Data Collection Methods

Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques
June/July 2017

Course Numbers and Class Dates
University of Michigan: SURVMETH 623
June 5 – July 26, 2016

Instructors
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Overview and Goals of Course
This course will present research conducted to increase our understanding of how data collection decisions affect survey errors. This is not a “how-to-do-it” course on data collection, but instead reviews the literature on survey design decisions and data quality in order to sensitize students to how alternative survey designs might impact the data obtained from those surveys.

This course reviews a range of survey data collection methods that are both interview-based (face-to-face and telephone) and self-administered (paper questionnaires that are mailed and those that are implemented online, i.e. as web surveys). Mixed mode designs are also covered as well as several hybrid modes for collecting sensitive information e.g., self-administering the sensitive questions in what is otherwise a face-to-face interview. The course also covers newer methods such as mobile web and SMS (text message) interviews, and examines alternative data sources such as social media. It concentrates on the impact these techniques have on the quality of survey data, including error from measurement, nonresponse, and coverage, and assesses the tradeoffs between these error sources when researchers choose a mode or survey design.

Class Structure and Course Concept
This course uses a flipped classroom design. In this course, you are responsible for watching video recorded lectures and reading the required literature for each unit and then attending one-hour online meetings twice a week where students have the chance to discuss the materials from
a unit with the instructor. Just like in an on-site course, homework will be assigned and graded and there will be a final exam at the end of the course.

Although this is an online course where students have more freedom in when they engage with the course materials, students are expected to spend the same amount of time overall on all activities in the course – including preparatory activities (readings, studying), in-class-activities (watching videos, participating in online meetings), and follow-up activities (working on assignments and exams) – as in an on-site course.

**Online Meetings**

Monday and Wednesday, 3-4 PM (ET)

Meetings will be held online through BlueJeans. To join the meetings online, go to [https://bluejeans.com](https://bluejeans.com) and log in with a webcam (no audio-only participation). All meetings will also be live broadcasted in room G300 Perry on the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus. Students who are in Ann Arbor during the time of the meetings are welcome to join the meetings there. We will designate some sessions when one of us will be in the classroom; this will be students’ opportunity to be in the same physical location as the instructors.

In preparation for the online meetings, students are expected to watch the lecture videos and read the assigned literature before the start of the meeting. We will treat the online meetings as an opportunity to discuss the material so it complements but does not replace the video lectures and reading, i.e., this is not “either or.” It will be up to you to come to class with questions or topics for discussion; usually, we will not prepare additional material for discussion.

**Technical Equipment Needs**

The learning experience in this course will mainly rely on the online interaction between students and the instructor during the online meetings. Therefore we encourage all students in this course to use a web camera and a headset. Decent quality headsets and web cams are available for less than $20 each. In addition, we suggest that students use a strong and stable internet connection, when connecting to the online meetings.

**Course Materials**

All course materials will be made available online on the class website at [https://canvas.umich.edu/gateway/](https://canvas.umich.edu/gateway/). Course materials on the website includes pre-recorded video lectures available for streaming, required and recommended readings for downloading, homework assignments, and the final exam.

**Evaluation**

Grading will be based on:
- Participation in online discussion demonstrating understanding of the required readings (10% of grade).
• Four short exercises (3-5 pages each) reviewing specific aspects of the material covered (60% of grade). Exercise 2 will be worth twice as much as the remaining exercises in the assignment total.
• A final exam (30% of grade)

Dates of when exercises will be handed out and when they are due are indicated in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangement with the instructors. Assignments should be submitted as a MS Word documents on the course website on the due date before class starts.

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 help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

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_and_professional_integrity/statement_on_academic_integrity

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.

Course Outline and Readings
Dates in the outline denote dates of online meetings. Materials will be available in advance on the course website.

June 7: Overview of course; Introduction to errors in surveys; Methods of data collection (Conrad)

Readings:

Module A: Modes of Survey Data Collection

June 12: Classic modes of data collection: Phone, Face-to-Face, Mail (Keusch)

Readings:


Recommended:


June 14: Web and mobile Web (Keusch)

- Assignment 1 handed out (due on June 21 before start of class)

Readings:


Recommended:

June 19: Web and mobile Web (continued) (Keusch)

Readings:


Recommended:


June 21: Mixed mode studies; Mode comparison (Keusch)

- Assignment 1 due
- Assignment 2 handed out (due on June 28 before start of class)

Readings:


Recommended:


Module B: Nonresponse error

June 26: Nonresponse error; Response rates (Keusch)

Readings:


Recommended:


June 28: Nonresponse error; Nonresponse reduction (Keusch)

- Assignment 3 handed out (due July 10 before start of class)

Readings:


Recommended:


July 3: No class (Independence Day)


**Module C: Interviewers**

**July 5: The role of the interviewer in survey data collection; Respondent selection (Conrad)**

Readings:


**July 10: Interviewing technique; Interviewer training and evaluation (Conrad)**

- Assignment 3 due

Readings:


Recommended:


**July 12: Interviewer effects (Conrad)**

- Assignment 4 handed out (due July 19 before start of class)

Readings:

Recommended:


**Module D: Variations on a theme**

**July 17: Biomarker data collection (Guest lecturer: Colter Mitchell)**

Readings:

Recommended:

**July 19: New modes and new data (Conrad)**

- Assignment 4 due

Readings:


Recommended:


**July 24: Longitudinal surveys; Establishment surveys (Keusch)**

Readings:

Recommended:


**July 28: Final Exam due**