

**Course Syllabus**  
**SurvMeth 652: Introduction to Focus Group Interviewing**  
**Research Methods**  
**1 credit Summer 2018**  
**Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques**  
**University of Michigan**

### **Schedule and Location**

Date: July 24 – 25, 2018  
Class times: 9:00 am – 4:00 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**

This course introduces the skills needed to conduct focus group interviews. Students will learn about the critical components of successful focus group research. They will develop a plan for a focus group study and practice key skills. Attention will be placed on moderating, recruiting, developing questions, and analysis of focus groups. This course will be particularly applicable for those conducting focus group research in academic, non-profit, and government settings.

### **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*. 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **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

### Tuesday, July 24

#### Focus Group Overview, Moderating, Asking Questions

Topics:

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

Readings for Tuesday:

- Chapters 1 – 5 Focus Groups, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

Application exercise:

- Participating in a focus group interview

### Wednesday, July 25

#### Analysis, Recruiting, Reporting, Telephone and Internet Focus Groups

Topics:

- The critical first few minutes of a focus group interview
- Recruiting participants

- Planning the focus group study
- Sampling strategies
- Analysis of focus group interviews
- Telephone and Internet focus groups

Readings for Wednesday:

- Chapters 6 – 12

Application exercises:

- Delivering an introduction to a focus group interview

### **Written assignments due by August 1 to [rkrueger@umn.edu](mailto: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 August 1<sup>st</sup>. 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](mailto: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/](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/section10/)

and the University of Maryland Graduate School web site:

<http://www.graduate.umd.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.

March 21, 2018