

Course Syllabus
SurvMeth 652: Introduction to Focus Group Interviewing
Research Methods
1.5 credits Summer 2017
Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques
University of Michigan

Schedule and Location

Date: June 26 - 30
Class times: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Class location: TBA

Instructors:

Richard Krueger Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota
Mary Anne Casey Adjunct Professor, University of Minnesota
E-mail: rkrueger@umn.edu and casey016@umn.edu

Course Description

In this introduction to focus groups, students will learn about critical components for conducting successful focus group research and will practice key skills. We will discuss how focus group research is adapted for different environments: academic research, market research, governmental and non-profit studies, and community efforts.

Course Goals

By the conclusion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Plan a focus group study
2. Recruit information-rich participants
3. Use beginning moderating skills
4. Develop a focus group questioning route
5. Choose among strategies for analyzing focus group data

Textbooks and Materials

Texts:

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krueger, Richard A., & Mary Anne Casey. (2015). "Focus group interviewing." In K. Newcomer, H. Hatry, & J. Wholey, (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, (pp. 506 - 534). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (available on class website)

Additional Resources – not required

Bystedt, J., Lynn, S., & Potts, D. (2003). *Moderating to the max*. Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market Publishing.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., and Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 2006, 18;59.

Grob, G.F. (2015). Writing for impact. In K. Newcomer, H. Hatry, & J. Wholey, (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, (pp. 739 - 764). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (Available on class website)

Hennink, M. M. (2007). *International focus group research: A handbook for the health and social sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Houston, T.K., et al. (2011). Culturally appropriate storytelling to improve blood pressure. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 154(2) 77-84.

Krueger, R.A. (1998). *Developing questions for focus groups. Moderating focus groups. Analyzing and reporting focus group results*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krueger, R. A., & King, J. A. (1998). *Involving community members in focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merton, R., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. L. (1956). *The focused interview*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (Eds.). (1998). *The focus group kit*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rosser, B.R.S., et al. (2011). The future of Internet-based HIV prevention: A report on key findings from the men's INternet (MINTS-I, II) sex studies. NIH Public Access. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3345812/>

Assignments

Student performance will be evaluated based on written assignments (90%) and class participation (10%).

Requirements and Student Evaluation:

1. Three written assignments. 90% of course grade.
 - Assignment 1: Develop an introduction for a focus group. 20% of grade.
 - Assignment 2: Develop a questioning route for a focus group study. 40% of grade.
 - Assignment 3: Develop a plan for a focus group study. Include the following elements: Name of the study, purpose or research question, description of the participants, recruitment procedures & incentives, number of groups & locations, resources needed and timeline. Note template on class website. 30% of grade.

2. Participation. 10% of grade

In class demonstrations and exercises:

- Giving a focus group introduction
- Moderating a focus group
- Developing a plan for a focus group
- Recruiting for a focus group
- Pilot-testing focus group questions
- Analysis of focus group results
- Solving problems that occur in a focus group

Grading

A -- Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B -- Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C -- Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

D -- Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

F -- Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Course Schedule

Monday, June 26

Overview of Focus Group Interviewing

Topics:

- Introduction to focus group interviewing
- Demonstration of focus group interviewing
- Moderator skills
- Role and expectations of the assistant moderator
- Uses of focus groups

Readings for Monday:

- Chapter 1: Overview of focus groups

Application exercise:

- Participating in a focus group interview

Assignment 1:

- Develop oral introduction to a focus group for Tuesday
- Written version due July 14

Tuesday, June 27

Introductions, Asking Questions, & Capturing Data

Topics:

- The critical first few minutes of a focus group interview
- Developing focus group questions
- Capturing data

Readings for Tuesday:

- Chapter 2: Planning the focus group study
- Chapter 3: Developing a questioning route
- Chapter 5: Moderating skills

Application exercises:

- Delivering an introduction to a focus group interview
- Taking notes during a focus group

Assignment 2: Due July 14:

- Develop a focus group questioning route

Wednesday, June 28

Planning, Logistics, & Analysis

Topics:

- Recruiting participants
- Planning the focus group study
- Sampling strategies
- Telephone and Internet focus groups

Readings for Wednesday:

- Chapter 4: Participants in a focus group
- Chapter 9: Focus group interviewing with young people
- Chapter 10. International and cross-cultural focus group interviewing
- Chapter 11. Telephone and Internet focus groups
- Chapter 12. Focus group interviewing within the organization

Assignment for Thursday:

- Prepare to conduct the beginning of a focus group

Thursday, June 29

Application & Practice

Topics:

- Conducting an actual focus group

Application exercise:

- Conduct practice focus group

Readings for Thursday:

- Chapter 7: Reporting
- Chapter 8: Styles of focus groups research
- Chapter 13. Modifications of focus groups
- Chapter 14: Answering questions about the quality of focus group research

Assignment 3: Due July 14:

- Develop a focus group plan

Friday, June 30

Analysis & Practice

Topics:

- Systematic analysis
- Analysis with transcripts, audio recordings, notes, memory
- Analyzing focus group results

Application Exercise:

- Classic approach to analysis
- Course evaluation

Readings for Friday:

- Chapter 6: Analyzing focus group results

Written assignments due by July 14 to rkrueger@umn.edu

- Develop a plan for a focus group study
- Develop a written version of a focus group introduction
- Develop a focus group questioning route

Electronic submission of assignments

All assignments are due by midnight on July 14. Students are encouraged to submit assignments electronically. When submitting electronically include your name and the assignment number in the subjectline of the email. These should be submitted to rkrueger@umn.edu

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class session and to participate in class activities.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

University of Michigan

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. information you provide is private and confidential.

University of Maryland

In order to receive services you must contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office to register in person for services. Please call the office to set up an appointment to register with a DSS counselor. Contact the DSS office at 301.314.7682; <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

Academic Conduct

Clear definitions of the forms of academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Rackham web site for the University of Michigan:

http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/section10/

and the University of Maryland Graduate School web site:

<http://www.graduate.umaryland.edu/policies/misconduct.html>

Knowledge of these rules is the responsibility of the student and ignorance of them does not excuse misconduct. The student is expected to be familiar with these guidelines before submitting any written work or taking any exams in this course. Lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. Charges of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with very seriously and may result in oral or written reprimands, a lower or failing grade on the assignment, a lower or failing grade for the course, suspension, and/or, in some cases, expulsion from the university.

February 2, 2017