INTRODUCTION

This course provides an elementary review of research methods. Its purpose is to equip you to read and criticize social scientific material presented in other courses. It should also better enable you to evaluate claims that appear in mass media, including claims related to debates over the relative desirability of alternative public policies.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

The bulk of course time will be taken up with lectures by me. The material covered will be drawn from Earl Babbie and Lance W. Roberts, *Fundamentals of Social Research* (Toronto: Nelson Educational, 4th edition, 2018), supplemented by additional material, as appropriate. The paperback version of the textbook is rather expensive. You can also get much cheaper access to it online. It is possible to purchase and use earlier editions of the textbook. But there are differences over time so, if you purchase an earlier edition, you should be careful to check the differences between it and the current edition.

Evidently, you will have a much easier time with the course material if you keep up with the readings. Note that dates are not provided for the sections of the course discussed below. Different parts of the text will take different amounts of time. We will deal with the subjects in approximately the order they appear in the textbook chapters - but there are some divergencies. The chapters are grouped into the sections below because I will emphasize connections between the material covered within a section. This is a matter of relative connectedness. There are connections between all subjects covered in the course.

Exceptionally, the classes of, 25th January, 15th February, 15th March, and 10th April will be replaced with conferences. The organization of the conferences will be dealt with early in the semester.

Your grade will be based on the following:

i) a mid-term examination on Tuesday February 20th worth 30% of your final grade;
ii) an examination in the final examination period, worth 60% of your final grade;
iii) an exercise to be submitted on March 13th worth 10% of your final grade. You will be
asked to respond to questions on the following article: Angela Moe (2007), “Silenced voices and structural survival - battered women’s help seeking,” *Violence against Women* 13 (7): 676-699. The article is available on-line from the McGill Library system.

**READINGS**

1. **From ideas to observations and back**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapters 1-2, 4-6

2. **Experiments, surveys, official statistics, and content analysis**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapters 7-9

3. **Qualitative research**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapters 10, 11, 13

4. **Applied research**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapter 12

5. **Generating and analysing quantitative data**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapters 14-16

6. **Research ethics**
   
   Babbie and Roberts, chapter 3

**SENATE POLICIES**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Student Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.