



**NYU**

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

## **PADM-GP 4501**

### **Designing Data Collection for Program Evaluation, Policy, and Management**

**Spring 2019**

#### **Instructor Information**

- Professor Josh Merfeld
  - Email: [merfeld@nyu.edu](mailto:merfeld@nyu.edu)
  - Office Address: Puck, Room 3040B
  - Office Hours: Monday 4pm-5pm

#### **Lectures:**

- Dates: 1/28/2019-3/25/2019
- Day: Wednesday
- Location: 194M Room 208
- Time: 4:55pm – 6:35pm

#### **Course Description**

This half-semester course will include a qualitative and a quantitative component. We will begin with a discussion of using focus groups as a tool for data collection. We will spend the rest of the course talking about survey designs (including probability and non-probability sampling) and questionnaire development, as well as implementation issues. Students will produce a short focus-group proposal or survey questionnaire.

#### **Course Prerequisites**

This course does not have any explicit prerequisites.

#### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to give students an introduction to two common types of data collection: focus groups and household surveys. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain the merits of different types of data collection.

- Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of open- and closed-ended questions.
- Write example focus group questions.
- Write example survey questions.
- Construct a short focus group interview guide or survey questionnaire.

## Textbooks

There are two course texts I will draw from, but you are not required to purchase either. The first book is **Focus Groups: Theory and Practice (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)**, by Stewart and Shamdasani. The second book is **Survey Methodology (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**, by Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, and Tourangean. *I will post all relevant readings on our Classes site.* I will generally draw much of the lecture material from the textbooks, but we will discuss a number of articles in class.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## Course Requirements and Grades

Course grades are based on the following:

- Mock Interview Guide (20%)
- Population and Sampling Frames Assignment (20%)
- Research design (50%)
- Participation (10%)

# Course topics

## Class 1 – Introduction and Focus Groups

Topics:

1. Introduction
  - Syllabus
  - Expectations
2. Focus groups I
  - What is a focus group?
  - Advantages and disadvantages
  - Choosing participants

## Class 2 – Focus Groups

Topics:

1. Focus groups II
  - Designing the interview guide
  - Conducting the focus group
  - Analyzing data

## Class 3 – Introduction to Surveys

Topics:

1. Examples of surveys
  - Common surveys in the United States
  - Proprietary surveys
2. Inference and error in surveys
  - The Central Limit Theorem
  - Natural error vs. researcher-induced error

Due:

1. Mock interview guide

## Class 4 – Populations and Samples

Topics:

1. Target populations and sampling
2. Sampling frames

## Class 5 – Sampling and Weighting

Topics:

1. Sampling frames (cont.)
2. Sample designs and weighting
  - a. Why weight?
  - b. Ex ante and ex post weighting

## Class 6 – Writing Survey Questions

Topics:

1. Designing a survey questionnaire
  - a. Modes of data collection
2. Types of questions
  - a. Recall
  - b. Attitude
3. Response bias
  - a. Question order and framing
  - b. Sensitive questions

Due:

1. Population and Sampling Frames Assignment

## Class 7 – TBD

Topics:

1. Hoping for a guest speaker this week

## Class 8 – Final Exam

Due:

1. No final exam
2. Turn in questionnaire

## **NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.