**Survey Methods**

**AS.470.764**

**Advanced Academic Programs**

**Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences**

**Johns Hopkins University**

*Note: This is a content-focused syllabus to assist colleagues who teach in this area. University policies have been removed. Many thanks to Eric Lindgren for helping to design this syllabus.*

### Course Description

This course provides an examination of all aspects of designing, fielding, and analyzing surveys. The class covers question construction, measurement, sampling, weighting, response quality, scale and index construction, IRB, ethics, quality control, modes of data collection, post collection processing, and the quantitative analysis of survey data. In addition, the course covers the fundamentals of report writing and presenting results. The class culminates with fielding a survey of student-created experiments and an accompanying final paper and presentation.

### Course Goals and Learning Objectives

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

* **Identify and explain theoretical principles and practical approaches to survey research and survey methodology.**
* **Conduct survey research**
* **Design surveys to measure constructs**
* **Develop and evaluate samples taken from populations**
* **Measure and evaluate survey reliability and validity**
* **Administer surveys and conduct interviews**
* **Reduce error in survey results and inferences**
* **Conduct post data collection data processing**
* **Analyze and evaluate the quality of survey results**
* **Summarize and discuss survey research findings in writing**

1. **Course Materials**

### Textbook

* Robert M. Groves, et al. July 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd Edition.

ISBN # 978-0-470-46546-2

* A good statistics textbook. Recommendations: Pollock’s *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, Imai’s *Quantitative Social Science*, or Stock and Watson’s *Introduction to Econometrics.*

The required text can be purchased through the Johns Hopkins bookstore or through an online vendor (e.g. Amazon).

### Other Readings

The other required readings are available via E-Reserves on the course website. In some cases, readings can be accessed directly using the links provided in each lesson.

1. **About the Course**

### Course Topics

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| --- | --- |
| Week 1 | Introduction: History of Survey Methodology and Examples |
| Week 2 | Making Defendable Inferences; Defining and Avoiding Error |
| Week 3 | Writing Useful Survey Questions and Obtaining Suitable Answers |
| Week 4 | Evaluating Survey Questions |
| Week 5 | Populations, Samples and Coverage Error |
| Week 6 | Sample Design and Error |
| Week 7 | Non-Response in Surveys |
| Week 8 | Ethics in Research |
| Week 9 | Methods of Data Collection |
| Week 10 | The Basics of Interviewing |
| Week 11 | Post-Collection Processing of Surveys and Begin Survey Development |
| Week 12 | Finalize Survey Development and Field Survey |
| Week 13 | Writing Survey Results |
| Week 14 | Presentation and Final Paper |

**Directions for Students**

**Next Steps:**Carefully review the remaining sections of the syllabus before beginning the **Week 1** activities, which are located in the **Lessons** folder in your online course.

* Once you feel that you are ready to dive into the first week’s activities, click on the **Lessons** button on the left-side navigation menu. Then, click on **Week 1** to begin with the Introduction and Objectives.

### What to Expect in this Course

This course is 14 weeks in length and includes activities in a weekly cycle of instruction. Except for the first week, each week begins on a Wednesday and ends on the following Tuesday. Please review the course syllabus thoroughly to learn about specific course requirements. Each week, you will complete activities that may include viewing multimedia presentations, reading selections from the textbooks and completing problem sets. Be sure to refer to the Student Checklist each week, which provides a week-at-a-glance and shows targeted dates for the completion of activities.

1. **Assessments and Grading Policies**

### Assignments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Points** |
| **Problem Sets**  There will be five problem sets assigned throughout the course. Each problem set is worth 22 points. | 110 |
| **Survey Project Tasks**  The entire class will collaborate to write and field a survey, and you will individually write a part of the survey and test a hypothesis. There will be three separate tasks (25 pts each): Input on the block of demographic questions; development of a survey experiment; and peer feedback and revision of questions. | 90 |
| **Final Paper and Presentation**  In a final paper, you will analyze and present the findings from your survey experiment using the methods and concepts covered in the course. You will also share your key findings with the class in a short presentation that you’ll record to post to the class discussion forum. | 100 |
| **Total** | 300 |

### Grading

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale (numbers are percentages): A (95-100), A- (90-94), B+ (88-89), B (84-87), B- (80-83), C (79-70), F (0-69).

### Assignment Guidelines

**What is the expectation for using the discussion boards?**

For each week and problem set, there will be a discussion board on which students can ask questions. You are strongly encouraged to use these discussion boards to both ask and answer questions.

**What is the expectation for asking questions on the discussion boards?**

You are encouraged to ask questions about the material and the problem sets. These questions should be used to gain a greater understanding about the content of the course and approaches for solving the problem set questions.

**What is the expectation for answering questions on the discussion boards?**

You should not give away answers to problem set questions. Posting answers to the questions undermines students’ ability to learn the material for themselves.

**What is the expectation for completing the problem sets?**

You are encouraged to work collaboratively on the problem sets. That said, each student must submit his or her own problem set, and students are not permitted to copy each other’s answers. You must submit your own work, though your work can be completed with the assistance of other students in the class. Keep in mind, however, that your final exam must be completed without any help from others.

**How should assignments be submitted?**

Problem sets should be submitted through Canvas. Specific details about formatting and submission logistics will be provided for each assignment.

**When will assignments be due?**

Assignment due dates are listed in the course schedule.

**When will completed assignments be returned?**

The instructor will aim to return assignments to you within 5-7 days following the due date.

**What is the policy for late assignments?**

It is extremely important that you submit assignments on time or make prior arrangements with the instructor. The solutions to each problem set will be posted shortly after the problem set is due, so ***late problem sets will be greatly penalized***. ***A late problem set can only earn a MAXIMUM of 10 points***. Please keep this mind as you are scheduling your time.

In addition, failure to complete the IRB human subjects training by the due date will result in a failing grade, since you will not be able to participate in the survey if you do not complete this training.

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### Time Management Expectations

**What is the time demand and schedule of the course?**

This is a graduate-level course and it is expected that you look ahead to schedule your time. Plan to complete coursework across several days of the week rather than all in one day.

1. **Course Participation and Communication Policy**

### Participation

**What are the participation requirements?**

You are expected to log into Canvas **at least three** times a week, though a daily check-in is recommended. It is your responsibility to read all announcements and discussion postings. You should revisit the discussion multiple times over the week to contribute to the dialogue.

**What are the requirements for working collaboratively?**

You are encouraged to work collaboratively on the problem sets. That said, you must submit your own problem set. Further, you are not permitted to simply copy others’ answers.

### Network Etiquette (i.e. “Netiquette”)

In this course, online discussion will primarily take place in our online discussion board. In all textual online communication, it’s important to follow proper rules of netiquette.

What is netiquette? Simply stated, it's network etiquette -- that is, the etiquette of cyberspace. And "etiquette" means the social and culture norms of communicating with others in a proper and respectful way. In other words, netiquette is a set of rules for behaving and interacting properly online.

The Netiquette “Core Rules” linked below are a set of general guidelines for cyberspace behavior. They probably won't cover all situations, but they should give you some basic principles to use in communicating online.

For Netiquette Core Rules visit [The Core Rules of Netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html) web page.

### Contacting the Instructor

Feel free to contact your instructor with comments, questions, and concerns. You will receive a response within 24-48 hours. All email messages will be sent to you via your JHU email account, so you should be in the habit of checking that account every day or you should ensure that your JHU email account forwards messages to another account of your choice.

1. **Course Topics, Activities and Schedule**

The problem sets and other course assignments assume you have completed the required readings and watched the assigned videos. The recommended readings are not necessary to complete the problem sets and other course assignments; they are additional resources for those who would like to explore the week’s topic further.

**Unit 1: Why Surveys?**

**Week 1:** **Introduction and History of Survey Methods**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required reading:
   * Chapter 12 in Converse, Jean M. *Survey research in the United States: Roots and emergence 1890-1960*. Routledge, 2017.
   * Chapter 1-3 in Glynn, Carroll J., Susan Herbst, Mark Lindeman, Garrett J. O’Keefe, and Robert Y. Shapiro. *Public Opinion*, Routledge, 2018.
2. Watch: Presentation on Course Expectations and Syllabus.
3. Watch: Presentation on Survey Methodology, History and Examples.

*Assignment and Due Date:*

1. Discussion forum introductions

**Week 2:**  **Making Defendable Inferences, Defining and Avoiding Error**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Inference and Error in Surveys).
2. Required Reading: Lavrakas, Paul J., Applying a Total Error Perspective for Improving Research Quality in the Social, Behavioral, and Marketing Sciences, *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77 (2013), 831-50
3. Suggested Reading: Seligson, Mitchell., Improving the Quality of Survey Research in Developing Nations, *PS: Political Science & Policy* 38 (2005), 51-56.
4. Watch: Presentation on Inferences and Error.
5. Suggested Web Browsing: [The Roper Center’s Polling Fundamentals Tutorial on Total Survey Error](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/support/polling-fundamentals-total-survey-error/).

*Assignment:*

1. Complete and submit Problem Set 1

**Unit 2: Constructing Survey Questions**

**Week 3: Writing Useful Survey Questions and Obtaining Suitable Answers**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 7: Questions and Answers)
2. Required Reading: Gaskell GD, O'Muircheartaigh CA, et al. (1994). Survey questions about the frequency of vaguely defined events: The effects of response alternative. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58(2): 241-254.
3. Suggested Reading: Bradburn, N. M., Sudman, S., & Wansink, B. (2004). Asking Questions: The definitive guide to questionnaire design (revised edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
4. Watch: Presentation on Survey Questions and Answers.

*Assignment*

1. Begin Problem Set 2

**Week 4: Evaluating Survey Questions**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 8: Evaluating Survey Questions)
2. Required Reading: Presser S., Couper M., Lessler J., Martin E., Martin J., Rothgeb J., Singer E. (2004). Methods for testing and evaluating survey questions. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68(1)109-130.
3. Watch: Presentation on Evaluating Survey Questions.

*Assignments*

1. Complete and submit Problem Set 2
2. Complete and submit Survey Project Part 1 (input on demographic questions)

**Unit 3: Sampling**

**Week 5: Populations, Samples and Coverage Error**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 3: Target Populations, Sampling Frames and Coverage Error)
2. Required reading: Squire, P. (1988). Why the 1936 Literary Digest poll failed. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 52(1), 125-133.*
3. Suggested reading: "President" Landon and the 1936 Literary Digest Poll: Were Automobile and Telephone Owners to Blame? *Social Science History (2012) 36 (1): 23-54.*
4. Suggested Reading: Keeter, S. (2006). The impact of cell phone noncoverage bias on polling in the 2004 Presidential election. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (70), 1, 88-89.
5. Suggested Reading: Iannacchione, VG.  (2011) The Changing Role of Address-Based Sampling in Survey Research.  *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 75 (3) 556-575.
6. Watch: Presentation on Populations, Samples and Coverage Error.

*Assignment*

1. Complete and submit Problem Set 3

**Week 6: Sample Design and Error**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 4: Sample Design and Sampling Error)
2. Required Reading: Yeager, David S., et al. "Comparing the accuracy of RDD telephone surveys and internet surveys conducted with probability and non-probability samples." *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 2011): 75(4): 709-747.
3. Suggested Reading: Scott Keeter, et al., "Gauging the Impact of Growing Nonresponse on Estimates from a National RDD Telephone Sample," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70 (2006): 759-779
4. Watch: Presentation on Sample Design and Error.

*Assignment*

1. Complete and submit Survey Project Part 2 (survey experiment)

**Week 7: Non-Response in Surveys**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 6: Nonresponse in Sample Surveys)
2. Required Reading: Beatty, P., & Hermann, D. (2001). To answer or not to answer: Decision processes related to survey item nonresponse. In D. A. Dillman, J. L. Eltinge, R. M. Groves, & R. J. A. Little (Eds.). (2001). Survey Nonresponse (pp. 71-86). New York: Wiley.
3. Suggested Reading: Singer E, Hoewyk JW, et al. (1998). Does the payment of incentives create expectation effects? *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62(2): 152-164.
4. Suggested Reading: Teitler JO, et al. (2009). Costs and Benefits of Improving Response Rates for a Hard to Reach Population. Public Opinion Quarterly. 67:126-138.
5. Watch: Presentation on Nonresponse in Surveys.

*Assignment:*

1. Complete and submit Problem Set 4

**Unit 4: Survey Administration**

**Week 8: Ethics in Research**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 11: Principles and Practices Related to Ethical Research)
2. Required Reading: American Association for Public Opinion Research: Code of Professional Ethics & Practices.

*Assignment:*

1. Complete IRB Training

**Week 9: Methods of Data Collection and**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: *Survey Methodology* (Chapter 5: Methods of Data Collection)
2. Required Reading: Couper M, et al. (2001). Web Survey Design and Administration. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65(2): 230-253.
3. Suggested Reading: De Leeuw, E.D. (2005). To mix or not to mix data collection modes in surveys. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 21(2): 233-255.
4. Watch: Presentation on Methods of Data Collection.

*Assignment*

1. Begin Problem Set 5

**Week 10: The Basics of Interviewing**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: Survey Methodology (Chapter 9: Survey Interviewing).
2. Suggested Reading: Schober MF, Conrad FG (1997). Does conversational interviewing reduce survey measurement error? Public Opinion Quarterly 61(4): 576-602.
3. Suggested Reading: Lisa Blaydes & Rachel M. Gillum, "Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response in Egypt," Politics and Religion 6 (2013), 459-482
4. Watch: Presentation on Interviewing.

*Assignment*

1. Complete and submit Problem Set 5
2. Submit revised version of survey experiment

**Week 11: Post Collection Processing of Surveys and Begin Survey Development**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: Survey Methodology (Chapter 10: Postcollection Processing).
2. Required Reading (review): Pollock, Philip. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis* (fourth edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 3 & 5.
3. Suggested Reading: Matthew DeBell. Harder than it looks: Coding political knowledge on the ANES. *Political Analysis*, 21(4):393–406, July 2013.
4. Suggested Reading: Kalton, G. & Flores-Cervantes, I. (2003). Weighting methods. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 19(2): 81-97. (http://www.jos.nu/Contents/jos\_online.asp)
5. Watch: Presentation on Post-Collection Processing and Hypothesis Testing Part 1.
6. Watch: Presentation on Hypothesis Testing Part 2, Cross-tabulation and ANOVA.

*Assignment*

1. Begin working on final paper and presentation

**Unit 5: Analyzing and Presenting Results**

**Week 12: Finalize Survey Development and Field Survey**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Suggested Reading: Tufte, E. R. (2001). *The visual display of quantitative information* (2nd Ed.). Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.
2. Watch: Presentation on Writing Survey Methodology Findings

*Assignment*

1. Work on final paper and presentation

**Week 13: Writing Survey Results**

*Readings and Resources:*

1. Required Reading: Chapters 8 and 13 in Turabian, Kate L. *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers*. University of Chicago Press, 2018.

*Assignment and Due Date:*

1. Work on final paper and presentation

**Week 14: Results/Begin Writing Final Paper**

*Assignments*

* + - 1. Submit your final paper
      2. Post your presentation to the discussion forum
      3. Enjoy watching your classmates’ presentations!