Overview: This course provides an introduction to the principles that underlie the uses of surveys for social research. The course also provides practical experience in some of the basic techniques of survey research. The first half of the class focuses on questions of how to represent a population, that is, overall study and survey design as well as basic concepts of sampling. The second half focuses on measurement, that is, refining concepts, and writing and testing questions. At several points during the course, students integrate what they have learned in a Paper.

Readings, lectures, and labs present different material, and all are required. Labs, exercises, and weekly assignments are an integral part of the course. Labs and weekly assignments illustrate how survey researchers apply the methods presented in the class and provide students the opportunity to practice applying the concepts and methods they learn every week. The Papers are designed to give students experience writing formal reports – a skill that employers often look for when hiring students from the social sciences. The course provides a substantial experience with practical research skills that are relevant in research and non-research jobs in both the academic and private sectors.

The techniques used in this class are relevant for many kinds of data collection and standardized measurement, such as experiments in social psychology or political polls, although neither of these specialized methodologies is covered in this course.

Notes about Lab:
- Lab is required.
- Lab will sometimes meeting in 3128 Sewell and sometimes in 212 Educational Sciences. Check the course website and announcements in class and from the TA.
- Lab is scheduled for 4 hours, but in most weeks, labs will be for a shorter time and the remaining time used for work on weekly assignments and office hours. The long scheduled time allows staff from the UW Survey Center to make practical presentations to all students at once.

Prerequisites: Sociology 360 or Sociology 357 or equivalent or concurrent registration in one of these classes. Some exercises require using Stata and we assume that you have used it before.


Additional Readings: Available by link or electronic reserve.

Assignments: Assignments are of two types.
Weekly Assignments: Based on the material in readings, lecture, and lab. Weekly assignments are usually a few pages, though some may be longer. Some require a formal draft of a Paper that you work on the following week.

Papers: Structured reports of modest length. Papers are more formal and require integration of additional sources. Grading weighs more heavily (compare to “weekly assignments”) whether the presentation is organized, clear, and professional.

Lab participation: Attendance at and participation in lab are recorded.

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All assignments must be completed to receive a grade for the class, however we drop the lowest grade from the 11 weekly assignments (so only 10 are counted above. Attendance will be taken at lecture and lab and participation will be considered for grades that are 1 or 2 points below a boundary.

Assignments receive letter grades. Grades are combined using the grade point value of the letter grade and the weights shown above.

Criteria for evaluation. Weekly assignments and longer Papers provide opportunities to practice structured professional communication. Evaluation of reports and Papers considers the following: Clarity and relevance; integration of material presented in the readings, lectures, and lab; and professionalism of the presentation.

Administrative matters.

Communication. Please communicate about this course through Canvas. Go to your inbox in Canvas to send messages to the instructor or the TA, whomever you wish a reply from. The instructor and TA may each then add the other to a reply to help speed communication.

NOTE: If communicating within Canvas proves to be a problem, we may change during the semester.

Appointments. Please use the Scheduling Assistant within MyUW to schedule appointments during office hours. If you try to make an appointment, but I do not seem to be available, feel free to check with me by email. Please check to make sure you go to the right office! Unfortunately, I often cannot make an appointment to meet within a day or two of any request, so please plan ahead.

Privacy of Grades. Use only the last six digits of your UWID on all assignments; no names. To protect your privacy, we cannot give grades over the telephone or by email. If you want an assignment or grade given to someone else, you must give the instructor a letter of authorization.

Classroom deportment. Please sit in the front half of the room, in front of the instructor. Be respectful of instructor, TAs, and other students. Turn your cellphone off (not to vibrate) before the lecture or lab begins. No use of headphones and no texting during class; you may be asked to stop or leave the class. If you need to leave the class and return (for example, because you need to take a telephone call for a medical emergency) make arrangements with the instructor in advance. Napping
and reading a novel or newspaper are commendable activities, but they are more comfortably done elsewhere and are not appropriate during class.

**Late penalties and incompletes.** All assignments must be completed to receive a grade for the class, and you must complete assignments on time to avoid a penalty. To be fair to those who complete work on time, I deduct a letter grade for each day an assignment is late. We 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. If your life is disrupted and we need to talk about how that will affect your timeliness in this class, please let me know.

**Soc 351: Course Outline and Schedule**

- Do the readings from the textbook for the week before Tuesday lecture if possible. Lab activities assume that you have done the reading and reviewed the questions in the Weekly Assignment.
- Weekly Assignments are due at the beginning of class (1 pm) on Tuesday of the following week. So WK01_Assignment is due on Tuesday of Week 2.

**Week 1 – Introduction & Total Survey Error & Planning the Survey – Only one class this week!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
<th>BCB Chapter 1 &amp; Chapter 2 &amp; Chapter 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Reading(s):</td>
<td>Biemer, 2010. Overview of Design Issues: Total Survey Error, Handbook of Survey Research. [Note: Read pp, 28-38 closely. Skim the formulas on pp. 38-46 – you are not responsible for the exact formulas. But try to absorb the main concepts of these sections, especially the difference between random and systematic error, which should be familiar to you from intro stats.]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab:</th>
<th>Listen to 2 modules of General Interviewer Training. Exercise on interviewing each other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong></td>
<td>Keep used QuexA and QuexB for WK10 lab and assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to CITI Training</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Assignment:</th>
<th>Report about interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of design of General Social Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions about readings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snip of certificate for CITI training</td>
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</table>

| Other Assignment: | Complete CITI training and snip certificate to include in weekly assignment. |

**Week 2 – Data Collection I – Selecting a method**

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<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
<th>BCB Chapter 4 – Data Collection I: Selecting a Method</th>
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| Additional Reading(s): | BRFSS 2015 Overview [Read and answer questions in Weekly Assignment before Week 02 Lab] |
Lab: How it works: Talk by UWSC staff about obtaining and fielding phone sample for Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS)

NHIS and estimates of landlines and wireless-only households:

Weekly Assignment: Questions about readings, including BRFSS and Pew Research Center reports

Other: Notify instructor by Friday of Week 02 if you require accommodations because of a disability or rescheduling of assignments because of religious observances.

Week 3 – Sampling I: Concepts of Representation and Sample Quality

Text: BCB Chapter 5 – Sampling I: Concepts of Representation and Sample Quality
BCB Chapter 6 - Sampling II – Population Definition and Sampling Frames


Lab: Introduction to sampling distributions. Sampling frame evaluation.
Note: Labs and Weekly Assignments for Weeks 3-6 cumulate and provide instruction and content for Paper 1.

Weekly Assignment: Report on lab activities: Sampling distribution exercises and evaluation of example sampling frame, including categories of problems with frame (e.g., blanks, duplicates, etc.).

Week 4 – Sampling II – Population Definition and Sampling Frames

Text: BCB Chapter 7 - Sampling III: Sample Size and Sample Design


Lab: Drawing simple random samples from example population. Probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. Beginning to think about more complicated (multistage) sampling designs.

Weekly Assignment: Report on lab activities: Sample statistics for simple random samples, logic of PPS sampling, discussion of stratification and clustering differences.

Week 5 - Sampling III: Sample Design
Week 6 – Applied Sample Design – Address-Based Samples – Mixed Mode

Text: None.

Additional Reading(s):

Lab: How it works: Talk by UWSC staff about obtaining and fielding addressed-based sample (ABS) in Wisconsin FHS

Work time for Paper 1

Paper 1: Describe design and implementation of multistage sample drawn in lab including definition of target population, discussion of frame quality and coverage, documentation of all decisions, sampling weights.

Week 7 - Measurement

Text: BCB Chapter 8 – Questionnaire Development I: Measurement Error and Question Writing

Additional Reading(s):

**Recommended Reading**


**Lab:**

Logic of split-ballot question wording experiments.

**Weekly Assignment:**

Logic of split-ballot experiments and the model of survey response.

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**Week 8 - Measurement**

**Text:**

BCB Chapter 9 – Questionnaire Development II: Questionnaire Structure

**Additional Reading(s):**


**Recommended Reading for Paper 2**


**Lab:**

Examine the wording of the questions in the assignment. What is the research question? How do you know what literature to look for? Look for literature for split-ballot experiment. Prepare for GSS analysis: Look for missing values. Run table of difference between the two forms.

**Weekly Assignment (Draft of Paper 2):**

Find and review two articles relevant to this question wording experiment in addition to those in the Recommended Readings. Describe the structure of the split ballot experiment, identify outcomes and relationships, and formulate hypotheses. Hand in draft of Paper 2

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**Week 9 - Measurement**

**Text:**

None.

**Additional Reading(s):**


**Recommended Reading**


**Lab:**

Continue analysis of GSS split-ballot experiment. Add some version of education and one criterion.

**Paper 2:**

Write up analysis of split ballot experiment: Issues identified, hypotheses, results, recommendations

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**Week 10 - Measurement**

**Text:**

BCB Chapter 10 – Questionnaire Development III: Pretesting

Methodology Appendix 3 – Cognitive Interviewing Workshop

**Additional Reading(s):**


**Lab:**

Bring used copies of Quex A and Quex B from WK01.

Use the CCS to identify problems in the questions in the instrument.

Develop cognitive interviewing probes.

Training in cognitive interviewing.

Conduct 2 cognitive interviews. (One with a student in the class, one with someone else.)

**Weekly Assignment:**

Begin drafting report about testing and revising instrument. Hand in draft that includes a draft of the section about cognitive interviews with the instrument.

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**Week 11 - Measurement**

**Text:**

Methodology Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Evaluation Workshop

**Additional Reading(s):**


**Lab:**

Revise some of standardized questions in Text, Methodology Appendix 2

Revise the items on which cognitive interviews were conducted in Week 10.

Conduct additional cognitive testing on students in lab.

**Paper 3:**

Complete report about issues identified, cognitive testing, and revising the instrument.
Week 12 – Data Collection - Survey Design – One class this week! No lab! Thanksgiving!

Text: None


Lab: No lab this week. Thanksgiving weekend.
Weekly Assignment: Review and analyze packet of survey materials - advance letter, etc.

Week 13 – Data Collection - Interviewers and Interviewing

Text: BCB Chapter 11 – Data Collection II: Controlling Error in Data Collection


Lab: Interaction coding of standardized interviews
Weekly Assignment: Report about interaction coding

Week 14 – Post-survey Processing and Reporting

Text: BCB Chapter 12 - Postsurvey Statistical Adjustments and the Methodology Report


Watch videos for AAPOR Transparency Initiative. Review TI requirements:

Lab: Using the AAPOR RR Calculator
Work on final paper

Weekly Assignment: Calculating response rates
Analyze compliance of sample methodology report

Week 15 – Survey Documentation and Reporting – Only one class this week! No lab.

Text: None

Additional Reading(s): AAPOR Report: Evaluating Survey Quality, 2016:


Lab: No lab.

Paper 4 Revise and expand paper 2. Details TBA. Revised paper due Friday December 15.

Other Announcements Last class is Tuesday of this week. No lab this week. Office hours TBA.

Departmental Notices

Department learning outcomes. Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content, I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to provide students opportunities to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- Conduct Research and Analyze Data (quantitative or qualitative). Although professional-quality research requires graduate-level training, we expect that all undergraduate majors will be able to conduct small-scale research in which they formulate a research question, collect data, analyze results, and draw conclusions.
- Critically Evaluate Published Research. Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
- Communicate Skillfully: Sociology majors write Papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.
- Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market: Students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for employment or further study, assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their
qualifications. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications and to learn how to present their accomplishments. Students will understand, recognize, and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.

- **Work effectively in groups**: Students will improve their skills in understanding group dynamics and working well with people from different backgrounds with different strengths and weaknesses.
- **Improve project management skills**: Students will improve their skills in time management, ordering and executing a series of complex and inter-related tasks, and integrating distinct components of a project into a final product.

**Accommodations.** Please send the instructor an email **by the end of the second week of the course** if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: [http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/). Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s [web page](https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698) for details.

**Sexual harassment and misconduct.** Professional conduct and appropriate behavior are critical to create a safe learning environment for students and instructors alike. Here is a statement about sexual harassment from the University:

**What is Sexual Harassment?**
Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, academic progress, or participation in a university program; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct influences employment, academic or university program decisions; or
- the conduct interferes with an employee's work or a student's academic career, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, learning, or program environment.

**Tangible Action or Quid Pro Quo (This for That) Sexual Harassment and Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment** are both illegal and unacceptable.

One practical implication is that instructors (faculty or graduate students) may not date students to whom they will be assigning grades. If you believe that you have been harassed, contact the chair of the Department of Sociology ([socchair@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:socchair@ssc.wisc.edu)), The Title IX office ([TitleIX_Coordinator@wisc.edu](mailto:TitleIX_Coordinator@wisc.edu)), or see this link for confidential sources ([https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/campus-procedures/reporting/complainant/](https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/campus-procedures/reporting/complainant/)).

**Academic honesty.** As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the [Office of the Dean of Students](http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/) at [http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/](http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/)
According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website.

My tolerance for plagiarism or other academic misconduct is very low. If you plagiarize or engage in other misconduct in this course, you will probably be required to discuss the matter with the Dean of Students. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor.

**Feedback.** I am interested in hearing your reactions to the course, and your suggestions for improvement. At one point during the semester we may have an informal evaluation at which time you are able to write comments or make suggestions anonymously. In addition, please feel free to e-mail comments or suggestions to schaeffe@ssc.wisc.edu or make an appointment to see me.

**Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights.** The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu).