

# **SOCPsy 2K03 RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

## **Winter 2024**

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**TA:**  
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### **Course Description**

This course will introduce you to the methods that social psychologists use to conduct research. It will provide you with the basic skills to become both a producer and informed consumer of research in the social sciences. You will learn how to generate and frame a research question, measure concepts, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various research strategies, and analyze data. Throughout, we will explore the challenges that social scientists frequently encounter when investigating social phenomena, including the importance of scientific skepticism when interpreting research findings, and the balance between ethical principles and scientific inquiry.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- understand the ways of knowing and the role of science in building knowledge
- understand the dialectical nature of scientific inquiry
- be familiar with the dominant research methodologies used in the social sciences
- be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various research strategies

### **Required Materials and Texts**

- Earl Babbie, *Fundamentals of Social Research*, Canadian Fifth Edition
- All articles, lecture content and films presented in class or posted on Avenue to Learn.

### **Class Format**

Lectures and tutorials

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

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| 1. Midterm Exam (multiple-choice: <b>Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup></b> ) | 30% |
| 2. Assignment (written: due <b>March 30th 9am</b> )                          | 30% |
| 3. Final Exam (multiple-choice: final exam period)                           | 40% |

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Midterm (30%), Monday Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 430-540**

A multiple-choice midterm during lecture time on **Monday Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 430-540** (70 minutes). The midterm will cover the following material: Week 1-Week 5 (including experiments).

### **Assignment (30%), due March 30<sup>th</sup> 9am**

Details on the assignment will be provided during the term. The assignment will be submitted on Avenue to Learn (**due March 30<sup>th</sup> 9am**).

### **Tutorials are held on the following dates:**

(17/1): Introduction

(31/1): Operationalization

(13/3): Designing surveys

(25/3): Drop-in tutorial

### **Final exam (40%), Held during final exam period**

A multiple-choice final exam will be held during final exam period. The exam will cover all material covered from Week 1-14.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (8/1) Introduction**

Readings: Chapter 1

### **Week 2 (15/1) Research ethics and research design**

Readings: Chapters 3 and 4

### **Week 3 (22/1) Conceptualization**

Readings: Chapter 5

### **Week 4 (29/1) Sampling**

Readings: Chapter 6

**Week 5 (5/2) Experiments**

Readings: Chapter 7; Lovaglia reading (on avenue)

**Week 6 (12/2) Midterm**

**Week 7 (19/2) No class**

**Week 8 (26/2) Survey research and qualitative interviewing**

Reading: Chapters 8 and 11

**Week 9 (4/3) Quantitative data analysis I**

Reading: Chapters 14 and 16

**Week 10 (11/3) Quantitative data analysis II**

Reading: Chapters 14 and 16

**Week 11 (18/3) Field research and qualitative analysis**

Reading: Chapters 10 and 13

**Week 12 (25/3) Unobtrusive research**

Reading: Chapter 9

**Week 13 (1/4): Reading and writing social research**

Reading: Chapter 17

**Week 14 (8/4): Wrap-up and exam review**

**Course Policies**

**Submission of Assignments**

Students will submit the written assignment on avenue to learn.

**Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day after the assignment deadline

**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**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

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.

### **AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION**

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. 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 details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **ONLINE PROCTORING**

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## **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](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

## **REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work.<sup>3</sup>

## **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.

## **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.

## **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, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

## **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.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
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