The Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) study is the oldest ongoing nationally representative longitudinal study of the role of a broad range of social, psychological, and behavioral factors (along with aspects of medical care and environmental exposure) in health and the way health changes with age over the adult life course (http://www.isr.umich.edu/acl/). The study began in 1986 with a national face-to-face survey of 3617 U.S. adults ages 25 and up in the continental U.S., with African Americans and people aged 60 and over over-sampled at twice the rate of the others. Survivors were re-interviewed in 1989, 1994, 2001/02, and 2011. ACL collects information about standard topics, such as socioeconomic position, health risk behavior and physical and mental health outcomes, cognitive functioning, employment and unpaid productive activity, and marital histories and parenting, but also includes prospective data on an unusually rich set of psychosocial factors, including social integration, social support, job attitudes and conditions, personality, life events, discrimination, and religion and meaning. Most data from all waves are publicly available, and detailed mortality data and geocoded residential addresses will be released under a restricted use agreement procedure in the spring of 2016.

The ACL Summer Workshop will give participants an introduction that will enable them to use the ACL data for their own research, or enhance their skills and range if they are already using the ACL. The basic format of the Summer Workshop is morning lectures on topics including basic survey content, sample design, weighting, and restricted data files and a hands-on data workshop each afternoon in which participants learn to work with the data under the guidance of ACL staff. The workshop is designed for faculty, researchers, and doctoral students. The data training portion assumes some familiarity with SAS or STATA. Prior experience with ACL data or other panel survey data is desirable but not essential. No funding for travel or lodging is available for participants.

Topics to be Covered:
1. Overview of the design and content of ACL
2. Overview of the data structure and available files (including restricted data)
3. Sample design and weighting, design effects and complex variance estimation
4. New directions with the ACL in recent waves
5. Accessing the ACL data and working with the data
6. Measuring health and mortality in ACL
7. Geocoded and residential data in ACL
8. Personality, psychosocial and social support measures in ACL
9. Using ACL as a synthetic cohort
10. Longitudinal analysis with ACL
11. Presentation of participants’ research ideas for feedback from study team

Instructors: James House, Sarah Burgard, Michael Elliott, Philippa Clarke, Rich Mero, Robert Melendez and the ACL project team: http://www.isr.umich.edu/acl/people.htm