

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
SUMMER SEMESTER 2007**

**EDUC 484-4
SPECIAL TOPICS: Equity, Equality, and Evidence: Empirical
Approach to Social Justice Issues in Education
(D01.00)**

Ken Murray
EMAIL:kgmurray@sfu.ca

Thursday 1:00-4:50 SFU Surrey room 3280

PREREQUISITE: none

Course Description:

An undergraduate educational foundations course for prospective teachers of arts, humanities, social sciences and environmental studies, Educ 487 introduces students to a variety of contemporary and historical social issues relating, but not limited to, to education and schooling through the examination of robust, authentic documents including census data, psychometric studies, Ministry of Education Annual Reports, UN Yearbooks, to name just a few. Through lectures, case studies, and their own research projects, students will explore the strengths and limitations of empiricism and quantitative research as they are employed in the human and social sciences.

Educ 487 enables students to meet the Q (quantitative/analytical) course requirement for graduation from SFU. As such, it is intended to deepen their understanding and appreciation of quantitative and formal reasoning, their utility, and their creative potential. In doing so, students will explore the relation between concepts and structures associated with social justice issues that are communicated through numbers and other systems of abstract representation including maps, graphs, and statistical data bases. As well, it seeks to foster students' abilities to engage more effectively with the subject matter of the arts, humanities, social sciences and environmental studies, and with practical everyday situations they may encounter on entering the teaching profession.

Course Requirements:

- Regular attendance
- Active in-class participation
- Regular reading and reflection upon course materials

Participation 20%

Group research project 40%

Working in groups of two or three, students will design and carry out a mini-research project of their own choosing involving the use of empirical/quantitative methods. The project has three phases: a design phase, a draft report phase, and presentation of the research findings to the class. The design is to be reviewed and approved during week two, the draft report should be submitted in week five, and the presentations will be made during week six.

Case study readings and responses 40%

Students will be asked to respond critically and analytically to readings from the course pack and supplemental materials related to the four case studies (each of which are presented with the aid of

quantitative data). These will be submitted on the Tuesday of each of the four case study weeks.

Required Readings:

Students will purchase a course pack comprising selected articles and research studies, data from Statistics Canada and the BC Ministry of Education, Fraser Institute Reports, etc.

Students will access a variety of on-line data-bases and resources.