New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

PADM-GP 4114  Surveys and Interviews  Fall 2011
Fridays, Sept. 23, Oct. 14 and Nov. 11  12:00pm – 5:00pm
Location: 194 Mercer Street, Room 203

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Home/office phone  212-877-1475  Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE PRE-REQUISITES: The completion of a course on Statistical Methods is required prior to taking this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This three-day workshop will provide students with the skills they need to design, conduct and analyze mail, telephone, and internet surveys, focus groups and face-to-face interviews as well as critically evaluate instruments designed and implemented by others. These types of data collection instruments are designed for a variety of purposes and for different settings including public policy, urban planning, as well as for program implementation evaluation, cost-benefit analysis, and more.

To supplement the class discussions of the required readings in Don Dillman’s book *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys*, students will be examining a sample of mail, telephone, and internet surveys, focus groups and face-to-face interviews in a “Survey Clinic” that will be held each time the class meets. For example, on the first day of class students will examine instruments used a number of years ago for face-to-face interviews and focus groups to study the experience of welfare mothers seeking child care services. In subsequent classes, students will closely examine several other instruments that were designed to evaluate the cost effectiveness and impact of various programs. For example, students will examine an interview schedule designed for an evaluation of the implementation of the NYC Board of Education’s Performance Driven Budgeting (PDB), a form of school based budgeting. In another “Survey Clinic,” students will examine a web survey designed to study the uses of the internet by nonprofit organizations and also mail and internet surveys that were designed to study the nonprofit sector in New York City\(^1\).

The primary purpose of this workshop, and the “Survey Clinics,” is to enable students to use the knowledge and skills they will acquire in this class in their Wagner Capstone projects, in their current work elsewhere, and in their future professional careers.

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\(^1\) All are examples of well designed and executed surveys in which Prof. Naphtali was directly involved. Copies of these instruments will be available in class and on Blackboard.
Students are encouraged to bring drafts of their own mail or internet surveys and interview schedules or focus groups instruments to each of the “Survey Clinics” that will be held each time the class meets.

The first day of this three-day workshop will begin with a class discussion of the ever changing nature of the survey research field and the impact of new technologies on it. In preparation for this class discussion, students are required to read Chapter 1 in Don Dillman, et. al, *Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys*. They should also read (and bring copies to class) Morgan M. Millar, Allison C. O’Neill and Don Dillman, “Are Mode Preferences Real?” This article is available as a Technical Report 09-003 on Dillman’s website at [http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papersweb/2009.html](http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papersweb/2009.html)

Throughout this workshop, issues that are particular to internet surveys, telephone and face-to-face interviewing, focus groups, mail and other modes of data collection will be closely addressed. This workshop, like Dillman’s book and his various articles, will be organized around the stages of the design of questionnaires, interview, internet surveys and other modes of data collection. It will also focus on issues of implementation, data management and statistical analysis, and on the reporting of results. A close examination of the sources of errors in surveys, and what makes surveys work, will be central to these discussions.

Each class (during the Survey Clinic) students will be examining a sample of surveys provided by Prof. Naphtali. We will pay close attention to how they were designed, to issues related to question writing, the order of questions, the importance of the first question, of “don’t know”, etc. Sampling issues and statistical data analysis of survey results will also be addressed on the third day of class.

One central concern addressed in this workshop is how to decide when an internet or mail survey is appropriate and when to use other methods, or when to employ a combination of methods. Following Dillman’s advice, it will be argued that the **mixed-mode strategy** offers the best protection against common errors that affect accuracy in surveys and interviews. The sources of error are -- sampling, coverage, measurement, and non-response errors.

To summarize, students will be learning about
- Conceptualization and design issues
- Internet and mail questionnaire design and implementation
- Interview and focus group schedule development and refinement
- Interviewer training and supervision
- Item editing and coding and data processing, data cleaning, and data analysis issues
- Practical sampling design strategies
- Statistical data analysis of survey results
After completing this workshop, students should be able to design and implement high quality surveys and interviews (and other types of data gathering instruments) as well as critically examine surveys designed by others. This workshop focuses on the practical side but does not lose sight of theoretical and methodological issues dealing with what makes various approaches work.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend all three classes (during the entire class from 12:00pm-5:00pm). Students are expected complete all the required reading and take-home assignments before each class and come prepared for a class discussion. Notes on the reading and other assignments will be collected each class. It is recommended highly that students complete the supplementary readings as well. Finally, note that while I encourage students to work with classmates on class assignments, each student must submit individual write-ups of the reading, the review questions, the final project paper, etc.

Completing all the assignments will provide students with excellent background and skills in preparing survey instruments, collecting the data with these instruments, preparing the data for analysis and analyzing the data statistically as well as writing research reports.

**Grading** Students are required to come prepared for a class discussion each time the class meets. All class requirements must be completed by the dates specified below or they will not be counted towards final grade. The notes on the readings and the review questions will be collected each class and commented on.

**Topics and Assignments**

(1) **CLASS #1** Introduction to Survey Methodology (Friday, September 23)

   (1) Looking Back and Forward (2) Are Mode Preferences Real?

**First assignment** Due in class #1, Friday, September 23

The assignment involves pre-class reading listed below. Your typed notes (2 pages) on each of the reading will be collected in class (Required)

**Required Reading before the first day of class** (Take Notes)

1.1 Don Dillman, *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys*, Ch. 1 on “Turbulent Times for Internet Surveys.” Read before the first class (take notes)

1.2 Morgan M. Millar, Allison C. O’Neill and Don Dillman, “Are Mode Preferences Real?” Note that this article is available as a Technical Report # 09-003 on Dillman’s website at [http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers.htm](http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers.htm) (take notes). Students are required to print a copy of this paper and bring it to class!!
1.3 Priscilla Salant and Don. A. Dillman, *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*, (Wiley, 1994) [Available at the NYU Professional Bookstore and Bobst]. Please read any two chapters of your choice. (Take notes, 2-3 pages; to be collected) Your notes on the reading will be collected.

GUEST PRESENTATION: September 23, 2011 3:30pm-5:00pm
Dr. Donna Eisenhower  deisenho@health.nyc.gov

(2)  CLASS #2  On Crafting the Questionnaire  Friday, October 14

Students are required to read (before this class) and take notes on the following

2.a. Don Dillman, et. al., *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys*, Chapters 2, 4, 5  
   Ch. 2 “The Tailored Design Method”, pp.15-40  
   Ch. 4 “The Basics of Crafting Good Questions”, pp. 65-106  
   Ch. 5 “Constructing Open- and Close-ended Questions”, pp. 107-150  
   Write 2-3 pages on each chapter.

2.b  Begin reading selected chapters from the list of books on reserve. Take notes  
   2-3 typed pages; See list of supplementary readings on pages 6-7

2.c. Students are expected to prepare written notes on Review Questions #1  
   (10% of final course grade). Typed notes (2-3 typed pages) on the reading and  
   the Review Questions will be collected in class today.

SURVEY CLINIC
Street Standards and On-Street Parking in Residential Neighborhoods

This survey is supposed to be completed by a government official responsible for street  
planning and regulation from either the department of transportation, department of  
public works, or related agencies. The purpose is to identify the best practice on  
residential streets with a particular interest in how local governments allocate street  
space to parking.

4:00pm-5:00pm  SURVEY SOFTWARE PRESENTATIONS (tentative)

PRESENTATION OF QUALTRICS  http://www.qualtrics.com
PRESENTATION OF REMARK  http://www.gravic.com/remark
(3) CLASS #3 Mixed-Mode and Internet Surveys Friday, November 11

3.a 30% of the final course grade “How America Responds” -- Due today - class #3, The assignment involves an examination and a critique of a Telephone Survey on “How America Responds.” Students are asked to write a reaction letter/critique to the designers of this survey at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan suggesting improvements. [4 or more pages, See details on pp. 9-10 of this syllabus].

3.b Dillman, et. al., Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys; Required Reading before next class Chs. 3, 6, 7and 8, and one more chapter of their choice.
   Ch. 3, “Coverage and Sampling, pp. 41-64
   Ch. 6, “From Questions to a Questionnaire”, pp. 151-233
   Ch. 7, “Implementation Procedures”, pp. 234-299
   Ch. 8, “When More Than One Survey is Needed” pp. 300-330
   Ch. 9, “Longitudinal and Internet Panel Surveys”, pp. 331-352
   Ch. 13 “Coping With Uncertainty”. pp. 440-457

3.c Students are also expected to read, take notes and come prepared to discuss one chapter or two from the recommended books on reserve (see list on pages 7-8 of this syllabus), OR any article from Dillman’s website, or on one article in the publication Public Opinion Quarterly, or an article on Blackboard.

3.d Students are expected to prepare and submit written notes on Discussion Questions #2 (2 pages or more).
   Please take careful notes on all assigned readings, print them, and come prepared for a class discussion. Your notes will be collected but not graded.

4. Fourth assignment (30% of final course grade) Due on Friday, November 18
   NOTE: The Final Project Paper is due on the last day of class OR on Nov. 18, one week after this course ends. Note that on the last day of class, all students should come prepared to discuss their progress on their Final Project Papers in class and be prepared to share copies of the data collection instruments they designed.

   For their Final Project Paper students are required to design TWO data collection instruments on any topic they choose using the mixed-mode approach recommended by Don Dillman (see details on page 12 below).

ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE TYPED. ALSO PLEASE SAVE ALL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS ON A CD WHICH YOU WILL SUBMIT WITH YOUR FINAL PROJECT PAPER ON NOVEMBER 11 AND NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 18.

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REQUIRED READING (a summary)

(1) Dillman, et. al., Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys; read chs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 OR 13; Read also a chapter or two from the books on reserve and an article from Dillman’s website, from Public Opinion Quarterly, and any one of the articles I will place on Blackboard.

READ BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS.


A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOK

(3) Priscilla Salant and Don. A. Dillman, How to Conduct Your Own Survey, (Wiley, 1994) [Available at the NYU Professional Bookstore].

OTHER REQUIRED READING.

(4) One or two chapters from one of the books on reserve at the BOBST library (see the long list of books on reserve on pages 7-8).

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADES AND DUE DATES

Assignments are DUE on September 23, October 14, November 11 or 18, 2011. Come prepared to present your work in class

FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 20% of your final grade

DUE on the second and third days of class.

REPORTS ON READING 20% of your final grade

ONE PRACTICE EXERCISE 30% of your final grade

FINAL PROJECT PAPER 30% of your final grade

“HOW AMERICA RESPONDS?” (PRACTICE EXERCISE)

Students will be asked to review and evaluate a major telephone survey on “How Americans Responded” to the September 11, 2001 attack. This mail survey was designed and conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan within a few days after the attack. The assignment is to examine the survey closely and discuss its design, the sampling strategy used, and the questions (for example, question order, and more) and make suggestions of how this survey might be improved. Details on pp. 10-11.
The Final Project paper (at least 6 double-spaced pages) will involve a **review the literature** on the subject of your survey, a discussion of the methodology of designing the two data collection instruments used, a discussion of the research design, and why a particular data collection method was chosen. In their papers students should include a discussion of the library research they conducted on topic chosen, a description of the search for appropriate questions or full questionnaires (in books, the internet, etc.).

See Details on pp.11.

**LIST OF REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS**
The books are available at the NYU Professional Bookstore and also on Reserve at Bobst Library.

**REQUIRED READING**
(1) Don Dillman, *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys*, (Wiley, 2009);
Chapter 1 on “Turbulent Times for Survey Methodology” should be read prior to the first class.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READING**
(2) Morgan M. Millar, Allison C. O’Neill and Don Dillman, “Are Mode Preferences Real?”
This article is available as a Technical Report 09-003 on Dillman’s website.
(3) Selected chapters from Priscilla Salant and Don. A. Dillman, *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*, (Wiley, 1994) [Available at the NYU Professional Bookstore].

In addition, students should select **ONE** of the following from the list of recommended books available for this class on RESERVE. Read a chapter or two from a book of your choice.

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON RESERVE AT BOBST LIBRARY**
This is classic book. Still enjoyable to read Call Number: LB1027.P385.
AND MORE

**SOME OLDER BOOKS OF INTEREST.**
*Deutscher’s book is my favorite*
(22) Irwin Deutscher, et. al., *Sentiments and Acts* (Walter de Gruyter, NY, 1993)
   – now available as an e-Book

**More books**

**ON DATA ANALYSIS**
(23) Jelke Bethlehem, *Applied Survey Methods* (Wiley 2009);

**INTERNATIONAL**
FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
20% of your grade in this course

(1.1) Which one of the four sources of error -- measurement, nonresponse, coverage and sampling -- do you consider the most difficult to overcome, and why? Please give three or more EXAMPLES! Due October 14

(1.2) Which survey format is better -- the agree/disagree OR open-ended questions that allow respondents to come up with their own answers? In your discussion consider several of the survey modes. Give three or more examples. Due October 14

(2.1) Briefer Discussion. The use of WEB surveys introduces new challenges and opportunities. Humphrey Taylor, the Chairman of The Harris Poll, for example, identified the following features of web surveys. (a) Harris Polls has a list of several million respondents who volunteer to answer them on the web. (b) He says that the web-based survey “is a visual medium and is more effective in addressing sensitive issues”. Please discuss the sampling issues raised by this and other web-based surveys, and the opportunities introduced by the visual medium and ability to ask sensitive questions. Compare to other survey modes. Give examples. Due November 11

(2.2) Dillman discusses the importance of the ordering of questions in mail surveys and says that a questionnaire is like a conversation. He recommends grouping topics and questions. Discuss whether and how Dillman’s recommendations hold when designing other types of data collection instruments (telephone, focus groups, face-to-face interview and web surveys). Give examples. Due November 11

NOTE: Please type up your answers to these questions. Bring your notes to class. Come prepared for a discussion. I will collect your notes.
Practice Exercise

THE “HOW AMERICA RESPONDS” TELEPHONE SURVEY

A Letter to the Institute for Social Research At the University of Michigan

This assignment is due on November 11, 2010.
Length: Three or more double spaced pages. 30% of your grade

The web page for a description of this survey is:
http://www.isr.umich.edu/cps/har/

The web page for the questionnaire is:
www.isr.umich.edu/cps/har/combined_topline.pdf

On the afternoon of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a group of concerned social scientists at
the Institute for Social Research (ISR) gathered to consider how their talents might be used
to help the country in the wake of the shocking events of that morning.

They decided that tracking the impact of these events on Americans’ psychological well-
being, as well as their political beliefs and behavioral intentions regarding economic activity,
would offer the country critical information in the months ahead.

The surveys were designed by a multidisciplinary group of researchers at ISR with an
emphasis on using items from past surveys to produce longitudinal trend data. In order to
facilitate comparisons, the sources included major national data collections like the American
National Elections Studies and the General Social Survey as well as surveys conducted after
other critical events such as the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, the
invasion of Iraq, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. New questions directly
relevant to the events of September 11, 2001 ² were added to the survey.

² The assignment was inspired by one that was on Don Dillman’s website a few years ago.
The surveys were conducted by telephone, using a list-assisted sample drawn for a national sample of telephone households. Interviews were conducted with a randomly selected adult 18 years of age or older in each household. A CATI application was designed to facilitate rapid data collection and analysis, as well as to provide for appropriate branching and randomization patterns for questions. The response rate was 59% for the Wave 1 study and 46% for the wave 2 study.

You will find the Questionnaire and Results document at https://www.isr.umich.edu/cps/har/combined_topline.pdf. The results for any question in a particular survey are identified as “T1” for Wave 1, “T2” for Wave 2, and “P” for the panel respondents. If the question was asked in both waves of the study, all three sets of results are presented. If the question was asked only in Wave 1 or Wave 2, only those results are given. If the question order in Wave 1 was different from Wave 2, the question number in Wave 1 is indicated in parentheses at the start of the question.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to examine this survey closely and write a reaction paper in a form of letter to the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. In your letter discuss how this survey might be improved. For example, what could the survey designers at Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan have done to increase the response rate to the survey? Also discuss your thoughts about the research design, and the questions, the first question, and more.

In writing your recommendations, you should draw on all we have discussed in this course and all you have read in the assigned and recommended readings. For example, according to Dillman, the 59% response rate for Wave 1 and the 46% response rate for Wave 2 are considered rather low. Can the validity of this survey be questioned based on standards requiring an at least a 70% response rate? Remember that Dillman taught us that Nonresponse Error occurs when a significant number of people in the survey sample do not respond to a telephone interview and are different from those who do in a way that is important to the study. Discuss these and other issues.

When writing your recommendations please remember to consider such issues as “choosing the first question carefully”, question order, as well as the structure of questionnaires. Was good use made of the four types of questions (that include attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and attributes, etc.)? You can also discuss other ways in which the survey can be improved, drawing on all you learned from class discussions and the readings about writing questions.

I will be collecting your “HOW AMERICA RESPONDS” paper in class on November 11, 2010.
The Final Project

DESIGNING YOUR OWN DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS: A MIXED-MODE APPROACH

This assignment is due no later than November 18, 2011. Proposals are due on October 14 (the 2nd day of class).

Length: at least 6 double spaced pages plus two data collection instruments. Each one should be at least 3 pages long and 10 questions. 30% of your grade

One of the first steps in preparing the survey (mail or internet) or interview schedule or focus group for your final project is to review the literature on the topic to see what has been already done -- mostly in search of questions from previous surveys.

The next step is to write up a brief research design describing the topic, summarize briefly the state of research in the area, decide on the intended focus of the survey and write a set of questions that will direct you in gathering the data. Each student is required to construct two data collection instruments (each one should be at least 3 pages long or have at least 10 questions), which will include the key questions necessary for researching the topic. Time permitting, students can go ahead and complete the data collection, analyze the data and write a final report.

For this Final Project assignment, you are required to design two instruments. They can be a mail and web questionnaire, or an interview schedule or focus groups, etc. In other words, you can choose from any of the available methods to conduct your survey. For example, you can design a fax survey and telephone survey for the second instrument or prepare an interview schedule with which to conduct an in-person interview and a mail or email survey for the second instrument, or face-to-face interview and drop-off survey, etc.

Preparing a web survey is recommended using Survey Monkey, Qualtrics or REMARK www.surveymonkey.com http://www.qualtrics.com or http://www.gravic.com/remark NYU has licenses for all three programs. Information will be given in class.

Students are also asked to prepare and conceptualize a research strategy for their topic in consultation with Prof. Naphtali. The assignment does not require that you collect the data. However, you should draft an outline of the Final Report and attach to your paper.

IF YOU BORROW QUESTIONS FROM OTHER SURVEYS, IT IS REQUIRED THAT YOU CITE THE SOURCE OF THE QUESTIONS.

SAMPLE PROJECTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION IN CLASS AND ON BLACKBOARD.