Soc 752: Measurement and Questionnaires for Survey Research
(Questionnaire Design)
Revised 1 September 2014

N.C. Schaeffer
Fall 2014/2015
4462 Social Sciences (UWSC: 4304B Sterling) W 8:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m.
262-2182 (UWSC: 262-9051) 6240 Social Sciences
Office hours: Most Wednesdays 11 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and by appointment schaeffe@ssc.wisc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides an introduction to the conceptual issues raised by conducting measurement using self-reports in surveys, an overview of the literature that addresses theoretical and practical problems in questionnaire design, and practice in developing, reviewing, and writing standardized questions and questionnaires. Particular attention is paid to recent work that draws on cognitive psychology to inform designing standardized instruments. The course is structured around the stages of instrument development: developmental interviewing, question writing, question testing, pretesting, and questionnaire formatting. Issues involved in telephone interviews and computer-assisted interviews are included, but the assignments use face-to-face interviews with paper instruments. The material covered in this course is relevant for standardized measurement in many social research contexts in addition to surveys, such as laboratory experiments.

This course is pre-statistical in the sense that it considers issues that are dealt with before statistical analysis of data begins and in the sense that course assignments require no statistical analysis. The course provides conceptual and practical tools to use in planning and executing your own research. You do need to be able to read and interpret research that includes statistical analysis.

Lectures assume that you have completed the assigned readings before the lecture, and lectures do not systematically summarize the readings. The schedule of readings given here is fixed, regardless of how much the lectures appear to deviate from the schedule.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS: Course grades are based on a series of assignments. The assignments provide an opportunity to work on a single problem through most stages of questionnaire design. For the final project, you revise the assignments and prepare a final, complete, instrument. The reports required with the assignments must be written in a professional style. All instrument (questionnaire) drafts must also be typed, except that some complex grids may be printed neatly if your word processing skills so require; check with me first if you wish to do this.

Eight Graded Assignments. You select a topic. The assignments lead you through the steps of developing a complete, though limited, instrument on that topic. In addition, there is an assignment in which you construct a roster and one in which you design a split ballot experiment. I hand out the instructions for all the assignments during the first week of class. Each instrument assignment requires drafting a small portion of an instrument, testing it in two interviews, revising it, and writing a brief report. In the last assignment you put the pieces of the questionnaire together into a complete instrument, pretest it, write a final report, and present a final proposal for a split ballot experiment. You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

Criteria for Evaluation. In evaluating class assignments I consider how well the work applies relevant concepts and findings presented in lectures and readings. The reports should explicitly refer to relevant results from the readings and show that you have read and understand the material; I consider how well you deploy the readings when I grade the reports. In grading the instruments, I also consider the practicality, comprehensiveness, and creativity of the solution to the problem presented in the assignments. For the final report, I expect you to refer to research beyond that on the course syllabus. Finally, I take into account how well you present your solution--whether the
presentation is organized, well written, clear, and professional.

Class Participation. For some classes I will identify several articles to prepare for class discussion. Come prepared to be called on if the discussion grows quiet! When these assignments are made, they are required but not formally graded. If your grade for the class as a whole is "borderline," I take contributions to class discussion into account in assigning the final grade.

Grading. I deduct a letter grade for each day an assignment is late. Assignments 1, 2, R, and 6 each contribute 10% to your grade. Assignments 3, 4, 5, and the final assignment each contribute 15% to your grade.

No incompletes. All assignments must be completed on time.

Auditors. Auditors may sit in by arrangement with the instructor. Please formally register for this class as an auditor if possible

Human Subjects. This course involves exercises in which you develop a standardized instrument. As part of those exercises, you try out your instrument in approximately 2 interviews in each of several assignments. You must realize several things:

- You may conduct these interviews as part of the course without obtaining a separate approval for your research project from the IRB, as long as you do not disseminate the results of that research. If you plan to do so, as you might if your research is for your dissertation, you must notify me and, under the direction of the faculty advisor for your research, obtain IRB approval before beginning the interviews. See both the IRB central information from the Graduate School http://www.grad.wisc.edu/research/hrpp/ and the link about student research: https://kb.wisc.edu/gsadminkb/page.php?id=29168

Regardless of whether you are conducting these interviews only as part of this course or to obtain knowledge that you will disseminate, you must complete the training at: https://my.gradsch.wisc.edu/citi/index.php

Send me an email confirming that you have completed this tutorial by 20 September. The subject line must read: "soc752 - Confirming CITI Training."

- You must obtain informed consent (see below) from everyone you interview and protect their anonymity. No information that would identify the person you interviewed should be attached to their answers.

Sensitive Data. Read about policies and procedures for handling sensitive data:

http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/sscc/resources/sensitive_data.htm

Informed Consent. The following is an excerpt from the University’s Human Subjects website (https://kb.wisc.edu/gradsch/page.php?id=29762)

Eight Elements of Consent

UW-Madison IRBs require that the following basic elements of informed consent be provided to each participant unless the IRB has approved an alteration of the basic elements, as described in Section IV.E of this policy:
1. A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject’s participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures which are experimental;
2. A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject;
3. A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research;
4. A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject;
5. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained;
6. For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained;
7. An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects’ rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject; and
8. A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

The IRB may also require, in appropriate cases, one or more of the following additional elements of informed consent:

a. a statement that the particular treatment or procedure may involve risks to the participant (or to the embryo or fetus, if the participant is or becomes pregnant) that are currently unforeseeable (e.g., when the research involves procedures that have limited experience in humans and in all research protocols that involve an investigational drug or device).
b. the anticipated circumstances under which the participant’s participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the participant’s consent (e.g., when the protocol describes situations where participants should be withdrawn from the research or if it is reasonable to expect that participants will be withdrawn from the research without their consent).
c. any additional costs to the participant that may result from participation.
d. the consequences of a participant’s decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the participant (e.g., when withdrawal from the research might place a participant at risk of harm).
e. a statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research that may relate to the participant’s willingness to continue participation will be provided to the participant.
f. the approximate number of participants involved in the study (e.g., when a reasonable person would find the information useful in making a decision to participate in the research).

**Appropriate Language**
The consent form or script should be worded so that potential participants can readily understand it. A general recommendation is to use an eighth-grade reading level for the writing style, but investigators should adjust the language to an appropriate level for the particular participant population.

**Obtaining Signatures and Retaining Records**
Signatures on the consent forms should be placed immediately below the text of the form. Each participant must be given a complete copy of the consent form. Investigators must also
keep a copy of the signed consent form. UW-Madison's policy requires investigators to keep
signed consent forms on file for seven years following the completion of the research.

Image and Audio Recording of Participants

It is the policy of UW-Madison's IRBs that if the research involves the use of image or audio
recording of participants, the consent form should clearly state that fact. In addition, there
should be a statement about how the recordings will be used and how long they will be kept.
This statement should include who will see/hear the recording and where the recording will
be used (e.g., in a classroom, professional meeting).

For SBS IRB and ED IRB protocols, if the investigator wants permission for the recording to be
viewed or heard by anyone other than the research staff, or, if it involves sensitive material,
participants should also be given an opportunity to view, or listen to, the recording after it is
completed. Permission for the tape to be used should then be obtained. See, Protecting
Privacy and Confidential Data Policy.

Anonymity

Participants should not be promised anonymity unless the research data is truly anonymous.
Anonymity cannot be guaranteed unless there is no method by which the investigator can
connect the research results with individual participants providing the data. If there are
codes or a master list that would enable the investigator to identify participants, the
research is not anonymous, even though the participant names do not appear in the research
data.

READINGS: Readings average 80-100 pages each week.

Required readings. I ordered a few books at University Book Store. Some of the books are also on
reserve in the Social Science Reading Room (SSRR) on the 8th floor of Social Science building. These
are expensive books. Buy only what you.

Required book selections and articles. Articles and chapters from books that I did not order at the
bookstore are marked * in the course outline. These will be on electronic reserve. Sometimes copies
of overheads will be given out in class; sometimes they will be available in the copy center or on
electronic reserve.

NOTE: All articles and overheads on reserve in the SSRR are my personal copies. Please do not
write on them. As a courtesy to your colleagues, if you need to keep an article for more than 1
day, please make a copy of it. The Social Science Reading Room is on the 8th floor of the Social
Science building. Take rear elevators on the lake side of the glass doors.

Required Books
(Ordered at Bookstore)

Cambridge. ISBN: 0521576296


Recommended
(Not Ordered at Bookstore)

Aday, Lu A. and Llewellyn J. Cornelius. 2006. Designing and Conducting Health Surveys: A


Additional Sources

The following additional sources may be useful.


Topics and Readings

The course outline lists required readings. Readings marked * are on electronic reserve. I use the following abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Journal Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASR</td>
<td>American Sociological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOS</td>
<td>Journal of Official Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMR</td>
<td>Journal of Marketing Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>Sociological Methods and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASA</td>
<td>Journal of the American Statistical Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POQ</td>
<td>Public Opinion Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Sociological Methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weeks 1-2 -- Course Introduction and Measurement in Surveys


Weeks 3-4 - Question Development

The Response Process


Developmental Interviewing


"Spradley, James F. 1979. Steps 4-8, in *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and
Weeks 5-8 -- Survey Questions: Overview


Weeks 5-8 (continued) -- Questions about Events and Behaviors

Questions about Events and Behaviors: Cognition and Memory


Questions about Events and Behaviors: Errors


**Questions about Events and Behaviors: Threatening Questions**


**Questions about Events and Behaviors: Voting**


**Questions about Events and Behaviors: Writing Other Questions**


**Writing Questions**


**Design and Format of an Instrument**


**Social Characteristics: Household Composition**


**Weeks 9-12- Questions about Subjective Things**

**Overview**


**Cognitive Processes**


**Questions about Subjective Things: Choices and Ratings**


Questions about Subjective Things: Agree/Disagree


Week 13 -- Questions about Subjective Things (continued) and Questions about Other Topics

Social Characteristics: Race and Ethnicity


Social Characteristics: Income


Social Characteristics: Other


**Week 14 -- Cognitive Interviewing and Question Testing**


**Week 15 -- Interviewing and Mode of Interview**


**Week 15 -- Ethical Issues**


UW - Guidelines for Human Subjects Research in the Social and Behavioral Sciences [Consult this document on the web: [https://kb.wisc.edu/sbsedirbs/](https://kb.wisc.edu/sbsedirbs/)]