

**Sociology 313 (Lec. 01)**  
**Introductory Social Research Methods**  
**Fall 2009**

**Instructor:** J.S. Frideres

Office: EdT 1414

Office hours: T & Thurs 1300-1400 (or by appointment)

Phone: 220-2554

Class time: T TH

Class hour: 0800-0915

Class Room: SB 148

Labs: Lab 01, Tuesday, 1530-1720                      Room              SH 284

Lab 02, Thursday, 1530-1720                      Room              SH 284

**Teaching Assistants:**

Scott Henwood

Office:

Office Hrs:

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**Emergency Evacuations:** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Food Court in the Professional Faculties Building.

**Course Goals and Objectives**

*“Social Research is all around us. Educators, government officials, business managers, human service providers, and health care professionals regularly use the data and principles of social research findings. People use social research to raise children, reduce crime, improve public health, sell products, or just understand one’s life. Reports of research appear on broadcast news programs, in popular magazines, and in news papers.” (p. 2, L. Neuman Basics of Social Research, Boston, Pearson, 2004)*

This is one of the “tools” courses offered by the Department of Sociology and it will be an important course that will contribute to your ability to think critically and analytically. Research constitutes one of the most important ways in which intellectual development of the discipline is enhanced. Thus it is crucial for creating new knowledge and establishing the reliability and validity of such work is equally important. Research involves both innovative thinking as well as meticulous attention to the detail of data gathering.

The focus of this course will be on an empirical (tinged with positivism and realism) approach to research. We will examine the ways in which we gain our knowledge of the social world, the relationships that exist between theory and research and finally the place of values and ethics in research practice.

This course will focus on developing two sets of general skills for students. First, it will try to help you formulate a good research question. Framing a research question is difficult for both applied and basic research. The second set of skills will be on understanding the logic and applicability of specific sets of technical data collection techniques.

In summary, the goals of this class are threefold: First, it will show students that social research is one of the keys to developing new knowledge. Second, it will demonstrate to students that social research is not a matter of simply following “cookbook directions.” We will explore many different techniques to collect data and evaluate their appropriateness with regard to the issue that is being addressed. Third, it will show that research requires the researcher to set aside biases and to maintain personal integrity, make moral and ethical choices, and a commitment to free and open inquiry about various topics that interest the researcher. By the end of the course you should be able to formulate a good research question, decide on the appropriate data gathering technique to address that question, apply that technique to the real world, assess the validity and reliability of the technique and ensure you have acted in a professional, ethically and moral manner.

### **Required reading**

Alan Bryman, James Teevan and Edward Bell, *Social Research Methods* (Second Canadian edition), New York, Oxford , 2009.

George Gray and Neil Guppy, 2007. *Successful Surveys: Research Methods and Practice*, (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Scarborough, Thompson Nelson

Additional reading materials will be assigned during the semester.

Exam Schedule (Tentative: the dates may change)

First exam: September 24  
Second exam: October 22  
Third exam: November 12  
Final exam (yet to be determined).

### **Evaluation**

**NOTE: You must pass the final exam to pass the course.**

Course evaluation will be based upon: (1) examinations (65%), (2) team research exercise (20%) and (3) individual/team assignments (15%).

Examinations: Exam #1	10%
#2	15%
#3	20%

Final Exam: 20%

Research/lab exercises:

Major Class Project: 20% (due date: TBA). This will require an oral presentation (with appropriate technological support) to the class.

Individual/team assignments (3 x 5%) 15% (due date: TBA)

### **Deferrals**

Students need to be aware of the current University of Calgary regulations with regard to deferral of examinations or laboratory assignments. Students who are unable to write tests or submit assignments at the scheduled time because of illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction must inform the instructor (teaching assistant) that they are seeking a deferral and must produce appropriate documentation as specified in the calendar.

### **Intellectual Honesty**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is cumulative and further advances are predicated on the contributions of others. In the normal course of scholarship these contributions are apprehended, critically evaluated and utilized as a foundation for further inquiry. Intellectual honesty demands that the contribution of others be acknowledged.

### **Letter Grade Assignment**

A+	97-100	C+	77-79	F	<55
A	93-96	C	73-76		
A-	90-92	C-	70-72		
B+	87-89	D+	67-69		
B	83-86	D	60-66		
B-	80-82	D-	55-59		

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments/exams from a public place, e.g., outside instructor's office, the department office. Assignment/exams must be returned to students individually, during class or office hours. If a student is unable to pick up an assignment/exam from the instructor or teaching assistant, s/he may provide a stamped self addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment/exam.

### **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 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.

### **Universal Student Ratings of Instruction**

All students will be asked to complete an evaluation form near the completion of the course.

**Exam Policies:** Under normal circumstances, 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. 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.

**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.

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(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.**

### **Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades**

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.