

## WRITING QUESTIONS FOR SURVEYS

**July 1-2, 2020**

**9:00am-4:00pm, Wednesday and Thursday**

Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques  
Institute for Social Research  
University of Michigan

**NORA CATE SCHAEFFER**

University of Wisconsin-Madison

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Introduce a structural analysis of parts of a survey question
- Introduce cognitive interviewing as a method for testing survey questions
- Describe guidelines for diagnosing problems in survey questions and writing new survey questions
- Focus on the structure and wording of survey questions, whether for interviewer-administered or self-administered instruments
- Provide an opportunity to apply the guidelines and principles during in-class exercises
- Focus on improving individual questions and sets of questions.
- Summarize research that underlies key decisions in writing survey questions.

### **WHO SHOULD ATTEND**

Individuals who will be writing or reviewing survey questions or survey instruments or analyzing survey data. This course gives practical guidance to those who have written survey questions but who are not familiar with research on question design, those who are just beginning to design survey instruments, and those who use survey data but do not themselves design survey instruments.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

Schaeffer NC, Presser S. 2003. "The science of asking questions", *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65–88.

<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/eprint/rU4UOoizjRXROhijkRIS/full/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.110702.110112>

Schaeffer NC, Dykema J. 2011. "Questions for Surveys: Current Trends and Future Directions." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 75, 5: 919-961. <http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/content/75/5/909.full.pdf+html>

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

**Nora Cate Schaeffer** is Sewell Bascom Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Faculty Director of the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. She has over thirty years of experience in survey methodology and questionnaire design and has taught Questionnaire Design at the University of Michigan's Summer Institute in Survey Research for many years. Her research has been published in *American Sociological Review*, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Sociological Methods and Research*, and *Sociological Methodology*. She is co-editor (with Douglas W. Maynard, Hanneke Houtkoop-Steenstra, and Johannes van der Zouwen) of *Standardization and Tacit Knowledge: Interaction and Practice in the Survey Interview*. She was named a fellow of the American Statistical Association in 2010 and elected Vice President of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2018.