

SOCIOLOGY 2Z03-C01
Introduction to Sociological Research

Winter 2020

Day and Time of Classes: Wed, 7:00-9:00pm

Class Location: PGCLL M21

Office: KTH-613

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Kaida

Ext.: 23601

Office Hours: Tues, 12:00-1:00pm

Email: kaidar@mcmaster.ca

Teaching Assistant:

Carlo Charles (charlc6@mcmaster.ca)

Office hours: TBA

Only communications from McMaster email addresses will be responded to. 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.

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.

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://ccl.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*. Toronto: Nelson.

(Access code for MindTap is **not required** for this course. However, students who have purchased an access code for MindTap can access practice questions for the mid-term test and final exam).

TOPICS AND SCHEDULES

January	8 (week 1)	Introduction	
	15 (week 2)	The nature of social science research	
	22 (week 3)	Causality and hypothesis testing	Tutorial 1
	29 (week 4)	Conceptualization, operationalization and measurement	
February	5 (week 5)	Research ethics	Tutorial 2
	12 (week 6)	Mid-term test	
	19	No class (mid-term break)	
	26 (week 7)	Sampling	Tutorial 3
March	4 (week 8)	Survey research Assignment 1 due (7pm)	
	11 (week 9)	Quantitative data analysis	
	18 (week 10)	Qualitative interviewing & Field research	Tutorial 4
	25 (week 11)	Non-reactive research	Tutorial 5
April	1 (week 12)	Conclusion and review for final exam Assignment 2 due (7pm)	Tutorial 6

April 13-28: Final exam will be held during exam period (the exam date will be announced later)

Other important dates, Winter 2020

January 14 (Tues): Last day for enrollment (registration) and changes

March 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=38&navoid=8059>

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Grade Breakdown:

Assignment 1 (due: Mar. 4)	20%
Assignment 2 (due Apr. 1)	25%
Mid-term test (Feb. 12)	25%
Final exam (date: TBA)	<u>30%</u> 100%

Although grades are given on the basis of specific tasks, I expect you to come to every class having completed all the assigned readings and prepared to participate in lectures/tutorials.

Assignments: Instructions for Assignments 1 and 2 will be provided later.

Late Policy:

- Assignments are due when specified on the course outline. If the assignment is submitted late, 5% for each 24-hour period following the deadline will be deducted, with no prorating over the 24-hour period. For example, if you receive 65% on the assignment (equal to C), but turn in the paper 6 hours late, you will lose 5%, or receive a grade of 60%, a C-. If you turn in the assignment 2 days late, you will lose 10%, etc. Weekends count as days late.

Mid-term Test and Final Exam:

- The mid-term test and final exam consist of multiple choices and short answer type questions and will be based on readings, lectures, and tutorials.
- The mid-term test covers material from Week 1 to Week 5, and the final exam covers material from Week 7 to Week 12.
- The test starts at the beginning of the class. Therefore, if you arrive late, you must turn in your test at the same time as the other students do (this means you will not get extra time to compensate for the late arrival).

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**.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED ITEMS**Email:**

Please consider email as equivalent to any other form of written communication. Students who write to their professors and teaching assistants 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. This means that email is not the right medium for urgent matters.

Office Hours and Appointments: I encourage you to visit my office to discuss matters of concern. If you cannot make it during the regular office hours, please let me know so we can arrange an appointment.

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 on surface comprehension of the material but deep comprehension; in Assignments 1-2, 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 in person within 2 weeks of the assignment being returned to the class. Re-marked assignment can be graded up or down.

Use of Avenue:

Announcement: Occasionally, I will make announcements and post course-related files on Avenue. To avoid missing important information, you are asked to have valid accounts for the Avenue and to log on to my course web page at least **twice a week**.

Assignment submission: You are asked to submit your Assignments 1 and 2 by uploading your works (preferably in Word format) to Avenue's Assignment **AND** hand in a hard-copy to Dr. Kaida in person in the beginning of class.

Course Grades:

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

(<https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/exams-grades/grades/#tab-2>):

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 approach 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.

Classroom Policies:

- I will not tolerate discourtesy or disruptions of any kind during lectures.
- Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive and are thus not acceptable.
- In consideration of your colleagues, please turn off cell/smart phones during class time.

Campus Support

- Student Academic Success Centre, writing support services
<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/academicsupport/#academicWriting>
- Student Wellness Centre, counselling services
<http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/counselling.html>
- Mac Library <http://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 can submit the MSAF only for **Assignment 1** (worth 20% of the final grade), but not for Assignment 2, the mid-term test, and the final exam.

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, 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.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

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](#) 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.

COURSE READINGS

Please note: This is a tentative schedule. Unforeseen circumstances sometimes require flexibility in scheduling. If that occurs, I will notify you in advance and provide a revised schedule.

January 8 (week 1): Introduction

No readings

January 15 (week 2): The nature of social science research

Chapters 1-2

January 22 (week 3): Causality and hypothesis testing

Chapter 4

January 29 (week 4): Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement

Chapter 5

February 5(week 5): Research ethics

Chapter 3

February 12 (week 6): Mid-term test (No readings)

February 26 (week 7): Sampling

Chapter 6

March 4 (week 8): Survey research

Chapter 8

March 11 (week 9): Quantitative data analysis

Chapter 14

March 18 (week 10): Qualitative interviewing & Field research

Chapters 10 & 11

March 25 (week 11): Non-reactive research

Chapter 9

April 1 (week 12): Conclusion

No readings