This course is about survey data and where it comes from. The course examines the principal features of survey design and how they contribute to total survey error. Topics include: mode of interview, basic sampling concepts, effects of nonparticipation, issues in instrumentation, interviewing, and computer assisted data collection. Most of the course is spent reviewing research that describes the effects of features of survey design on survey error.

This course considers issues that arise before analysis of data begins. Some course assignments, particularly those about sampling, require some comfort with elementary statistical concepts and formulas. The assignments and readings require familiarity with principles of research design. The conceptual and practical tools introduced in this course may be useful in planning and executing your own research.

Lectures proceed somewhat independently of the readings. The schedule of readings given here is fixed, regardless of how much the lectures appear to deviate from the schedule. Lectures do not systematically summarize the readings.

Course Assignments and Requirements

Four assignments. Four assignments require that you write a report. Each of these assignments will be handed out on a Tuesday and will be due a week from the following Thursday during class, so you have a bit over a week for each. The assignments present realistic research situations, require research decisions, and give you practice applying the approaches and research presented in class and the readings. The assignments require you to apply readings discussed in the text and listed in the course syllabus. You are encouraged to supplement the text and assigned readings with additional readings, if that will improve the final product. The maximum length of each assignment is 4 pages. I count only the three best grades, so you may skip one assignment if you are satisfied with your grade. Each assignment contributes 10% to the final course grade, for a total of 30% of the course grade.

Project. The course project requires you to write a brief proposal to conduct a survey. I will provide a detailed description of the project at least 4 weeks before the project is due. The maximum length of the project is 15 pages of text, and it contributes 60% to the course grade.

Chapter exercises. There are weekly exercises. These exercises will sometimes be the basis for class discussion, and must be handed in, but will not be formally graded. I will use the following scale: “3” if complete, substantially correct, and well-documented; “2” if there are
minor deviations from the “3” standard; “1” if incomplete, poorly presented, or showing little effort. Individual problems will not be marked, but some problems will be discussed in class. Assignments handed in late will be subject to a one-grade penalty. Weekly exercises contribute 10% to your grade.

Articles for discussion. There are several weeks in which the schedule of assignments indicates that you should come to class prepared to discuss specific articles in the coursepack.

Class participation. If your grade for the class as a whole is borderline, I take contributions to class discussion into account in assigning the final grade.

Late penalties and incompletes. All assignments must be completed on time. I deduct a letter grade for each day an assignment is late. I may discuss the content of assignments in class after the due-date, so that accepting late assignments is not fair to the other students. However, I recognize that emergencies happen, so I allow a one-day grace period for one assignment.

Communication. Put the text “soc751 - “ at the beginning of the subject line of every email message. This allows me to find your email easily if I lose track of it. I do not accept assignments by email.

General instructions for assignments. All course assignments that are reports are to be written in a professional style. In the exercises, you will practice analyzing problems and proposing solutions in the style that you will use in writing research papers and grant proposals. Exercises and the project must be edited, proofed, and typed in the following format: at least 1 inch margins, double-spaced (not 1.5-spaced), upper-lower case, 10 or 12 point fixed-space type (like Courier) or 12 point variable-spaced font (like Times New Roman), page-numbered, and stapled. I may refuse to read assignments that do not follow these guidelines. (Note that restrictions of this type are also common in requests for proposal.)

Be sure to keep your exercises and the project if you think you will want to ask me for a letter of recommendation later based on your work in this course.

Criteria for evaluation. In evaluating class assignments I consider how well the work applies relevant concepts and findings presented in lectures and readings and whether additional sources are appropriately incorporated. I also consider the practicality, comprehensiveness, and creativity of the solution to the problem presented in the assignments. Finally, I take into account of how well you present your solution--whether the presentation is organized, clear, and professional.

Office hours and appointments. There is a sign up sheet outside my office. If no one signs up by the end of class on Tuesday, office hours may be cancelled. My schedule tends to be very full because of standing meetings that I cannot move around. Last minute appointments are rarely possible.

Readings
Be warned that assignments and exercises are lighter in some weeks than in others.

**Reserve readings.** A copies of the coursepack is on reserve in the Social Science Reading Room on the 8th floor of the Social Science Building. The Social Science Reading Room is on the 8th floor of the Social Science building. Take the rear elevator. Many recommended books are on reserve at Helen C. White.

**NOTE:** All articles and books on reserve in the Social Science Reading Room are my personal copies. As a courtesy to me and other students, please do not write on them. If you need to keep an article for more than 1 day, please make a copy of it.

**Required Books**


**Recommended Books**

I order these books for those of you who have special interests. These books are all expensive, so buy only what you need.


**Other General Sources**


### Soc 751: Schedule of Written Assignments

Complete 3 of 4 Assignments and the Semester Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned</th>
<th>Week Due</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Mode of Data Collection</td>
<td>12 Oct</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21 Oct, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>Nonparticipation</td>
<td>26 Oct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 Nov, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Instruments and Response Issues</td>
<td>9 Nov</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18 Nov, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Interviewers and Interviewing</td>
<td>30 Nov</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9 Dec, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester Project</td>
<td>by 25 Nov</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Friday 17 Dec, noon, CDE office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Soc 751: Schedule of Weekly Exercises and Articles for Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Week</th>
<th>Due Tue of Week:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Exercises and Articles for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>SM, p. 36: 1 and select 2 others Miller article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Errors in Surveys</td>
<td>SM, p. 64: 1, 2, 4, 5 Cicourel and Schuman articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>SM, p. 91: 1 - 3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>SM, p. 132: 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>SM, p. 132: 6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Groves and McGonagle article, Singer article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>SM, p. 166: 1-6, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nonparticipation</td>
<td>SM, p. 197: 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nonparticipation</td>
<td>SM, p. 197: 5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>SM, p. 238: 6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Evaluating Questions</td>
<td>SM, p. 267: 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Maynard and Schaeffer article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>SM, p. 298: 1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Post-survey processing</td>
<td>SM, p. 341: 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>SM, p. 374: 1-3 (prepare for class discussion only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Soc 751: Course Outline
Week 1: Introduction

SM, Chapter 1, “An Introduction to Survey Methodology”

ISQ, Chapter 1, “The Evolution of Survey Process Quality”


Week 2: Errors in Surveys

SM, Chapter 2, Inference and Error in Surveys
ISQ, Chapter 2, The Survey Process and Data Quality


Weeks 3, 4, 5 Basic Sampling Concepts

SM, Chapter 3, Target Populations, Sampling Frames, and Coverage Error
SM, Chapter 4, Sample Design and Sampling Error
ISQ, Chapter 9, Sampling Error

Weeks 6 and 7: Mode of Survey and Interview

SM, Chapter 5, Methods of Data Collection
ISW, Chapter 6, Data Collection Modes and Associated Errors


Weeks 8 and 9: Nonparticipation

SM, Chapter 6, Nonresponse in Sample Surveys
ISQ, Chapter 3, Coverage and Nonresponse Error


Weeks 10 and 11: Instruments and Response Issues

SM, Chapter 7, Questions and Answers in Surveys
ISQ, Chapter 4, The Measurement Process and Its Implications for Questionnaire Design


Week 12: Evaluating Surveys Questions

SM, Chapter 8, Evaluating Survey Questions
ISQ, Chapter 8, Overview of Survey Error Evaluation Methods

Week 13, 14: Interviewers and Interviewing

NOTE: Thanksgiving is Thur 25 November in Week 13.

SM, Chapter 9, Survey Interviewing
ISQ, Chapter 5, Errors Due to Interviewers and Interviewing


Week 15: Post-Survey Processing and Estimation

SM, Chapter 10, Postcollection Processing of Survey Data
ISQ, Chapter 7, Data Processing Errors and Their Control
ISQ, Chapter 10, Practical Survey Designs for Minimizing Total Survey Error

Week 16: Confidentiality, Privacy, and Standards of Practice

SM, Chapter 11, Principles and Practices Related to Scientific Integrity
