

HLTH AGE 2A03
Research Methods in Health and Aging

Department of Health, Aging & Society
McMaster University
Fall 2016

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Lectures: Tuesday & Thursday, 2:30-3:20pm

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Office Hours: Thursday, 3:30-5:30pm

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****If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: hasdept@mcmaster.ca).**

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of social scientific research methods and consider how different methods can be used to investigate the empirical terrain of health and aging. It will discuss dominant and competing ontological assumptions about how the social world is put together and explore implications for social research. A defining theme of this course will be the development of student skills to make possible the investigation of social phenomena using the principles and tools of research design. Thus, it will provide an overview of qualitative and quantitative approaches, modes of data collection, and the analysis of data.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to key components of the research process, including the development of an empirical terrain to be investigated (e.g., research question and/or hypothesis) and plan for the collection and analysis of data.
- Explain the importance of linking theoretical frameworks to research methodology.
- Illustrate the principles and processes of quantitative and qualitative approaches, including their epistemological and ontological assumptions, objectives, techniques for data collection, and procedures for data analysis.
- Provide students with critical and analytical skills to evaluate the quality of research findings in the domain of health and aging.
- Examine the principles of ethical research practices, including informed consent.
- Facilitate course learning through the completion of hands-on and group activities that illustrate contemporary issues in researching the topics of health and aging.
- Advance skills in group work, research design, the use of academic databases, and the writing of literature reviews as well as other crucial elements of a research proposal.

Course Materials

Neuman, W. & Robson, K. (2015). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (3rd Canadian ed.). Toronto, ON: Pearson.

Listed below is a selection of additional readings that will be discussed predominately in tutorial. Links to these readings are posted on Avenue to Learn and can also be found using the McMaster University Library on-line catalogue. You are expected to read in advance

these readings and to bring with you to tutorial either a hard or an electronic copy of each reading on the day in which the article will be discussed.

Andrews, G., Sudwell, M. & Sparkes, A. (2005). Towards a geography of fitness: An ethnographic case study of the gym in British bodybuilding culture. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60, 877-891.

Creswell, J. (2009). The purpose statement. In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.) (pp. 111-120). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Green, J., Draper, A., Dowler, E., Fele, G., Hagenhoff, V., Rusanen, M., & Rusanen, T. (2005). Public understanding of food risks in four European countries: A qualitative study. *European Journal of Public Health*, 15(5), 523-527.

Owens, J., Antin, J., Doerzaph, Z., & Willis, S. (2015). Cross-generational acceptance of and interest in advanced vehicle technologies: A nationwide survey. *Transportation Research Part F*, 35, 139-151.

Tuokko, H., Rhodes, R., Love, J., Cloutier-Fisher, Jouk, A., & Schoklitsch, A. (2013). Change in beliefs about older drivers through applied theatre. *Educational Gerontology*, 39, 45-56.

Utz, R. (2011). Like mother, (not) like daughter: The social construction of menopause and aging. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 25, 143-154.

Course Requirements & Important Dates

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

Course Requirement	Weight	Due Date
Midterm Exam	30%	October 20
Quantitative & Qualitative Purpose Statement Draft	5%	Due in <i>tutorial</i> on either November 8 or 9*
Purpose Statement Assignment	25%	Due in <i>lecture</i> on November 24
Tutorial Participation & Attendance	10%	Assessed on a weekly basis
Final exam	30%	TBD by the Office of the Registrar

* Your due date depends on your tutorial assignment.

MIDTERM: Your midterm will be based on all course material including lectures, tutorials, assigned readings, audio-visual materials (e.g., documentaries, video clips, images), and in-class discussions up until the scheduled date of the midterm. Your midterm will consist of approximately 30-40 multiple-choice questions. Your midterm is scheduled to take place on October 20. You will have 50 minutes to write your exam.

FINAL EXAM: Your final exam is *not* cumulative; it will be based on all course material including lectures, tutorials, assigned readings, audio-visual materials (e.g., documentaries, video clips, images), and in-class discussions occurring after the midterm. Your final exam will consist of approximately 80-100 multiple-choice questions. You will have 2.5 hours to write your exam. More details about your final exam will be discussed in class. The date of your final exam is to be determined by the Office of the Registrar but will take place between December 9 and December 22.

PURPOSE STATEMENT ASSIGNMENT: You are required to complete an assignment that establishes the direction for a proposed research project, including the identification of a research question/problem, completion of a brief literature review, and establishment of a

research design and sampling strategy. This assignment will need to include a brief introduction to your study as well as a fully completed purpose statement as per the directions outlined by Creswell (2009) in the chapter entitled “The Purpose Statement” posted on Avenue to Learn.

This assignment should be 5-6 pages in length and is expected to be written in university-level English and presented in proper academic format using APA citation style. This format includes a cover page with the title of the assignment, your name and student number, course name and number, as well as the name of the course instructor and Teaching Assistant. Assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and printed with 2.54 cm margins on all sides in 12-point Times New Roman font with pages numbered. Grading will depend on your assignment’s content, accuracy, structure, grammar, and writing style. *Further guidelines are posted on Avenue to Learn and will be discussed in tutorial.*

QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE PURPOSE STATEMENT DRAFT: You are required to hand in a draft version of two purpose statements. One statement should propose to use a quantitative research design (e.g., classical experiment, quasi-experiment, survey) and the second statement should propose to use a qualitative research design (e.g., interviews, focus groups, ethnography). Your statement should outline a direction for the proposed research, including the identification of research question or problem (and hypothesis, if appropriate) as well as outline in brief the methods and sampling strategy to be used in the research. Each purpose statement should be 3 to 5 sentences in length. In addition, your assignment should outline using APA citation style the list of articles that you plan to use to write your literature review for your full assignment. Your assignment should include a paragraph that summarizes as a whole how you think that you will use these references to write your literature review. This assignment should be single-spaced, written in 12-point Times New Roman font, and approximately 1-1.5 pages in length. *Further guidelines are posted on Avenue to Learn and will be discussed in tutorial.*

TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE: Each student must attend regularly a weekly tutorial session run by a Teaching Assistant. Tutorials will provide you with the opportunity to discuss course material, complete small group activities and assignments to facilitate learning, participate in discussions about completed research studies using different methods discussed in lecture, and receive help with course assignments and exam preparation.

If you are unable to attend the tutorial section in which you are registered, you can request to be moved to another tutorial session. However, it may not be possible to grant all of these requests due to tutorial enrolment, room size, and fire code regulations. Please be mindful that it is *mandatory* that you attend all scheduled tutorial sessions; make-up assignments will not be prepared for conflicting schedules or other forms of competing obligations. Teaching Assistants are not responsible for informing individual students about material that was discussed during missed tutorial sessions.

Your tutorial participation grade will be assigned by your Teaching Assistant taking into consideration your attendance record and individual contributions to your tutorial session. *Tutorial attendance is worth 5% and tutorial participation is worth 5% for a total of 10%.* You will be rewarded if you participate in tutorials in a relevant, respectful, and contributory manner on an on-going basis throughout the semester.

To assess tutorial attendance, roll call will be taken regularly by your Teaching Assistant. Tutorial participation will be assessed after each tutorial by your Teaching Assistant. You can also accumulate credit by completing small tasks assigned by the Teaching Assistant during or in advance of tutorial. These small assignments will not be

assessed for accuracy but for completeness and will be used by your Teaching Assistant to provide general feedback to the class. The Teaching Assistant will look for evidence that you were intellectually and thoughtfully engaged with the tutorial assignment. Completed assignments will result in the accumulation of participation credit for this course.

Teaching Assistants reserve the right to downgrade your tutorial participation mark (a maximum of 5 points) for **negative class tutorial participation** and an attitude that is disrespectful towards the course, Professor, or Teaching Assistant. Activities considered negative class participation include: irregular class attendance, talking to classmates about material that is not related to the course, inappropriate use of computers or electronic devices (e.g., facebook, twitter, texting, surfing the internet, playing games), sleeping, listening to ipods or mp3 players, coming to class late or leaving early, etcetera. Laptops should only be used to take notes; evidence of inappropriate computer usage or other behaviour may result in a Teaching Assistant asking you to leave tutorial.

Tips and Suggestions for Succeeding in this Course

1. Attend lecture. It is my experience that students who come to class regularly do better in social science courses.
2. Keep up with assigned readings. Assigned readings will be the basis for lecture material, sometimes complementing readings and at times covering new ground. It is especially important to keep up with assigned readings because there will not be enough time in lecture to cover all of the content in the textbook/course pack. Some material you will be responsible for learning on your own through individual self-study.
3. When studying for exams remember that all lecture materials, including assigned readings, audio-visual materials (e.g., documentaries), and in-class discussions are considered testable materials on examinations.
4. Powerpoint presentations will be used during lecture but note-taking is crucial to doing well in this course. To the best of the Professor's ability, powerpoint presentations will be posted on Avenue to Learn in the hours before lecture is to take place. If you simply review powerpoint presentations in lieu of coming to class, you will not do well in this course. Powerpoint presentations will be designed to facilitate student note-taking and will not be a replica of all that was discussed during lecture. Taking notes in class is productive for two reasons. First, it ensures that you stay focused on course materials rather than distracted by facebook, twitter, or any other electronic mode of communication. Second, it facilitates the learning process by giving you practice writing and thinking with new material, which in the process makes present material that is unclear. In this case you should ask a question of the Professor to obtain clarification and/or spend time outside of the classroom engaging with explanations presented in assigned readings.
5. Exchange contact information (e.g., e-mail address and/or phone number) with a classmate or "buddy" early in the semester. I will not provide lecture notes to students that miss class, thus your first point of contact should always be your "buddy." I will be happy to discuss course material during office hours that you do not understand but only after you have reviewed lecture notes from a classmate.

Grading

Grades for each course requirement will be added together at the end of the term. The final total will be translated into the following letter grade according to the grading system documented below:

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

INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

Class Communication, Email & Office Hours: Please do not e-mail your Professor using Avenue to Learn. The best way to contact your Professor is to e-mail directly using your McMaster University account. Unfortunately e-mails that are sent to Professors from Avenue to Learn are bounced back when they are replied to. For this reason it is most effective and efficient if you email your Professor regularly from your McMaster e-mail account and not from Avenue to Learn.

If you have a substantive question that comes out of lecture, you are welcome to e-mail me but I prefer to see students during office hours. It is much easier to provide clarification about substantive questions in person than it is over e-mail. If you send a question about course content using e-mail, be prepared that I may simply ask you to come see me in person if the answer requires extensive explanation.

Please do not e-mail questions that can already be answered by information that has been given to you during lecture or is present on the course outline, documents posted on Avenue to Learn, or in university regulations (e.g., course calendar). There will be ample time to ask questions in class about course material, assignments, and exams, so please feel free to do so. E-mails to your Professor (and TA) should contain: “**HLTH AGE 2A03**” in the subject line. Otherwise your e-mail may be deleted as spam or directed to a junk mail file.

Computers & Cell Phones: You are welcome to bring your laptops with you to class, but when in class you should only be using your word-processing program. Please keep all electronic social networking out of the classroom. This means absolutely no twittering, texting, or facebooking during class time. My concern lies in the potential that this behaviour has for disrupting the learning of others in the classroom not electing to participate in it. If necessary, I will ask those who are breaking this policy to leave the classroom.

Late Assignments: All written work must be submitted in person on the due date as per the assignment instruction guidelines. Assignments that are received by e-mail in electronic form

in lieu of a hard copy or under the Professor's door will NOT be accepted. As described above, your assignment must be received in person in lecture on the assignment due date to avoid late penalty. Your assignment cannot be submitted to the digital drop box in place of an in person submission of a hard copy of your assignment. It is extremely time consuming for your Professor and Teaching Assistant to print student assignments individually in a class of this size, thus it is absolutely mandatory that you submit paper copies of your assignment. Planning your work, scheduling time, and meeting deadlines can be especially challenging, but are important skills to develop and part of the reality of life outside of the university. As an incentive to develop this skill and to be fair and equitable to all students, ***late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day that the assignment is late (including weekends)***. If an assignment is due at the beginning of lecture or tutorial, it will be considered one day late if it is received at any time after the end of class. Late penalties will be waived if the office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences notifies the Professor that you have submitted to that office the appropriate documentation to support your inability to submit the work by the due date.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Please do NOT e-mail or approach the Professor before or after lecture to request an extension for an assignment. In general, I do not grant extensions for assignments outside of the academic missed work university policy. In the event that you would like to request an extension on your assignment, make arrangements to come see me during office hours to discuss the specific circumstances surrounding your request. All requests that come to me outside of office hours will be denied. Your Teaching Assistants do not have the authority to grant extensions independent of consultation with the Professor.*

Missed Course Work: In this course if you miss an exam or assignment due date because of an excused absence, it is the Professor's policy that credit will not be transferred to another course assignment. You must complete all exams and assignments in a timely manner in this course.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please familiarize yourself with recent revisions to the university policy for the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) because under no exceptions will the previous rules and guidelines be enforced. These policy revisions became effective in the spring/summer 2015 term.

- The MSAF can be used for medical and nonmedical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation is required).
- The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.
- The MSAF provides relief for missed academic work resulting from medical or personal situations lasting up to 3 calendar days. If your medical or personal situation lasts longer than 3 days, you must report to the Faculty Office to provide appropriate supporting documentation.

Return of Assignments: In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers. Tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. The Professor will make arrangements for you to pick up your assignments in person during scheduled office hours. You may also provide the Professor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of assignments by mail.

Review of Marks: A great deal of time and attention will be spent marking your assignments and effort will be made to provide feedback about your assignment. If you would like additional feedback about the grade you received, please book an appointment with your Teaching Assistant or attend their scheduled office hours. If you disagree with the mark you received for your assignment, please adhere to the following procedure:

1. Document in at least 2 to 3 paragraphs (1 full page, single-spaced, type-written) why you think you deserve an improved mark. Ensure that your comments address specifically your concerns about the marking and explain in detail why you think your assignment meets the expectations of the assignment as outlined in the grading rubric. Your response should reflect on *all* of the written feedback provided by the Teaching Assistant.
2. Submit your written commentary and original assignment to the Department of Health, Aging & Society (attention: the name of your TA). Then, book an appointment with your TA to discuss the marking of your assignment.
3. If the TA and you are unable to resolve the dispute, book an appointment with your Professor. Prior to the meeting ensure that your Professor has a copy of your written commentary as well as the original assignment.
4. Please note that your TA and Professor have the ability to *increase or decrease* the original assignment score.
5. All disputes involving the TA and Professor must be resolved *at least one month* within the date in which you received your mark.

Videos: We will watch several documentaries in this course, which will be used to illustrate concepts from course material and to generate in-class discussion. These videos will be extremely difficult to obtain outside of class time, thus it is important that you are in class to see them. Exams will assess your understanding of the documentary as it relates to course material as well as your general knowledge about your viewing of the film.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

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.

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, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>. 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.

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.

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.

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. Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>. Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link.

Turnitin.com: In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

HLTH AGE 2A03: COURSE SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK	DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	N&R	A2L	TUTORIAL ACTIVITY
1	Tues., Sept. 6	Introduction to the course	CH1	Appendix A	No tutorials this week
	Thurs., Sept. 8	Doing Social Research			
2	Tues., Sept. 13	Theory & Social Research	CH2		Introduction to the TA & Exercise: Mapping out the Empirical Terrain for Health & Aging Research from a Social Science Perspective
	Thurs., Sept. 15	Theory & Social Research			
3	Tues., Sept. 20	Designing a Study	CH4 & CH5		Lecture: Conducting a Literature Review & APA Referencing
	Thurs., Sept. 22	Designing a Study			
4	Tues., Sept. 27	Ethics <i>Video: Deadly Deception</i>	CH3		Exercise: Writing a Hypothesis
	Thurs., Sept. 29	Ethics <i>Guest lecture: Dr. Karen Szala-Meneok</i>			
5	Tues., Oct. 4	Measurement	CH6		Exercise: Scale Construction
	Thur., Oct. 6	Measurement			
6	Tues., Oct. 11	MIDTERM RECESS			
	Thurs., Oct. 13				
7	Tues., Oct. 18	Measurement	CH6	Creswell (2009); Appendix A	Lecture: Review of Purpose Statement Assignment
	Thurs., Oct. 20	MIDTERM			

8	Tues., Oct. 25	Sampling	CH7		Exercise: Sampling
	Thurs., Oct. 27	Sampling			
9	Tues., Nov. 1	Survey Research	CH8	Owens et al. (2015); Tuokko et al. (2013)	Workshop: Quantitative Purpose Statement
	Thurs., Nov. 3	Experiments	CH9		
10	Tues., Nov. 8	Experiments	CH9		Exercise: Writing a Survey Questionnaire QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE PURPOSE STATEMENT DRAFTS DUE (in tutorial)
	Thurs., Nov. 10	Qualitative Interviewing	CH12		
11	Tues., Nov. 15	Focus Groups <i>Video: Demise of a Focus Group</i>	CH12	Andrews et al. (2005); Green et al. (2005); Utz (2011)	Workshop: Qualitative Purpose Statement
	Thurs., Nov. 17	Field Research <i>Video: Number Our Days</i>	CH13		
12	Tues., Nov. 22	Nonreactive Quantitative Research & Secondary Data Analysis	CH10		Exercise: Identifying an Experimental Design
	Thurs., Nov. 24	Nonreactive Qualitative Research PURPOSE STATEMENT ASSIGNMENT DUE (in lecture)	CH14		
13	Tues., Nov. 29	Nonreactive Qualitative Research	CH14		Final Exam Review
	Thurs., Dec. 1	Qualitative Data Analysis	CH15		
14	Tues., Dec. 6	Exam Review & Catch-up			No tutorials this week