

PP5379

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF SURVEY RESEARCH I

Online, Fall Term: 8/28/2017-12/17/2017

Professor:	Thomas Craemer
E-mail:	thomas.craemer@uconn.edu
Online Office Hours:	By appointment
Credits	3
Prerequisites	Admission to the Graduate Program in Survey Research or MPA Programs or permission of the instructor.
Availability	I will check email and the course website daily during the week and at least once on the weekend. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 48 hours.

Software Requirements

- Word processing software
- Microsoft excel
- SPSS
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- Internet access

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, **HuskyCT** (<http://huskyct.uconn.edu/>). Ensure your Internet browser and browser settings are HuskyCT compatible by viewing the **settings information** at <http://lrc.uconn.edu/ct/browserhelp.html>. If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, call the **Digital Learning Center** (DLC) at (860) 486-1187, or visit its online help (including instant chat) at <http://dlc.uconn.edu/>.

All software can be accessed via UConn's **virtual computer center** <http://vpc.uconn.edu/>.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

Course Overview

This course is a core course in the Graduate Program in Survey research (GPSR). The course provides a comprehensive review of the major issues associated with survey research methods,

and prepares students in the fundamental skill areas necessary to design and conduct survey research projects. These areas include survey research design, questionnaire construction, and scientific sampling. We will discuss how to design survey questionnaires and pay special attention to the psychological and social processes that may influence the survey response in unanticipated ways. This will enable the student to assess and minimize the risk of eliciting response effects that might lead to biased results. Further, we will discuss how different methods of sampling may influence the accuracy and quality of survey data.

Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will:

- Develop, evaluate, and ask survey questions
- Know threats to survey question reliability and validity
- Design self-administered and interviewer administered surveys
- Become familiar with strategies to decrease survey and item nonresponse
- Develop a sampling plan
- Know how to identify and reduce error in survey research

Assignments and Activities

Course assignments will provide students with opportunities to apply the research methods covered in class to practical research scenarios. Assignments will be both individual and group and the format will vary based on the research method being covered.

All assignments will be available through HUSKY CT and must be submitted via HUSKY CT. The course can be accessed directly via:

<http://huskyct.uconn.edu/>

Each student will develop an independent research proposal on a topic of their choice – including a complete questionnaire and sampling design. This process will begin with the explicit statement of a null- and a research hypothesis. The choice of questions will depend on these hypotheses and you will be asked to justify the wording of each question, as well as the format of your response options. The questionnaire will be pretested on a relatively small number of respondents. Based on this pretest the questionnaire will be revised and included in the final version of the research proposal. Depending on your research hypothesis, you will specify the population from which a sample is to be drawn and a method by which your sample would have to be drawn.

In addition to learning activities included in each session, the class will have four written assignments: **Assignment 1:** A statement of null- and research hypotheses with an initial list of questions. You should include theoretical and empirical justifications for your questions and for the response format(s) you use (ca. 4-5 pages in addition to the actual questions). **Assignment 2:** A pretest report that should include a description how many respondents you selected, how you selected them (no scientific sampling required for this pretest!), their open-ended comments about the experience of answering your questions and their responses to your probes. Revise

your questionnaire based on the feedback from your pretest participants (about 4-5 pages in addition to the revised questionnaire). **Assignment 3:** A short paper (3-4 pages) explaining your sampling design: What is the population your research hypotheses refer to? How do you plan to draw a sample from this population? What is your sample size? **Assignment 4:** The final research proposal should contain an introduction with a short literature review, your research hypotheses, and a description of your questionnaire (provide the complete questionnaire in the appendix). Describe how you altered your initial questionnaire based on your pretest, and provide your sampling design. You should also include the results that you would expect. The final proposal should be about 10-15 pages long in addition to the actual revised questionnaire.

In addition to assignments, there will be regular discussions in HuskyCT discussion boards. These discussions will be graded and make up 20% of your final grade.

One of the advantages of taking your course online is that you may be able to engage in online discussions with your instructor and fellow students at times when it is convenient for you. The intention of the course discussions is to encourage lively, informative exchanges about course-related topics that increase your knowledge of those topics--but it's up to you to make this happen.

Post at least one message to each discussion area and make sure to post it early in a given week. Then check back frequently and post responses to your classmates' posts. There is no upper limit to the number of times you can contribute to a discussion, and you will find that a busy discussion is a good one. Each contribution should be well written and interesting to read, with evidence of originality and considerable reflection. It should also demonstrate that you have read the relevant course materials.

Here are some guidelines for participating in an online discussion:

1. Do more than state agreement or disagreement. Justify and support your opinion. The most persuasive opinions are supported by evidence, examples, reasons, and facts. If you disagree with something, say why. If you really like something that you've read, let people know what makes you think that way.
2. Do the appropriate preparation, such as reading and lesson activity work, before you join the discussion.
3. Keep your comments fairly brief. A paragraph or two is plenty unless you are posting something that by nature has to be longer--a short story, for example.
4. Check your message before you send it. Pay attention to your spelling and grammar, and be sure your message makes the points you want to make in a clear and concise way. Remember, other students and instructors can read your messages.
5. Help move the discussion along. When contributing to a discussion, read other people's comments first. Introduce new ideas, but also build on what others have said ("Piggy-back" on other people's ideas).
6. Keep up with the discussion throughout the course. After you have made your contribution on a topic, check back a few times to find out how the discussion is evolving. Does someone's comment make you think twice about your view?

7. Share your experience with your fellow students. You may be able to offer advice to someone who is newer to the course.
8. Respect others' ideas and opinions. Feel free to disagree, but express your disagreement in a respectful manner. Disrespectful communication is poor communication and not acceptable

Often I will monitor a discussion but not participate immediately in an effort to give you and your classmates time to think and respond. I will respond to posts that are addressed to me directly.

Grading of Discussion Boards

Quality participation in all discussions is an important part of this course. Students are expected to participate actively in all discussions (as well as other activities). All students should offer comments, questions and replies to posted discussion questions and to the comments posted by classmates.

Discussion board postings will be evaluated based on the quality and frequency of the postings as well as the extent to which they promote discussion among the class. Each discussion will be evaluated separately. Online discussions will be assessed using the following:

N: Number of Postings	Q: Quality of Postings	T: Timeliness of Postings
All postings are counted even if they provide only minimal or basic response to the discussion question or postings of classmates	Quality postings are counted only. A quality posting fully addresses the discussion question or comment of a classmate and stimulates further discussion	While postings are counted under N and Q even if they fall outside session dates, the timeliness component counts only postings provided within the specified week.

Counts N, Q, and T are ranked, average ranks are computed, and averages curved so that the classmate with the greatest number of postings, highest quality of postings, and most timely postings will receive the highest grade, and the student with the lowest N, Q, and T average rank the lowest grade. This grading scheme is designed to balance quantity and quality of postings.

Final course grades will be based on the following:

Final Course Grade:

Assignment 1: Research Question	10%
Assignment 2: Questionnaire Pretest	10%
Assignment 3: Sampling Plan	10%
Assignment 4: Survey Research Proposal	25%
Quizzes and Activities:	25%
Participation in Discussion Boards:	20%

Required Text and Materials:

- Textbook: Groves, Robert et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd Edition. New York: Wiley
- Practice Material: A 1.69 oz bag of M&Ms (to be used in session 05)

Ground Rules

Professionalism and conduct. This is a graduate-level course that demands that students be carefully prepared. It entails a substantial weekly workload. This course is presented within the context of a professional degree program, and will be conducted according to the standards of the professional workplace. Class members should consider themselves colleagues who will collaborate to help each other develop a solid understanding of course materials and concepts. That said, individual proficiency is a must, and all assignments should represent your own work.

Integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be pursued if such conduct is discovered. ***All work that you submit for credit during this course, including problem sets and exams, must represent your own work and no one else's.*** Students are expected to abide by the University of Connecticut's policies on academic misconduct which are found in Appendix B of the University of Connecticut student code located on the web at <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu>. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to):

- Writing someone else's paper or handing in a paper that someone else wrote
- "Sharing" answers during an exam
- Including the ideas or research of others in a paper, assignment or exam without proving proper documentation

Students With Disabilities. According University of Connecticut policy, the university is committed to achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for persons with disabilities. Assurance of equal educational opportunity rests upon legal foundations established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. By federal law, a person with a disability is any person who: 1. has a physical or mental impairment; 2. has a record of such impairment; or 3. is regarded as having such an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning. All students with disabilities are entitled to a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Reasonable accommodation does not obviate the requirement for a student to meet course performance standards. If you believe you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities website at www.csd.uconn.edu.

Religious observances. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate absences from the course necessary to observe religious beliefs in accordance with the University Senate policy, which states that "students anticipating such a conflict should inform their instructor in writing within the first three weeks of the semester, and prior to the anticipated absence, and should take the initiative to work out with the instructor a schedule for making up missed work."

Logistics and Support

Technical support. Most technical problems result from improper computer settings. For example, you must disable pop-up blocking to have full functionality in HuskyCT. Make sure your computer is properly configured for HuskyCT by clicking on the “Recommended Settings” link at the bottom left of the **HuskyCT** main page (<http://huskyct.uconn.edu/>). If you use different computers, check the settings on each computer you will use to access the course. If you encounter problems you cannot resolve, get help. You may be able to resolve problems using HuskyCT’s built-in help function. In addition, UConn’s **Digital Learning Center** maintains a help desk to assist students with technical issues, and can be reached at (860) 486-1187 or <http://dlc.uconn.edu/> .

Email. I will communicate with you via your UConn email address (usually firstname.lastname@uconn.edu). It is your responsibility to check this email account for messages. If you have a personal email address that you prefer to use, you should forward your UConn email to this address.

Late Policy. Make-up exams will not be given and late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements are made **prior to the due date**. Exceptions will only be made in the cases of illness (I need a doctor’s note) or serious emergency (again, documentation must be provided). If you anticipate a problem meeting a deadline please see me IN ADVANCE.

Course Schedule:

Course sessions will become available on Mondays by 4 pm EST (Except on the week of Labor Day where the sessions will become available on Tue at 4pm). All assignments and session activities are due on Sundays before midnight (i.e., Sun 11:59pm).

Session Start Date (Session #)	COURSE SCHEDULE:	Readings
Mon. 8/28 (0)	Introduction: History and Ethics of Survey Research	Course Syllabus
<i>I. Questionnaire Design</i>		
Tue. 9/5 (1)	Models of the Survey Response	Groves: chapter 1,11
Mon. 9/11 (2)	Question Sequence, Wording, and Response Options (Assignment 1 due from 9/12 to 9/18)	Groves: chapter 7
Mon. 9/18 (3)	Evaluating Survey Questions: Pretesting and Wording Experiments	Groves: chapter 8
Mon. 9/25 (4)	Asking Survey Questions: Interviewer Effects	Groves: chapter 9
<i>II. Sampling Design</i>		
Mon. 10/2 (5)	Survey Modes (Assignment 2 due from 10/3 to 10/9)	Groves: chapter 5
Mon. 10/9 (6)	Simple Random Sampling	Groves: chapter 3
Mon. 10/16 (7)	Other Probability Sampling Designs	Groves: chapter 4
Mon. 10/23 (8)	Non-Probability Sampling Designs	–
<i>III. Minimizing Survey Error</i>		
Mon. 10/30 (9)	The Total Survey Error Approach (Assignment 3 due from 10/31 to 11/6)	Groves: chapter 2
Mon. 11/6 (10)	Sampling Error, Non-Response, and Response Rates	Groves: chapter 6
Mon. 11/13 (11)	Additional Sources of Survey Error	Groves: chapter 12
Mon. 11/20	Thanksgiving Recess (No Class)	
Mon. 11/27 (12)	Overview over the Survey Research Industry Research Proposal due from 11/28- 12/04	
Mon. 12/4 (13)	Survey Research Roundtable	