

Communication 7789
Practicum in Survey Research (3 Credits)
SP 2018

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Office hours Mondays, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., and by appointment

Classroom: Room 3116 Derby Hall
9-11 a.m. Fridays

Course description:

The Survey Research Practicum is an advanced course on survey research. We will consider the Total Error approach to survey design and explore its meaning for various considerations in planning and executing survey projects.

This course is one of two required courses for the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization (GIS) in survey research. This specialization can be an add-on to any graduate degree at Ohio State University and those who complete it receive a transcript designation from the Graduate School. Details about the program can be found at <https://polisci.osu.edu/graduate/graduate-interdisciplinary-specialization-survey-research>.

The course will be taught this semester as a hybrid course, that is, a course with online components that also has regular meetings for discussion, presentations and coordination. To succeed in this hybrid course, it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access. I will from time to time post announcements, and/or send out individual and class emails with updated information about the class. This means you should regularly (that is, daily) check Carmen and your university email.

Learning objectives:

- 1) You can expect to learn the basic concepts and principles of the Total Survey Error approach to survey research, a theory that guides most applied survey practice in today's world.
- 2) You will learn how these ideas are applied in survey projects and how they influence the choices of survey design and the allocation of survey resources to maximize quality and control costs.
- 3) Various extensions of the TSE framework (e.g., Total Survey Quality, Data Quality Perspective, or Total Quality Framework) are useful in maximizing a survey's fitness for purpose.
- 4) Engage in some reflective practice by thinking about research you have done/are doing and how it might benefit from consideration of these perspectives.

- 5) Understand how population-based experiments can help improve data quality and credibility of social science research.

Required texts:

Fowler, F.J. Jr. (2014). *Applied social research methods series 1: Survey research methods*, 5th Edition. 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 engaging in some reflective practice of research activities. The choice of activities depends on your interests and opportunities, as well as your career goals. Many activities are acceptable and each of you should consult with me to create an individualized plan for how you want to complete these activities.

I will try to arrange at least one field trip for us this term. This 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. Asterisked activities are strongly recommended if you have not already done them.

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 project directors 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 you can report on a topic that is not emphasized in the class, such as documenting survey data analysis, data archiving, etc.

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, or some other program such [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), [Limesurvey.org](https://www.limesurvey.org), etc.

**Critiquing an actual survey questionnaire

Seeing how questionnaires are coded for CATI and CAPI surveys

Testing the programming of surveys

Gaining experience with Web-based surveys

Embedding an experiment in a survey

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 a comparable program 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 from it, putting it in the context of the total survey error approach.
2. (20 points) A brief (10 pages) term paper or TESS proposal. If you elect to do a term paper, think of it as 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. One option is 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 by Week 12.

3. (25%) 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. (15%) Each of you will pick three week's reading and prepare a one-page paper commenting on the themes of that week's set of materials. Each of you will pick three week's readings and prepare essays dealing with the themes contained in those readings or other materials, e.g. videos. Each paper should be around 500 words (about one page, single-spaced). You will sign up for due dates for the essays, and they should be uploaded to Carmen/Canvas before the start of class for the week you are writing about. I want your reactions to the course materials – not the lectures or class discussions – so the idea is that you write these before hearing the lectures or classroom discussion. In preparing the essay, first consider ALL the material that is assigned for the given week, that is, read any articles or chapters assigned, watch any films, etc., and think about a theme that runs through these materials. In your essay, provide a concise description of the theme, and explain it. Offer your reaction to the theme. It is also very important to write absolutely accurate, factual information. The best essays will articulate a point of view with respect to the materials and then use facts from the materials to support this argument. These papers should *not* be a summary of the main points. I am more interested in your reaction to the information. This might involve the usefulness of the information, the level of interest you have in it, anything that you found particularly surprising or disappointing, etc. Note that although these essays are short, they should contain the elements of any well-written essay: A good, creative title, strong lead, and good introduction, transitions and conclusion. A specific grading rubric will be placed on Carmen/Canvas.
5. (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, 1 person will lead the discussion for a given week.

The OSU “standard scheme” of grading as implemented by Carmen is used and I will 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

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

Term paper or TESS proposal: 20%

Final exam: 25%

3 One-page papers: 15%

Discussion leading: 10%

Response papers:

Each of you will pick three week's readings and prepare essays dealing with the themes contained in those readings or other materials, e.g. videos. Each paper should be around 500 words (about one page, single-spaced). You will sign up for due dates for the essays, and they should be uploaded to Carmen/Canvas before the start of class for the week you are writing about. I want your reactions to the course materials – not the lectures or class discussions – so the idea is that you write these before hearing the lectures or classroom discussion.

In preparing the essay, first consider ALL the material that is assigned for the given week, that is, read any articles or chapters assigned, watch any films, etc., and think about a theme that runs through these materials. In your essay, provide a concise description of the theme, and explain it. Offer your reaction to the theme. It is also very important to write absolutely accurate, factual information.

The best essays will articulate a point of view with respect to the materials and then use facts from the materials to support this argument. These papers should *not* be a summary of the main points. I am more interested in your reaction to the information. This might involve the usefulness of the information, the level of interest you have in it, anything that you found particularly surprising or disappointing, etc.

Note that although these essays are short, they should contain the elements of any well-written essay: A good, creative title, strong lead, and good introduction, transitions and conclusion. A specific grading rubric will be placed on Carmen/Canvas. Check that for the specific quality criteria for which points are assigned.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu ; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

While many people associate academic misconduct with "cheating," the term encompasses a wider scope of student behaviors which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violation of course rules;
- Violation of program regulations;
- Knowingly providing or receiving information during a course exam or program assignment;

- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during a course exam or program assignment;
- Knowingly providing or using assistance in the laboratory, on field work, or on a course assignment, unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor or, where appropriate, a project/research supervisor;
- Submission of work not performed in a course: This includes (but is not limited to) instances where a student fabricates and/or falsifies information for an academic assignment. It also includes instances where a student submits data or information (such as a term paper) from one course to satisfy the requirements of another course, unless submission of such work is permitted by the instructor;
- Submitting plagiarized work for a course/program assignment;
- Serving as or asking another student to serve as a substitute while taking an exam.

Useful References

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

Weisberg, H.F. (2005). *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research*. University of Chicago Press.

Callegaro, M., Baker, R., Bethlehem, J., Goritz, A.S., Krosnick, J.A. & Lavrakas, P.J. (2014). *Online Panel Research: A Data Quality Perspective*. Wiley.

Heeringa, S.G., West, B.T., & Berglund, P.A. (2017). *Applied Survey Data Analysis*, 2nd Ed. CRC Press.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

Week 1: January 12

Course overview.

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

Finding the survey research literature

What would you like to do with survey research?

Some introductory comments on survey research and methodology

Week 2: January 19

Total Survey Error approach

Types of error in surveys

Fowler, Chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 1-7.

Fowler, Chapter 2, Types of errors in surveys, pp. 8-13.

Weisberg, H.F. (2016). Total Survey Error. Oxford Handbook of Polling and Polling Methods. Oxford.

Week 3: January 26

Survey modes

Fowler, Chapter 5, Methods of data collection, pp. 61-74

Flaxman, S., Goel S. & Rao, J.M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80. Special Issue, 298-320.

Callegaro, M. et al. (2014). Online panel research: History, concepts, applications and a look at the future. In M. Callegaro, et al., *Online panel research: A data quality perspective* (pp. 1-18). Wiley.

Week 4: February 2

Populations and sampling frames

Fowler, Chapter 3, Sampling, pp. 14-41.

Mercer, A.W., Kreuter, F., Keeter, S. & Stuart, E.A. (2017). Theory and practice in nonprobability surveys: Parallels between causal inference and survey inference. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 81, Special Issue, pp. 250-279.

Dutwin, D. & Buskirk, T.D. (2017) Apples to oranges or gala versus golden delicious: Comparing data quality of nonprobability internet samples to low response rate probability samples. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 81, Special Issue, 213-249.

Week 5: February 9

Nonresponse and what can be done about it, if anything?

Fowler, Chapter 4, Nonresponse: Implementing a sample design, pp. 41-60.

AAPOR Response rate calculators: <http://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/For-Researchers/Poll-Survey-FAQ/Response-Rates-An-Overview.aspx>

Hsu, J.W., Schmeiser, M.D., Haggerty, C. & Nelson, S. (2017). The effect of large monetary incentives on survey completion. Evidence from a randomized experiment with the survey of consumer finances. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 81,3, 736-747.

Lynn, P. Targeted appeals for participation in letters to panel survey members. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80, 3, 771-782.

Groves, R. M., & Peytcheva, E. (2008). The impact of nonresponse rates on nonresponse bias: a meta-analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72, 167–189.

Kreuter, F. (2013). Facing the nonresponse challenge. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 645, 23–35.

Week 6: February 16

Topics TBA

Week 7: February 23

Questions, answers and questionnaires

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

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

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

Additional readings TBA

Week 8: March 2

Weighting and analysis of survey data

Appropriate software and statistics for analyzing survey data

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

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

Bollen, K. A., Biemer, P. P., Karr, A. F., Tueller, S., & Berzofsky, M. E. (2016). Are survey weights needed? A review of diagnostic tests in regression analysis. *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application*, 3, 375–392.

West, B. T., Sakshaug, J. W., & Aurelien, G. A. S. (2016). How big of a problem is analytic error in secondary analyses of survey data? *PLOS ONE*, 11, e0158120.

Winship, C., & Radbill, L. (1994). Sampling weights and regression analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 23, 230–257.

Heeringa, S.G., West, B.T., Berglund, P.A. (2017). *Applied Survey data analysis: An overview*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-13.

Week 9: March 9

Data quality concerns

Berinsky, A. J., Margolis, M. F., & Sances, M. W. (2014). Separating the shirkers from the workers? Making sure respondents pay attention on self-administered surveys. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58, 739–753.

Curran, P. G. (2016). Methods for the detection of carelessly invalid responses in survey data. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 66, 4–19.

Week 10: March 16

Spring Break – No class.

Week 11, March 23

Survey experiments

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

Week 12, March 30

Survey experiments

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

Week 13, April 6

Issues in generalizability

Glick, P. (2008). Restating the case: The benefits of diverse samples for theory development. *Psychological Inquiry*, 19, 78-83.

Maner, J. K. (2016). Into the wild: Field research can increase both replicability and real-world impact. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 66, 100–106.

Sears, D. O. (1986). College sophomores in the laboratory: Influences of a narrow data base on social psychology's view of human nature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 515–530.

Week 14, April 13

Survey ethics: Transparency and respecting respondents' rights

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

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

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

AAPOR, Transparency Initiative website:

<http://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Transparency-Initiative/FAQs.aspx>

Belmont Report. *Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/belmont.html>

References:

<http://orrr.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/Standards-Ethics/Institutional-Review-Boards.aspx>

AAPOR Standards and Ethics.

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

Week 15, April 20 (Last class day)

Survey research in communication

Replication and data sharing

Lavrakas, P.J. & Kosicki, G.M. (In Press). Survey research in mediated communication. In P. Napoli (Ed.) Mediated Communication. De Gruyter Mouton.

TBA

Week 16, April 27

Final take-home exam due by 11 a.m.