# Introduction to Sociological Research (SOCIOL 2Z03) Winter 2022

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| **Instructor:** | **Teaching Assistant:** |
| Dr. Zhifan Luo ([luoz60@mcmaster.ca](mailto:luoz60@mcmaster.ca)) | Sarah Szymanski ([szymanss@mcmaster.ca](mailto:szymanss@mcmaster.ca)) |
| **Lecture Time:** | **Lecture Classroom:** |
| TW 9:30-10:20 A.M. | Peter George Centre for Living & Learning, Room  124 |
| **Office Hours:** | **Tutorials** |
| W 8:00 – 10:00 P.M.  (virtual & by appointment) | T01 Mondays, 1:30-2:20 P.M., KTH-B104 T02 Tuesdays, 10:30-11:20 A.M., BSB-120 |

**Course Summary**

This course provides an introduction to the essential components of designing and conducting empirical research to address sociological questions. In this course, students will be introduced to the logic of sociological research, the key concepts in designing sociological research, and the main research methods used in sociological research. The knowledge gained in this course will aid students in developing the skills of data-driven problem solving and advanced learning of research methods.

# Course Objectives

After taking the course, students are expected to be able to:

* Understand essential components and procedures of sociological research.
* Design a research project to answer a sociological question.
* Decide methods of data analysis based on research questions and the pros and cons of different methods.
* Assess published research from a scholarly perspective.

# Course Assessments

1. Reading quizzes:

There are 10 reading quizzes in this course, and each one quiz accounts for 2% of the final grade. The quizzes will be delivered on Avenue to Learn and must be submitted **BEFORE** the class starts (9:30 A.M.) on the assigned date. The quizzes will be solely based on assigned readings for the date.

1. Tutorial-based assignments:

There are 7 tutorial-based assignments in this class, and each of them accounts for 3% of the final grade. The teaching instructor will discuss each assignment in detail in the tutorial sessions.

1. In-class assignments:

There are around 7 in-class assignments in this course, and each assignment accounts for 2% of the final grade. It is up to the instructor to decide when to give the assignments. There is **NO make-up** for in-class assignments except accommodation has been required and approved in advance.

1. Tests:

There are 3 **non-cumulative** tests in this course, and each one accounts for 15% of the final grade. Each test consists of 30 multiple-choice/true-or-false questions. Test questions are based on **both** lecture material and the textbook. A review sheet will be posted for each test in advance on Avenue to Learn. All tests must be taken on the assigned date and time except when accommodation has been required and approved in advance.

1. Grading Breakdown:

The final grade will be based on the below distribution:

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| Reading quizzes | 20% |
| Tutorial-based activities | 21% |
| In-class assignments | 14% |
| Tests | 45% |

# Required Equipment and Textbook

In the last tutorial session (Apr 4/5), students will need to bring their own laptops/tablets for assignments. If you have any difficulty in doing so, please contact the instructor in advance to find a solution.

There is one required textbook for this course as follows, and it is available at the University Bookstore. Other required readings will be available on Avenue to Learn.

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.

# Course Schedule

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| **Date** | **Content** | **Reading** | **Reading Quiz & Tutorial** |
| Jan 11 (T) | Course introduction | Syllabus |  |
| Jan 12 (W) | Virtual Q&A session |  |  |
| Jan 18 (T) | Introduction to  sociological research | Babbie, Ch 1 |  |
| Jan 19 (W) | Sociological paradigms | Babbie, Ch 2 | Quiz 1 |

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| Jan 25 (T) | Theory construction |  |  |
| Jan 26 (W) | Research ethics | Babbie, Ch 3 | Quiz 2 |
| Feb 1 (T) | **Test 1** |  | Tutorial 1: Research ethics |
| Feb 2 (W) | Research Design (1) | Babbie, Ch 4 | Quiz 3 |
| Feb 8 (T) | Research Design (2) |  | Tutorial 2: Research design (1) |
| Feb 9 (W) | Conceptualization | Babbie, Ch 5 | Quiz 4; |
| Feb 15 (T) | Operationalization |  | Tutorial 3: Research design (2) |
| Feb 16 (W) | Measurement | Babbie, Ch 5 | Quiz 5; |
| Feb 22 (T) | Mid-term recess |  |  |
| Feb 23 (W) | Mid-term recess |  |  |
| Mar 1 (T) | Sampling (1) | Babbie, Ch 6 | Quiz 6; |
| Mar 2 (W) | Sampling (2) |  |  |
| Mar 8 (T) | **Test 2** |  | Tutorial 4: Sampling |
| Mar 9 (W) | Experiments | Babbie, Ch 7 | Quiz 7 |
| Mar 15 (T) | Survey (1) | Babbie, Ch 8 | Quiz 8; |
| Mar 16 (W) | Survey (2) |  |  |
| Mar 22 (T) | Field Research | Babbie, Ch 10 | Quiz 9;  Tutorial 5: Quantitative methods |
| Mar 23 (W) | Computational Social  Science (1) | Assigned  reading |  |
| Mar 29 (T) | Computational Social  Science (2) |  | Tutorial 6: Qualitative  methods |
| Mar 30 (W) | Interview | Babbie, Ch 11 | Quiz 10 |
| Apr 5 (T) | **Test 3** |  | Tutorial 7: Computational  methods |
| Apr 6 (W) | Recap |  |  |

**Course Policies**

1. Syllabus

All items in this syllabus are subject to change. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in class, emailed to students, and posted on Avenue to Learn.

1. Late Submission

Each one-day delay in submission will lead to the penalty of a one-point deduction from the

grade, except when accommodation has been required and approved in advance.

1. Absences, Missed Work, Illness

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.”

1. 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.

# University Policies

1. 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](http://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 other credit

has been obtained.

* + Improper collaboration in group work.
  + Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

1. Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

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

1. 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](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

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| **MARK** | **GRADE** |
| 90-100 | A+ |
| 85-89 | 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 |