further details and instructions can be found in the *Evaluations* module on Avenue.

Mid-term Test

- The mid-term test consists of 50 multiple choice questions and is based on the course material (readings, lecture videos, online quizzes) from Modules 1 to 5.
- The mid-term test will be available for a 3-hour period (7pm – 10pm) on October 21, 2020. You will access the test through the A2L Quizzes tool. Once you begin the test, you will have 75 minutes to complete and submit it. You must submit your test by 10pm on October 21, or you will receive a grade of 0.
- All times are based on Eastern Time (ET).

Final Exam

- The final exam consists of 40 multiple choice and 5 short answer type questions and will be based on the course material (e.g. readings, lecture videos, online quiz) from Module 6 to 11.
- The final exam will be held during exam period (the exam date will be announced later).
- You will access the exam through the A2L Quizzes tool. Once you begin the test, you will have 2 hours to complete and submit it.

Missed Test and Exam

- You must take the mid-term test and final exam as scheduled. The only exception is when a student meets conditions that will be accepted by the University. You must take a make-up test/exam as scheduled.
- If you miss the mid-term test or final exam without proper documentation, you will receive a mark of zero for the missed test/exam. These grades of zero will be included in your total grade.
- The make-up for the mid-term test will be held on a fixed date/time (TBA). The date and time of the make-up test are **fixed and non-negotiable**.

Assignment

- Instructions for the Assignment will be provided on Avenue in the *Evaluations* module.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED ITEMS

Course Grades

Course grades are calculated on the basis of a percentage scale. This percentage scale is used in the mid-term test, assignment, and final exam. The weighted sum at the end of the course is then translated into the letter grade used by [McMaster](#) as follows:

Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84

B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56
D-	1	50-52
F	0	0-49 -- Failure

Inclusion and Equity

This course brings together students from a variety of academic disciplines, as well as ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Learning from our diversity of experience, values and world views is a strength of the university experience. In order for all students to get the most from this course, dialogue should be respectful across disciplinary, cultural and personal differences.

Students with Disabilities

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Campus Support

- [Student Academic Success Centre, writing support services](#)
- [Student Wellness Centre, counselling services](#)
- [Mac Library](#)

COURSE POLICIES

Email

- Only communications from McMaster email addresses will be responded to. **Please do not use email through Avenue.**
- Please expect a reply from us within **3 business days**. Be sure to include 'Sociology2Z03' in the e-mail subject header to facilitate a timely response.
- Please consider email as equivalent to any other form of written communication. Students who write to their professors and teaching assistant are expected to follow rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In addition, please include a proper greeting, such as "Dear Dr. Kaida," and a closing that includes your full name, such as "Sincerely, Jane Lee." Email failing to meet these standards may not be answered. Email containing questions that can be answered by referring to this syllabus or to Avenue to Learn may not be answered. As we deal with many students, please expect to wait up to 3 business days for a response to your email.

Grade Appeals

- Every effort will be made to provide you with a grade that honestly reflects the quality of your work. Read carefully the comments provided on the returned assignment. Also consider the criteria on which the grading was based. Marks depend not merely on surface comprehension of the material but deep comprehension; in the Assignment, marks depend on critical and original analysis of the material, and clear and concise organization, presentation and writing with no irrelevant material. You are also assessed on spelling, grammar, and punctuation at a second-year undergraduate level.
- If, after having read the comments, listened to the review and reread your work, you believe the grade does not adequately reflect the quality of your work, return the assignment to me with short, specific, written comments arguing for the quality of your work. You must use the designated form, which is available upon request. The request form must be submitted to me via email within **2 weeks** of the assignment being released online. Please note that a re-marked assignment can be graded up or down.

MSAF

- The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.
- You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.
- Please note that the MSAF can be used for “missed academic work worth **less than 25%** of the final grade resulting from medical or personal situations lasting up to three calendar days” (<https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>). Therefore, you cannot submit the MSAF for **Assignment** (worth 25% of the final grade), the **mid-term test** (worth 25% of the final grade), and the **final exam** (worth 30% of the final grade).
- If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you **MUST** visit your Associate Dean’s Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.
- This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

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.

Turnitin.com

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.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity Statement

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](#).

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 other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.

Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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 requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation 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.

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.

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.

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.