Survey Research Methods, APSTAT-GE 2139, Fall 2016

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Office Hours	Monday, 2:00-3:00 and by appointment		

Prerequisites:

At least one year of applied statistics (including multiple linear regression) and familiarity with the use of one or more standard statistical software packages is strongly recommended.

Overview:

The social survey is an essential tool for researchers in the social, behavioral and policy sciences and in the applied professional fields, such as education, social work, public health, and marketing. The goal of this course is to provide a broad overview of the many aspects of survey research methodology including sampling, instrument design, the psychology of survey response, field testing, survey operations, nonresponse bias analysis and correction, and primary and secondary analysis of survey data. No prior experience in survey methods is expected and the course is designed primarily for those who intend to use surveys in their own research – whether designing original surveys or performing secondary analysis on survey data collected by others. Whenever possible, we will use examples and data from real surveys employed by academic researchers, professional survey firms, and Federal statistical agencies. Course assignments will require students to actively participate in every stage of the survey process, from initial design to final analysis.

Course Text:

"Survey Methodology," by Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, Tourangeau, 2nd ed.

Accommodations:

NYU is committed to facilitating equal access for students with disabilities, including hearing and visual impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, chronic illness, and psychological impairments. If you are not comfortable discussing your needs with me, I encourage you to contact the Moses Center on 240 Greene Street, 2nd Floor, 212-998-4980, for assistance in ensuring that you receive any necessary accommodations.

Evaluation:

Breakdown:

- In-class participation – 10 %
- Homework – 20%
- Project – 70%
  - o Topic proposal and background: 15%
  - o Sampling plan, timing and mode of administration: 10%
  - o Initial Survey draft: 5%
  - o Reviews of other students' surveys (2): 5%
  - o Pretesting report and survey revisions: 10%
  - o Final report: 20%
  - o Project Presentation: 5%

Factors contributing to the in-class participation grade will include, but are not limited to: completion of non-graded assigned tasks, in-class discussions of readings and lecture material, attentiveness during lectures and participation in in-class activities.

Assigned Readings:

A schedule of the assigned readings will be updated on NYU Classes and in class. You are expected to show up to class prepared to engage in discussion about any assigned readings.

Grading Scheme:

The following system will be used to convert numerical grades to letter grades:

A	92.5 – 100
A-	89.5 – 92.5
B+	86.5 – 89.5
B	82.5 – 86.5
B-	79.5 – 82.5
C+	76.5 – 79.5
C	72.5 – 76.5
C-	69.5 – 72.5
D+	66.5 – 69.5
D	62.5 – 66.5
F	0 – 62.5

Topic Breakdown (tentative):

Week	Date	Topic*	Chapter in Groves
1	9/12	Introduction to Surveys	1
2	9/19	Sources of Error in Surveys	2
3	9/26	Problems of Coverage	3
4	10/3	Sampling 1	4
5	10/17	Sampling 2	4
6	10/24	Sampling 3/Survey Modes	5
7	10/31	Writing better questions	7
8	11/7	Pretests 1	--
9	11/14	Pretests 2	8
10	11/21	Weighting, nonresponse, making a plan	10
11	11/28	Creating a Data Analysis Plan (univariate and multivariate analyses, basics of psychometrics)	--
12	12/5	Mystery Topic	--
13	12/12	Project Presentation part 1	--
14	12/13	Project Presentation part 2	--

* Please note that this list of topics is tentative. In order to optimize the class content for the students registered, I reserve the right to switch around some material, spend more or less time on certain topics, etc. I will try to keep the class updated on any changes to this plan to the best of my ability to do so.

Course Project:

The course project is designed to take you through all aspects of survey research from the definition of research objectives, to survey construction, and analysis plan. To manage the workload, the project will be broken down into several components.

If you are already involved in ongoing survey research with an original instrument and you wish to tailor the assignment to your specific needs, **please contact me in advance**.

Check point 1: Topic Proposal - Due Friday, September 30th, 5 PM.
- What are your research questions? Make sure to specify your target population.
- Why are these research questions important? How do your research questions fit into the current state of knowledge? (Provide any relevant references).
- Why is a survey an appropriate tool to answer your research questions? What are the constructs that your survey will measure?
- How, if at all, does this survey fit into a larger research project? Are there other sources of data you will need to collect?

Expected length: 3 pages, double-spaced. Please write in complete and proper sentences.

Check point 2: Sampling plan – Tentative due date: October 28th, 5 PM

In this checkpoint, you will outline two possible sampling plans that you could use. The first plan should be an ideal sampling plan that you would use if you had unlimited resources. The second plan should be a realistic plan that you could implement given, say, a two-year timeline. Conclude with a paragraph that describes the potential losses when if the realistic plan is implemented over the ideal plan.

For each plan, you should include details about the following:
- Target population
- Sampling frame
- Sampling scheme (be specific)
- Timing of administration
- Mode of administration

Check point 3: Initial survey draft and explanation – Tentative due date: Nov 11th, 5 PM

In this component, you will create an initial draft of your survey. More details will follow.

Check point 4: Reviews of other students' surveys – Tentative due date: Nov 21st, 5 PM

Each student will provide a critique of two other student's surveys. You will be graded on the feedback that you provide for others.

Check point 5: Pretesting Report. Tentative due date: December 5th, 5 PM

Pretest and revise your survey by collecting a convenience sample of at least 10 volunteers, using at least two cognitive interviews, and incorporating the two peer reviews provided by your classmates. Provide a description of the methods used and how your questions changed as a result of this process. Include a revised draft of your survey in your report.

Check point 6: Final Report, Due date TBA.

In this checkpoint, you will write a short report that presents your research project from start to finish. Details will follow.

Presentation: In class on Thursday, December 12th and 13th.

The final component of the project is a short in-class presentation. More information to follow.