

**University of Calgary  
Sociology Department  
Fall 2008**

**Course Information:**

Course Title:           **Introduction to Social Research Methods**  
Course Number:        SOCI 313  
Course Time:           M/W/F 13:00 – 13:50  
Course Location:       MS319  
Lab Times/Locations: W 16:00-17:20 (SS06) or Th 15:30-16:50 (SA 145)

**Instructor Information:**

Name:                 Melissa Munn  
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Office Hours:        Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 am - 12:30 am  
                          Or by appointment

**Text and Materials:**

Palys, T. & Atchinson, C. (2008). *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) Toronto, ON: Thomson Nelson.

Readings as indicated on Blackboard site for course.

**Course Description:**

Students in this course will develop a foundational understanding of social science research methods as practiced within sociology. Specifically, this course will focus on the theory of inquiry, scientific method, inductive versus deductive reasoning, overview of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research design and data collection, data sources, common errors in research and research ethics.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. Demonstrate a foundational understanding of key concepts and techniques for conducting research in sociology.
2. Develop an appreciation for the need to apply scientific reasoning and techniques to sociological issues.
3. Articulate the similarities and differences between qualitative and quantitative research design and data analysis.
4. Appreciate the strengths and weakness of common sources of sociological data.
5. Appreciate the value of ethical research in sociological research.
6. Recognize and critique research methodology in sociological research

## GRADING SCALE AND COMPOSITION

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

<b>A+</b> 96-100	<b>B+</b> 80 -84	<b>C+</b> 67-69	<b>D+</b> 57-59
<b>A</b> 90-95	<b>B</b> 74-79	<b>C</b> 63-66	<b>D</b> 53-56
<b>A-</b> 85-89	<b>B-</b> 70-73	<b>C-</b> 60-62	<b>D-</b> 50-52
			<b>F</b> 0-49

### Student Assessment:

The final grade in this course is based on the following criteria:

<b>Midterm # 1</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>Mon. Oct. 6</b>
<b>Midterm # 2</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>Wed. November 3</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>	
<b>Lab Work</b>	<b>15%</b>	
<b>Chapter Summaries (3 @ 5%)</b>	<b>15%</b>	
<b>Research Proposal</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>Mon. November 24</b>

### Assessment Instruments:

#### Midterms and Final Exam

This aspect of the assessment of student knowledge will follow the traditional "in-class" examination model. Students understanding of course content (lecture and readings) will be evaluated through multiple choice questions. The midterm examinations will be held during regularly scheduled class time; midterm examinations will last no longer than 50 minutes. Consult your course schedule for midterm dates.

<b>Midterm # 1</b> will cover Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 of the text and of the readings.
<b>Midterm # 2</b> will cover Chapters 6, 7, 8, 11 of the text

The final examination will contain multiple choice and short answer questions and will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office during the final examination period.

<b>Final Exam</b> will cover Chapters 9, 10, 12 & 14 of the text and the readings. Students are also required to have a <b>general</b> knowledge of methodology issues discussed throughout the course.
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### Chapter Summaries

It is critical that students in this course stay current on their readings and that the content is being processed and worked with. To that end, students will be required to complete a Chapter Summary each week and these will be collected on Mondays (or on Wednesday if Monday is a holiday). (These will be **great study guides** for your exams!) Three of these summaries will be collected from each student over the semester. Each week summaries will be collected **at random** and will be assigned a grade out of 5 (for a total of 15 marks.) If you are not present when your summary is called for, you will be assigned a zero; therefore, if you are unable to attend class, you should email your summary to the instructor before class per chance you are randomly selected.

Students must use the form provided for each chapter on blackboard to complete the summaries. Summaries must be hand written.

## Lab Work

During your lab sessions you will be required to work with the ideas covered during the lecture. You will be required to actively participate in hands-on activities which exemplify the key concepts. This lab work will form 15% of your final grade.

## Research Proposal

Either individually, or in a group of no more than 3, students are required to submit a research proposal for a hypothetical study; the choice to work as a group or individually must be made at the time that the proposal topic is submitted and can not be altered thereafter. Students must submit their research topic for approval by the instructor on October 10th. Each proposal should contain a relevant and brief literature review, articulation of research thesis, review of research design and data collection techniques and a discussion of population and sample. **Specific details will be posted on blackboard and reviewed early in the semester.**

Some parts of the Lab time will be used to discuss the Research Proposal; however, students should review Chapter 5 of their text for further guidance.

Each proposal must be completed using the APA documentation style and be a minimum of 2000 words and a maximum of 3000 words. This project is due at the beginning of class on November 24.

## NOTES ON ASSIGNMENTS

Please turn in your written work when it is due. When you make choices for time commitments, please be sure to understand that all assigned work is part of the course and the learning process. There will be no late submissions unless they are due to exceptional circumstances discussed with and approved by the instructor. Unauthorized late submissions (up to three days) will lead to a loss of one third of the total mark for the project per day. For a delay of more than three days, you will need a doctor's certificate. As per University of Calgary policy, plagiarism is a punishable offense and may result in disqualify from the course or program.

## LOGISTICS

### Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all lectures. If work is assigned and missed during one of those, the same policy as those employed for deferred examination will be followed.

### Exam Policies:

You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a "make up" exam as close to the original exam as possible, or to have the test waived and the weight of the missed test be added to that of the second test of the instructor and the student agree to this option. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. **Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam.** Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

**Research Ethics :**

Students are advised that any research with human subjects—including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation—must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

**Academic Misconduct:**

Cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

**The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation:**

disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

**Safewalk:**

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

**Academic Accommodation:**

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

**Deferrals:**

If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U. of C. Calendar. You can find the forms you need at:

Deferred Final Exam Application:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Winter2008DEFERREDFINALEXAMINATIONS.pdf>

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Social Sciences Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre.

To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions.

### Tentative Course Schedule:

The table below represents the tentative course schedule. It is subject to change with advance notice given at least one week in advance by the instructor in class and/or on Blackboard. Readings must be completed before the beginning of the week that they are to be discussed.

**T: Research Decisions**  
**R: Online Reader/Blackboard Based**

DATE (week commencing)	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING & WORK DUE
Sept. 8	Introduction to course The role of research in the Social Sciences	T: Chapter 1 (Summary due Friday)
Sept. 15	Research Ideas	T: Chapter 2 (Summary)
Sept. 22	Ethics in research	T: Chapter 3 (Summary)
Sept. 29	Sampling	T: Chapter 4 (Summary)
Oct. 6	<b>MIDTERM # 1 (Monday October 6)</b> Interactive Methods	T: Chapter 6 (Summary on Wed.) Research Topic Submitted
Oct. 15	Observation & Ethnography	T: Chapter 7 (Summary)
Oct. 20	Unobtrusive & Archival Methods	T: Chapter 8 (Summary)
Oct. 27	Ethics in Qualitative Approaches I	T: Chapter 11 (Summary)
Nov. 3	<b>MIDTERM # 2 (Monday Nov.3)</b> Introduction to Quantitative Measures	
Nov. 12	Experimental Approaches	T: Chapter 9 (Summary)
Nov. 17	Evaluation/Quasi-Experimental	T: Chapter 14 (Summary)
Nov. 24	Quantitative Data Analysis (Key Concepts)	T: Chapter 12 (Summary) Research Proposal
Dec. 1	Contemporary Research Decisions	T: Chapter 10 (Summary)
FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM PERIOD (December 8 -17/2008)		