

Soc 988: Introduction to Applied Questionnaire Design Workshop
Summer Institute

N.C. Schaeffer
12 June -16 June 2017

M-F 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Room TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This workshop distills research about survey questions to principles that can be applied to write survey questions that are clear and obtain reliable answers. The workshop provides students with tools to use in diagnosing problems in survey questions and in writing their own survey questions. Sessions combine lecture with group exercises and discussion. The lecture provides guidelines for writing and revising survey questions and illustrates how to revise troubled questions. Assignments require that students analyze problematic questions, revise them, and administer them to fellow students. Sessions consider both questions about events and behaviors and questions about subjective phenomena (such as attitudes, evaluations, and internal states).

Note: This course pairs well with *Question Testing Methods*, taught by Pam Campanelli in the afternoon during the same week.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments include completing readings and participating in exercises during class sessions and may also include completing exercises, such as revising questions and testing them, between classes, that is, overnight. Students taking the course for credit will complete an additional formal assignment that will be due after the course is completed.

Required Readings

There is a required coursepack that includes copies of overheads. The coursepack can be purchased from the copy shop at the Institute for Social Research by at least the first day of class. I will bring materials for the first day.

Readings are available online either in Canvas or by web link.

Key Classic and Current Sources for Later Exploration

Bradburn, Norman M., Seymour Sudman, and Brian Wansink. 2004. *Asking Questions: The Definitive Guide to Questionnaire Design*. New York: Wiley.

Couper, Mick P. 2008. *Designing Effective Web Surveys*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dillman, Don A., Jolene D. Smyth and Leah Melani Christian. 2014. *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, Fourth Edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Fowler, Floyd J. 1996. *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*. Sage.

Madans, Jennifer, Kristen Miller, Aaron Maitland and Gordon Willis, eds. 2011. *Question Evaluation Methods: Contributing to the Science of Data Quality*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Presser, Stanley, Jennifer Rothgeb, Mick Couper, Judith Lessler, Elizabeth Martin, Jean Martin, and Eleanor Singer, editors. 2004. *Questionnaire Evaluation and Testing*. New York: Wiley. [Note that volume from a 2016 conference on this topic will be out in 2017 or 2018.]

Schwarz, Norbert and Seymour Sudman, editors. 1996. *Answering Questions: Methodology for Determining Cognitive and Communicative Processes in Survey Research*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Sudman, Seymour, Norman M. Bradburn, and Norbert Schwarz. 1996. *Thinking about Answers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski. 2000. *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Tourangeau, Roger, Frederick G. Conrad and Mick P. Couper. 2013. *The Science of Web Surveys*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Willis, Gordon. 2005. *Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Willis, Gordon. 2015. *Analysis of the Cognitive Interview in Questionnaire Design (Understanding Qualitative Research)*. New York: Oxford.

Course Outline

NOTE: Priority readings are marked with *. I know that you don't have time for everything in a week – but try to read these articles!

Monday

Lecture: Background

Readings: Overview

*Fowler Jr., Floyd J. and Carol Cosenza. 2008. "Writing Effective Questions." Pp. 136-60 in *International Handbook of Survey Methodology*, edited by Edith D. de Leeuw, Joop J. Hox, and Don A. Dillman. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Krosnick, Jon A. and Stanley Presser. 2010. "Question and Questionnaire Design." Pp. 263-313 in *Handbook of Survey Research, Second Edition*, edited by P. V. Marsden and J. D. Wright. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Saris, Willem and Irmtraud Gallhofer. 2007. "Estimation of the Effects of Measurement Characteristics on the Quality of Survey Questions." *Survey Research Methods* (1):29-43.

Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Jennifer Dykema. 2015. "Question Wording and Response Categories." *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd Edition, edited by James D. Wright. Oxford, England: Elsevier.

*Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Jennifer Dykema. 2011. Questions for Surveys: Current Trends and Future Directions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 75, no. 5, pp. 909-961.

Download from: <http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/content/75/5/909.full.pdf+html>

*Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:65-88. Download from:

<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/eprint/rU4UOoizjrXROhijkRIS/full/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.110702.110112>

Tuesday

Lecture: *Background, continued. Begin General Guidelines.*

Readings: *Questions about Behaviors and Events*

Schaeffer, Nora Cate. 2000. "Asking Questions about Threatening Topics: A Selective Overview." Pp. 105-22 in *The Science of Self-Report: Implications for Research and Practice*, edited by Arthur A. Stone, Jaylan S. Turkkan, Christine A. Bachrach, Jared B. Jobe, Howard S. Kurtzman, and Virginia S. Cain. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

*Tourangeau, Roger. 2000. "Remembering What Happened: Memory Errors and Survey Reports." Pp. 29-48 in *The Science of Self-Report: Implications for Research and Practice*, edited by Arthur A. Stone, Jaylan S. Turkkan, Christine A. Bachrach, Jared B. Jobe, Howard S. Kurtzman, and Virginia S. Cain. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wednesday

Lecture: *Finish General Guidelines. Begin Events and Behaviors.*

Readings: *Questions about Behaviors and Events*

Thursday

Lecture: *Events and Behaviors.*

Readings: *Questions about Subjective Things.*

Dashen, Monica and Scott Fricker. 2001. "Understanding the Cognitive Processes of Open-Ended Categorical Questions and Their Effects on Data Quality." *Journal of Official Statistics* 17(4):457-77.

*Saris, Willem E., Melanie Revilla, Jon A. Krosnick, and Eric M. Shaeffer. 2010. "Comparing Questions With Agree/Disagree Response Options to Questions With Item-Specific Response Options." *Survey Research Methods* 4(1):61-79.

Friday

Lecture: *Subjective Things. Presentation of Self-Administered Questions.*

Readings: *Questions about Behaviors and Events, Question Testing*

Harrison, Chase H. 2010. "Mail Surveys and Paper Questionnaires." Pp. 499-526 in *Handbook of Survey Research, Second Edition*, edited by P. V. Marsden and J. D. Wright. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Redline, Cleo. 2013. "Clarifying Categorical Concepts in a Web Survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77(S1):89-105. doi: 10.1093/poq/nfs067.

*Willis, Gordon B., Patricia Royston, and Deborah Bercini. 1991. "The Use of Verbal Report Methods in the Development and Testing of Survey Questionnaires." *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 5:251-67.