SOCIOLOGY 2Z03

Introduction to Sociological Research (Online)

Spring 2020 Instructor: Lisa Kaida

Day and Time of Classes: Online Email: kaidar@mcmaster.ca

Office: KTH-613

# 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](http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html):

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 and Lance Roberts. 2018. [*Fundamentals of Social Research Fourth Canadian Edition*](https://www.nelsonbrain.com/shop/ProductDisplay?langId=-1&storeId=10651&catalogId=10052&productId=871557). Toronto: Nelson. Paperback, ISBN10: 0-17-657011-X/ ISBN13: 978-0-17-657011-8

* 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 access codes.
* **Do not** use earlier editions of the textbook.

**TOPICS AND SCHEDULES**

* Reading assignments for each module can be found on Avenue.

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**Other important dates, Spring 2020**

* May 11 (Mon): Last day for enrollment (registration) and changes
* June 3 (Wed): Last day for withdrawing from courses without failure by default
* This is not the complete list – for other important dates, click [here](https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=38&navoid=8059).

# METHOD OF EVALUATION

## Grade Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Quizzes (4% each \* 5) | 20% |
| Mid-term test (May 28) | 25% |
| Assignment (due: June 15) | 25% |
| Final Exam (date: June 18) | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

**Quizzes:**

* Each quiz will cover 2 modules of material, and will have 20 multiple choice/ true or false questions). You will access the test through the A2L Quizzes tool. Each quiz will be available for a 1 hour period (7-8pm) Once you begin a quiz, you will have 30 minutes to complete it.
* Further details and instructions can be found in the *Evaluations* module on Avenue.
* All times are based on Eastern Time (ET).

**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 2-hour period (7pm– 9pm) on May 28, 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 9pm on May 28, 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 on June 18 and will be available for a 3-hour period (7-10pm).
* 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

# 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 three 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.

**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](https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/exams/grades/) 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](https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/academicsupport/#academicWriting)
* [Student Wellness Centre, counselling services](https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/services/counselling/)
* [Mac Library](https://library.mcmaster.ca/)

# ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf

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 other credit has been obtained.

2. Improper collaboration in group work.

3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**Turnitin.com**

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. You will be required to submit your work electronically (Assignment within Avenue) so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/students/index.html>.

**DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

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.

Students should check the web (especially announcements posted on the Avenue), the white board, and the Undergraduate bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (e.g. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

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.

**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](https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/current-students/riso) about how to request accommodation.

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.