Questionnaire Design
Surv 630 / Soc 251
Spring, 2005

Time:    Fridays, 1:00 – 3:30 January 14 – May 6

Location:    Peabody Hall, Room 08 at UNC / 1208 Le Frak Hall at UMD

Instructors:    Rachel A. Caspar
                Gordon B. Willis
                Senior Survey Methodologist
                Cognitive Psychologist
                Program for Research in Survey Methodology
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Office Hours:    By appointment

Overview:
This course focuses on the design of questions and questionnaires used in survey research. The course will provide an overview of the theoretical and experimental literature related to question and questionnaire design as well as focusing on practical issues in the design, critique, and interpretation of survey questions that are often not taught in formal courses. Discussion will focus on the measurement of both subjective and objective phenomena. Topics include cognitive guidelines for question construction to ensure respondent comprehension, techniques for measuring the occurrence of past behaviours and events, the effects of question wording, response formats, and question sequence on responses, an introduction to the psychometric perspectives in multi-item scale design, combining individual questions into a meaningful questionnaire, special guidelines for self-completion surveys versus interview surveys, strategies for obtaining sensitive or personal information, issues associated with translating survey questions, and an introduction to techniques for testing survey questions.

The expectation is that assigned readings are completed prior to attending the class for which the materials are assigned.

Evaluation:
Grading for the course will be based on five homework exercises and a final exam. The exercises will focus on solving practical problems related to questionnaire design and will account for 60% of the total (each exercise will be worth 12 points). The final exam will assess participants’ mastery and critical appraisal of the required readings (textbooks and articles in coursepack) and will account for the remaining 40 percent of the grade.

Prerequisite:
An introductory course in survey research methods or equivalent experience.
**Required Texts**


5. Articles in the coursepack

**Course Website:**

[http://www.jpsm.umd.edu/spring05surv630](http://www.jpsm.umd.edu/spring05surv630)

Copies of the instructor's powerpoint slides will be available on the course website each week on the Thursday morning before the Friday afternoon class.

**Reading Schedule**

**January 14:** Introduction, Measurement Error, Standardization, and Operationalizing Constructs  
**Instructor:** Caspar teaching from UNC

Fowler, Chapter 1: pages 1 – 7.


**January 21:** Cognitive Processes Related to Answering Questions  
**Instructor:** Willis teaching from UMD  
**Assignment 1 available on the class website**

Willis, Chapters 2 and 3: pages 12 – 41.
Tourangeau, et. al., Chapters 1 and 2 and pages 313 – 323.


**January 28**

and

**February 4:** Writing Factual and Behavioral Questions / Memory Issues

**Instructor:** Caspar (teaching from UNC on 1/28 and from UMD on 2/4)

**Assignment 1** due by 3:30 pm on 2/4

**Assignment 2** available on the class website on 2/4

1/28

Fowler, Chapter 2, pages 8 – 33 only.

Tourangeau, et. al., Chapters 3 – 5, pages 62 – 164 and Chapter 8, pages 230 – 349 only


2/4:


February 11
and
February 18: Constructing Attitude and Other Non-Factual Questions
Instructor: Willis (teaching from UNC on 2/11 and from UMD on 2/18)
Assignment 2 due by 3:30 pm on 2/18
Assignment 3 available on the class website on 2/18

2/11:
Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski (2000), Chapters 6, 7, 239-254


2/18:


February 25: Multi-Item Scales
Instructor: Willis (teaching from UMD)

Devellis (2003), preface, Ch 1-5, 8.


March 4: Sensitive Questions and Special Populations
Instructor: Caspar (teaching from UNC)
Assignment 3 due by 3:30

Fowler, Chapter 3: pages 33 – 44 only

Tourangeau, et. al., Chapter 9: pages 255 – 288.


March 11: Design of Self-Administered Questionnaires
Instructor: Teresa Edwards (teaching from UNC)
Assignment 4 available on the class website


March 18: Spring Break

March 25: Spring Break

April 1: Special Issues When Designing Questionnaires for Computer-Assisted Data Collection
Instructor: Caspar (teaching from UMD)
Assignment 4 due by 3:30

Tourangeau, et. al., Chapter 10: pages 289 – 312.


April 8: Establishment/Business Surveys and Web Surveys  
Instructor: Willis (teaching from UNC)


April 15: Pretesting Methods  
Instructor: Willis (teaching from UMD)  
Assignment 5 available on the class website


April 22: Pretesting Methods (continued) and Translation Issues  
Instructor: Caspar (teaching from UNC)


Carrasco, L. (2003), Collecting Quality Census Data from Linguistic Minorities, paper presented at the Meetings of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, VA.

April 29: Putting it all together  
Instructors: Caspar (UNC) and Willis (UMD)  
Assignment 5 due by 3:30  
Final Exam available on the class website at 5:00

No assigned readings.

May 6: FINAL EXAM DUE