

# Survey Research Methods, RESCH-GE 2139, Fall 2012

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## 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 (especially Stata) 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

## 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 212-998-4980, for assistance in ensuring that you receive any necessary accommodations.

## Evaluation:

- Problem sets, reading summaries, in-class presentations – 60%
- Final Project– 40%

# Schedule:

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction and overview.
2. Perspectives on Surveys,

### Chapter 2

Tourangeau, R., G. Shapiro, A. Kearney, and L. Ernst. 1997. Who Lives Here? Survey Undercoverage and Household Roster Questions. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 13(1): 1-18. (<http://www.jos.nu/Articles/abstract.asp?article=1311>)

Martin, E. 1999. Who Knows Who Lives Here? Within-Household Disagreements as a Source of Survey Coverage Error. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63: 220-236. (Bobcat or online at: <http://pog.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/63/2/220>)

## SECTION 2: STATISTICS

3. Introduction to sampling: populations, sampling frames, and coverage error.

Groves, chapter 3, also 4.1-4.3

Lohr, S. 2007. Recent Developments in Multiple Frame Surveys. *Proceedings of the American Statistical Association, Section on Survey Research Methods*. (<http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/Proceedings/y2007/Files/JSM2007-000580.pdf>)

4. Sample design and sampling error.

Groves, sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.7

5. Weighting, imputation and estimation in complex surveys.

Groves, sections 10.5 to 10.7.

6. Putting it together in Stata.

## SECTION 3: HUMANS

7. Methods of data collection.

Groves, Chapter 5.

Jowell, R., et. al. 1993. "The 1992 British Election: The Failure of the Polls." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 57(2). (Bobcat)

Cui, W. W. 2003. Reducing error in mail surveys. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 8 (18) online at <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=8&n=18>

Porter, S. R. and Whitcomb, M. E. 2007. Mixed-mode contacts in web surveys: paper is not necessarily better. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71 (4). (Bobcat).

Fricker, S., Galesci, M., Tourangeau, R., and Yan, T. 2005. An experimental comparison of web and telephone surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(3). (Bobcat)

#### 8. Methods of data collection continued.

##### MIDTERM PROJECT DUE

Ehlen, J. and Ehlen, P. 2007. Cellular-only substitution in the United States as a lifestyle adoption: implications for telephone survey coverage. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71 (5). (Bobcat)

Couper, M.P. 2000. Web surveys: A review of issues and approaches. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64(4). (Bobcat)

#### 9. Questions and answers in surveys.

##### Groves, Chapter 7

Pearson, Robert W., Ross, M., and Dawes, R.M. Personal Recall and the Limits of Retrospective Questions in Surveys. In *Questions about Questions: Inquiries into the Cognitive Basis of Surveys*. (emailed to class)

Zaller, J. and Feldman, S. 1992. A simple theory of the survey response. *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616. (JSTOR).

Tourangeau, R. and Rasinski, K. A. 1988. Cognitive processes underlying context effects in attitude measurement. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 299-314. (Bobcat or online at [http://business.illinois.edu/shavitt/ba\\_531/tourangeau.pdf](http://business.illinois.edu/shavitt/ba_531/tourangeau.pdf))

#### 10. Evaluating survey questions.

##### Groves, Chapter 8.

Oksenberg, L., Cannell, C., and Kalton, G. 1991. New strategies for pretesting survey questions. *Journal of Official Statistics* 7(3). Online at <http://www.jos.nu/Articles/abstract.asp?article=73349>

11. Survey interviewing.

Groves, Chapter 9.

Anderson, B. A., Silver, B. D., and Abramson, P. R. 1988. The effects of the race of interviewer on race-related attitudes of black respondents in SRC/CPS National Election Studies. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 52(3). (Bobcat)

12. Survey nonresponse

Groves, Chapter 6.

Groves, R. et al. 2006. Experiments in producing nonresponse bias. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70(5) Special issue. (Bobcat)

13. Postcollection survey processing; imputing missing data.

Groves, Chapter 10.

14. Survey ethics.

Groves, Chapter 11

AAPOR statement at <http://www.aapor.org/ethics/intro.html>.

Wallman, K. 2003. Privacy and confidentiality—a new era (the 11th Morris Hansen lecture). *Journal of Official Statistics* 19(4). Online at <http://www.jos.nu/Articles/abstract.asp?article=194315>

Warner, S. L. 1975. Randomized response: a survey technique for eliminating evasive answer bias. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 60. (JSTOR)

Abernathy, J. R., Greenberg, B. G., and Horvitz, D. G. 1970. Estimates of induced abortion in urban North Carolina. *Demography* 7. (JSTOR)

15. Advanced topics: getting answers to hard questions; comparing cross-cultural survey response. (If there is time)

King, G., Murray, C. J. L., Salomon, J. A., and Tandon, A. 2003. Enhancing the validity and cross-cultural comparability of measurement in survey research," *American Political Science Review* 97(4). (JSTOR)

Baumgartner, H. and J-B. Steenkamp. 2001. Response styles in marketing research: A cross-national Investigation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(2): 143-156. (Bob-cat)

Rossi, P, Allenby, G., and Gilula, Z. 2001. Overcoming scale usage heterogeneity: a bayesian hierarchical approach. Journal of the American Statistical Association 96. (JSTOR)

## Final Project:

The intent of the final project is for you to write and field test a survey. You will then describe how why you wrote the questions you did and how the field testing improved the survey. Project steps:

1. Identify a survey topic that interests you. Example: the relationship between student anxiety and grades.
2. Choose one to two constructs of interest to you in your substantive research. At least one of these should be fairly abstract. (i.e. and attitude, belief, feeling, or latent attribute). Briefly describe the history of the measurement of this construct if one exists. For example, if you are writing about the measurement of anxiety, write about different measures that have attempted to measure this construct.
3. Describe any existing publically available surveys that have attempted to address similar topics.
4. Draft a survey instrument designed to cover this topic. You may modify an existing instrument, or write your own. If you use existing questions, explain why you chose them and describe any items you ruled out.
5. Field test your questionnaire on a convenience sample of classmates, friends, or others. Use at least two of the pretesting techniques we discussed in class to improve the questions. Describe how your questions changed as a result of the process. Conduct at least five test interviews/surveys, but no more than 15.
6. In addition to the test data, collect feedback on the survey items from an area expert. (This could be a fellow student who knows something about the subject, though ideally, it is a true area expert.)
7. Redraft your survey.
8. Explain how your questionnaire changed through the process of field testing.

Your paper should describe the above process. The entire project should be no more than ten pages in length, including the survey items. If you are already involved in ongoing survey research with an original instrument or with a publicly-available data collection and you wish to tailor the assignment to your specific needs, please contact me in advance.