

**PRACTICUM IN SURVEY RESEARCH
COMMUNICATION 7789
AU 2013**

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Office hours: 4-5 p.m. Mondays, 10:15-11:15 a.m. Wednesdays, and by appointment

Classroom: Room 3116 Derby Hall

3 Credits

3-3:55 p.m. MWF

Course description:

The Survey Research Practicum is an advanced course on survey research. The course has two components: consideration of the Total Error Approach to survey research and practicum experiences in surveys.

The course will introduce the total error perspective to survey research and then apply it to study the effects of measurement error, nonresponse error, and coverage error in addition to sampling error. The course will discuss survey methodology, covering such topics as:

- Survey conceptualization/design and total survey error
- Interviewer training, supervision, and verification
- Questionnaire development and refinement
- Sample design and generation of a sampling pool
- Respondent selection and control
- Sample control, execution, and response rates
- Item editing and coding
- Data processing and cleaning
- Sample weighting
- Dissemination and use of survey findings

This course is part of the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization (GIS) in survey research. Because this is an overview course, it must cover the full range of topics; students who have already had a GIS course on some of the topics being covered are expected to contribute actively to the relevant class discussions. Students who are not taking the GIS are also fully welcome in the class.

You are expected to participate actively in practicum activities in survey research. This could include experiencing the survey process including observing interviewing, monitoring interviews, and examining survey questions and questionnaires.

Requirements:

Texts:

Groves, R.M., Fowler, F.J. Jr., Couper, M.P., Lepkowski, J.M., Singer, E. & Tourangeau, R. (2009). *Survey Methodology*. 2nd Ed., New York: Wiley.

Weisberg, H.F. (2005). *The total survey error approach: A guide to the new science of survey research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fowler, F.J. Jr. (2009). *Applied social research methods series 1: Survey research methods*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Mutz, D.C. (2011). *Population-based survey experiments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Additional assigned readings will be made available through Carmen or through the OSU Libraries.

Practicum Activities:

An important part of the course is participating in survey-related practicum activities. These activities can occur at any survey organization in town. The choice of activities depends on your interests and opportunities, as well as your career goals. Many activities are acceptable.

The purpose of the practicum activities is to give you experience in what actually occurs in the process of survey research. These activities would ideally be hands-on, but some parts of the survey process require such intensive training that all that is feasible this quarter is observation of others performing these tasks. Some practicum activities that would be impractical to experience in other ways will be presented in our regular class sessions. Establish your own schedule for moving through relevant practicum activities.

I will try to arrange one or two field trips for us this term. These can be used to meet the requirements of a practicum activity by writing a brief paper about the experience, relating it to some of the principles we are studying. I will also invite some people to the class to talk about selected topics.

The list below shows some possible practicum activities (in addition to those that will occur during class sessions). Asterisked activities are strongly recommended if you have not already done them. **YOU SHOULD DO 3 PRACTICUM ACTIVITIES**; expect to spend 1-3 hours on each. I will try to arrange some opportunities for observing telephone interviewing and monitoring phone interviews, which would count for 2 of the 3 activities.

Students working in a survey organization, or who had another survey practicum course, or who already have other extensive survey research experience can use that experience for the practicums. You might report on your survey activities (such as what supervisors do or how your organization weights surveys). If you're writing a paper on survey research for the AAPOR conference or another professional meeting, you might use that paper. You can critique the questions in one of the

surveys that your survey organization has conducted, or you can critique a survey that you find on the Internet. Or report on a topic that is not emphasized in the class, such as panel surveys, meta-analysis, or conversation analysis.

Telephone interviewing-related activities

- **Going through interviewer training or observing interviewer training
- **Observing telephone interviewing (“shadowing an interviewer supervisor”)
- **Monitoring interviews as they are conducted (generally together with observing phone interviews)

Questionnaire-related activities

- **Creating a survey on Qualtrics, [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), [Limesurvey.org](https://www.limesurvey.org) or another web survey program
 - **Critiquing an actual survey questionnaire
- Writing survey questions and critiquing each other's questions
Seeing how questionnaires are coded for CATI and CAPI surveys
Testing the programming of surveys (e.g., at CHRR)
Gaining experience with Web-based surveys

Data management-related activities

- Coding open-ended questions
- Weighting survey data
- Geocoding survey responses

Archiving-related activities

- Critiquing survey documentation
- Critiquing on-line data archives
- Working with Project Dataverse or related materials to archive a survey project

Internet activities

- Finding information about survey research or survey research organizations on the Web

Talk to me about other ideas that you might have.

Grading:

You will be graded on six aspects of your performance/achievement:

1. (30%) Participation in three practicum activities with a short (2-3 pages) written report on each (worth 10% of the final grade each) critiquing your practicum activities on the basis of class readings on survey errors. Describe the activity and what you learned in it, putting it in the context of the total survey error approach.
2. (25 points) A brief (10 pages) term paper giving a literature review on some aspect of survey research of your choosing. The review paper should cover multiple journal articles and/or chapters in edited conference volumes regarding the topic you choose. As for any

paper, usually it is better to go in depth on a narrow topic than to try to give spotty coverage of a broad topic.

Various alternatives are possible. An acceptable alternative term paper would be using the Total Survey Error framework to critique a survey. Discuss the survey in terms of likely measurement error, nonresponse error, coverage error, and sampling error, as well as appropriate ethical and other considerations. As another alternative, students can have the option of writing a research proposal to Timesharing Experiments in the Social Sciences (TESS). This involves a theoretical justification of your research plans and a set of questions to be implemented on TESS. You can read more about TESS at the website: <http://tessexperiments.org/>. This paper is due the 12th week of the quarter.

3. (20%) A final exam covering the basics of the total survey error approach. The exam will include objective questions on the textbooks and assigned readings as well as a choice among broader essay questions.
4. (5%) Quality and quantity of participation in class sessions. This will include the manner in which you effectively contribute to the learning process during the class sessions. Doing assigned readings on a timely basis will be very important to effective class participation.
5. (10%) Each of you will pick two week's reading and prepare a one-page paper commenting on the themes of that week's set of materials. This is *not* a summary of the readings, but a thoughtful argument that encompasses the week's materials as a whole. I am interested in your reaction to the information, the level of interest you have in it, anything that you found particularly surprising or disappointing, etc. The best essays of this type will articulate a point of view with respect to the materials and then use materials from the readings to support the argument. You will sign up for a due date for these essays, but in general they will be due Monday evening of the week's readings that you are writing about. These essays will be uploaded to a dropbox on Carmen.
6. (10%) Members of the class will take turns leading the discussion for certain weeks. This will be decided early in the term. Discussions should be coordinated with me. Students working on the discussion for the week will email questions for discussion around to everyone in advance. Questions for discussion should be usually be sent by Sunday evenings to give everyone else a chance to look at them and begin to think about them. In general, two- to three-person teams will lead the discussion for a given week.

The OSU "standard scheme" of grading as implemented by Carmen is used and I will try to keep the grades on Carmen's grade book. Here is the OSU "Standard scheme": 93-100 (A), 90-92.99 (A-), 87-89.99 (B+), 83-86.99 (B), 80-82.99 (B-), 77-79.99 (C+), 73-76.99 (C), 70-72.99 (C-), 67-69.99 (D+), 60-66.99 (D), Below 60 (E). The following are the components of your grade for the term:

Summary of class activities and points

Exam: 20%

Participation: 5%

Discussion leading: 10%

2 One-page papers: 10%

Term paper: 25%

Practicum activities: 30% (3 papers at 10% each)

NOTE: Students with disabilities

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs, or contact the office for disability services at 292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate your documented disabilities.

Academic Misconduct:

All students at Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct

<http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/>

Suspected violations of the code in this class, especially pertaining to 3335-23-04 Section 1 on Academic Misconduct, will be taken through the procedures that the university has set up to deal with violations of the code. Academic misconduct is any activity that compromises academic integrity of the institution and subverts the educational process.

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy indicated above.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

Week 1: August 21, 23

Course overview.

Survey education at Ohio State: The Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Survey Research.

Introduction to survey research and methodology

Finding the survey research literature

Groves, et al., Chapter 1, An introduction to survey methodology, pp. 2-36.

Fowler, Chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 1-9.

Weisberg, Chapter 1, Scientific survey research: The development of a discipline, pp. 5-15.

Week 2: August 26, 28, 30

Types of error in surveys

Groves et al., Chapter 2, Inference and error in surveys, pp. 2-65.

Weisberg, Chapter 2, The establishment of a paradigm, pp. 16-28.

Fowler, Chapter 2, Types of errors in surveys, pp. 11-17.

Week 3: September 2, 4, 6

Populations and sampling frames

Groves et al., Chapter 3, Target populations, sampling frames and coverage error, pp. 69-95.

Fowler, Chapter 3, Sampling, pp. 19-47.

Weisberg, Chapter 9, Coverage error, pp. 205-224.

Week 4: September 9, 11, 13

Sampling error

Groves et al., Chapter 4, Sample design and sampling error, pp. 97-139.

Weisberg, Chapter 10, Sampling error: The need for representativeness, pp. 225-257.

Week 5: September 16, 18, 20

Survey modes

Groves et al., Chapter 5, Methods of data collection, pp. 150-179.

Fowler, Chapter 5, Methods of data collection, pp. 69-85

Weisberg, Chapter 3, Survey modes, pp. 29-42.

Week 6: September 23, 25, 27

Nonresponse

Groves et al., Chapter 6, Nonresponse in sample surveys, pp. 183-211.

Weisberg, Chapter 8, Nonresponse error at the unit level, pp. 159-203.

Fowler, Chapter 4, Nonresponse: Implementing a sample design, pp. 49-66.

Week 7: September 30, October 2, 4

Questions and answers

Groves et al., Chapter 7, Questions and answers in surveys, pp. 217-255.

Weisberg, Chapter 5, Measurement error due to respondents I: Question wording problems, pp. 72-114.

Fowler, Chapter 6, Designing questions to be good measures, pp. 87-114.

Week 8: October 7, 9, 11

Questionnaires

Groves et al., Chapter 8, Evaluating survey questions, pp. 259-288.

Weisberg, Chapter 6, Measurement error due to respondents II: Questionnaire issues, pp. 114-129.

Fowler, Chapter 7, Evaluating survey questions and instruments, pp. 115-126.

Week 9: October 14, 16, 18

Interviewers and interviewing

Groves et al., Chapter 9, Survey interviewing, pp. 291-325.

Fowler, Chapter 8, Survey interviewing, pp. 127-142.

Weisberg, Chapter 4, Measurement error due to interviewers, pp. 45-71.

Week 10: October 21, 23, 25

Data processing

Groves et al., Chapter 10, Postcollection processing of survey data, pp. 329-367.

Fowler, Chapter 9, Preparing survey data for analysis, pp. 145-152.

Fowler, Chapter 10, Analyzing survey data, pp. 155-161.

Week 11, October 28, 30, November 1

Survey ethics: Transparency and respecting respondents' rights

Fowler, Chapter 12, Providing information about survey methods, pp. 171-4.

Miller, P. AAPOR Presidential address on transparency. (Carmen)

AAPOR, Transparency Initiative website:

http://www.aapor.org/Transparency_Initiative/4272.htm

Groves et al., Chapter 11, Principles and practices related to ethical research, pp. 371-400.

Weisberg, Chapter 14, Ethics in surveys, pp. 311-324.

Fowler, Chapter 11, Ethical issues in survey research, pp. 163-168.

Belmont Report. *Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/belmont.html>

References:

<http://orhp.osu.edu/irb/about/>

<http://ohsr.od.nih.gov>

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>

AAPOR, "Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) -FAQs" and "Standards and Best Practices" on their web site <http://www.aapor.org>

AAPOR Standards and Ethics.

http://www.aapor.org/Standards_and_Ethics/4260.htm

Week 12, November 4, 6, 8

Survey experiments

Population survey experiments, Part 1.
Mutz, pp. 1-80.

Week 13, November 11, 13, 15

Survey experiments

Population survey experiments, Part 2.
Mutz, pp. 81-160.

November 11 is Veterans Day. No classes.

Week 14, November 18, 20, 22

Survey “panels” and self-selected samples

Baker, R., et al. (2013). *Report of the AAPOR task force on non-probability sampling*. May.
(Carmen).

Week 15, November 25, 27, 29

Replication and data sharing

King, G. (1995). Replication, replication. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, pp. 444-452. (Carmen)
King, G. (1995). A revised proposal, proposal. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, pp. 494-499.
(Carmen)
King, G. (2006). Publication, publication. *PSOnline*. Available at www.apsanet.org. (Carmen)
King, G. (2007). An introduction to the Dataverse Network as an infrastructure for data sharing.
Sociological Methods and Research, 36, 2, 173-199. (Carmen)

Thanksgiving Holiday is November 27, 29. No classes.

Week 16, December 2, 6

Review and summary of Total Survey Error

Groves et al., Chapter 12, FAQs about survey methodology, pp. 405-419.

Fowler, Chapter 13, Survey error in perspective, pp. 175-178.

Last class day is Dec. 2.

Final exam period is December 6, 4-5:45 p.m.