

Sociology 077.739 L01

Survey Research Methods

Department of Sociology
University of Manitoba
Fall 2003
3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Dr. Lori Wilkinson
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Class time: Wednesday 9:00 to noon
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Office hours: Wednesdays 12:00-1:00, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology 077.739 is a graduate level course providing a general overview of survey research (data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation). It is also intended to introduce graduate students to the beginning and completion of a major survey research project. The course includes lectures, projects, and student presentations. A public opinion survey measuring the attitudes of Winnipeggers on various items will be used as the guiding example throughout the course and as the basis of the major term assignment.

The goals of this course include:

- Becoming familiar with the range of quantitative methodologies used in the social sciences
- Exploring the value of mixing research methodologies, including qualitative and interpretive methodologies
- Achieving a reasonable degree of expertise in the area of survey research techniques, including sampling strategies, data collection methods, and questionnaire design
- Analysis of quantitative data using the statistical software SPSS
- Understanding quantitative data obtained from surveys
- Improving presentation skills (orally and in papers)

PREREQUISITES

Credit for undergraduate courses in both social science research methods *and* social statistics is required. For Sociology majors, completion of 077.448 is also required. Students who are unsure of their prerequisites should consult the instructor prior to the beginning of the course.

There is a lab component to this course. If you are unfamiliar with SPSS, you are required to attend 2-3 two-hour labs with a qualified instructor. The labs have been designed to assist you in the preparation of your final research paper. Lab date and times to be determined at the beginning of the class (based on availability of lab coordinator).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

Required Textbooks

Fowler, Floyd (1993) *Survey Research Methods*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fowler, Floyd (1995) *Improving Survey Questions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kirkpatrick, Lee A. and Brooke C. Feeney (2003) *A Simple Guide to SPSS for Windows for Versions 8.0, 9.0, 10.0, and 11.0*. Fifth Edition. Thomson/Wadsworth.

Optional textbook, available for purchase (and highly recommended)

Miles, Jeremy and Mark Shevlin (2001) *Applying Regression and Correlation: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. London: Sage Publications.

Additional course readings will be placed on reserve in the main library. Students are also advised to be familiar with some useful introductory research methods texts. Some of my favourites include:

W. Lawrence Neuman (1995) *Social Research Methods*; Ted Palys (1997) *Research Decisions*; C.M. Judd and E.R. Smith (1992) *Research Methods in Social Relations*; Earl Babbie (1998) *The Practice of Social Research*; Winston Jackson (1995) *Doing Social Research*; and George Gray and Neil Guppy (1994) *Successful Surveys*.

A schedule of weekly readings in addition to the Fowler texts is listed on page 5. These articles are intended to provide background for the day's discussion and will be a valuable resource for your future research and thesis work.

ASSIGNMENTS

There is no final examination in this seminar. Students are graded on three assignments and a formal class presentation. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade (5% deducted per day for each day late, including weekends). All course requirements must be completed before a final grade is assigned.

PhD students are required to prepare an additional section to the final assignment (a detailed description and critique of the sampling procedures).

Description and Due Dates of Assignments

Questionnaire construction assignment **due: Wednesday October 22**

This assignment involves outlining a survey research question and constructing an appropriate questionnaire. Students may choose their own research topics.

Additional information about this assignment will be provided early in the course.

Class presentation **(dates vary by student)**

Each student is expected to present a 15-minute paper on a course topic. Topics for the presentations will be chosen in class on September 17. Students will make a short presentation and will lead a short discussion about their topic. They will also prepare a paper outline of their presentation, including useful references, to distribute to other seminar participants. Students will be graded on the content and quality of the

- Students with special needs (who require aids, other supports or require extra time to write a test) should introduce themselves to the instructor at the beginning of the term in order to arrange suitable testing arrangements.

The VW date for this class is November 12, 2003.

CLASS PRESENTATION TOPICS

Students will be asked to select their topic for presentation during class on September 17. Class presentations will begin on October 1. Presentations will occur weekly with one presentation per class day until all students have presented their topic. To aid in organization, the suggested topics will be presented in order of selection. For instance, the student selecting “Ethnography” is expected to present on October 1.

Presentation 1: Ethnography

Presentation 2: Case Studies

Presentation 3: Content Analysis

Presentation 4: Narrative Analysis

Presentation 5: Response Sets

Presentation 6: Sensitive Questions

Presentation 7: Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Presentation 8: Focus Groups

Presentation 9: Quantitative Feminist Research

Presentation 10: Evaluation Research

Presentation 11: Action Research

Presentation 12: Replication and Triangulation

Presentation 13: Meta-Analysis

Presentation 14: Quantitative Historical Research

Presentation 15: Challenges in Recruiting Respondents

Presentation 16: Effects of Call-Display and other New Technology on Recruitment

Presentation 17: Obtaining Sensitive Information with FIPPA Legislation

Students are encouraged to suggest their own topics in consultation with the instructor. Some topics may be deleted according to the number of students enrolled in the course.

WEBSITE

Students may find the contents of the website useful. It contains information on Internet sites related to survey research, good sites for data and statistical analysis, and allows students to review the course syllabus and communicate with the instructor via e-mail. The instructor hopes to update the website early in the semester. Details to follow.

The university provides free access to computers in various labs across campus (consult General Calendar for locations). Every student receives a free e-mail account and access to the Internet. Students will not be penalized by not visiting or using the website. However, students may find the website useful for gathering electronic information and for communicating with the instructor or classmates.

COURSE READINGS

Note: *Most* articles can be found in my readings mailbox (under “Wilkinson” in Isbister 320) and are available during regular office hours for sign-out and photocopying (8:30am-4:30pm) weekdays. Other books are on reserve in Dafoe Library. They can be accessed using my name or the name of the course.

September 17: **Planning Surveys**

Blalock, Hubert M. Jr. (1989) “The Real and Unrealized Contributions of Qualitative Sociology” *American Sociological Review* 54: 447-460.

September 24: **Sampling and Sampling Errors**

Sudman, Seymour (1983) “Applied Sampling” pp. 145-194 in Peter S. Rossi, James D. Wright, and Andy B. Anderson, eds. *Handbook of Survey Research*. New York: Academic Press.

Green, Donald, Alan S. Gerber, and Suzanna L. De Boef (1999) "Tracking Opinion over Time: A Method for Reducing Sampling Error" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63(2): 178-192.

October 1-8: **Questionnaire Construction and Design (select 4 readings)**

Couper, Mick P. (1997) “Survey Introductions and Data Quality” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(2): 317-338.

Bradburn, Norman M. (1983) “Response Effects” pp. 289-318 in Peter S. Rossi, James D. Wright, and Andy B. Anderson, eds. *Handbook of Survey Research*. New York: Academic Press.

Schuman, Howard and Stanley Presser (1981) “Question Order and Response Order” in *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments in Question Form, Wording and Context*. New York: Academic Press.

Ibid, “The Assessment of No Opinion”

Ibid, “The Fine Line Between Attitudes and Non-Attitudes”

Bradburn, Norman N., Lance J. Rips, and Steven K. Shevell (1987) “Answering Autobiographical Questions: The Impact of Memory and Interference on Surveys” *Science* 236: 157-161.

Schwartz, Norbert and Seymour Sudman, eds. (1993) *Autobiographical Memory and Validity of Retrospective Reports*. New York: Verlag.

Loftus, Elizabeth F., Mark R. Klinger, Kyle D. Smith and Judith Fiedler (1999) “A Tale of Two Questions: Benefits of Asking more than One Question” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54: 330-345.

Krosnick, Jon A. and Howard Schuman (1988) “Attitude Intensity, Importance and Certainty and Susceptibility to Response Effects” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54(6): 940-952.

Alwin, Duane F. and Jon A. Krosnick (1985) "The Measurement of Values in Surveys: A Comparison of Ratings and Rankings" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49: 535-552.

Renzetti, Claire M. and Raymond M. Lee (1993) *Researching Sensitive Topics*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

Tourangeau, Roger and Tom W. Smith (1996) "Asking Sensitive Questions: The Impact of Data Collection Mode, Question Format, and Question Context" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60(2): 275-304.

October 15-22: **Non-Sampling Errors**

Goyer, John (1987) *The Silent Majority: Non-respondents on Sample Surveys*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Javeline, Debra (1999) "Response Effects in Polite Cultures: A Test of Acquiescence in Kazakhstan" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63(1): 1-28.

Kane, Emily W. and Laura J. Macaulay (1993) "Interviewer Gender and Gender Attitudes" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 57: 1-28.

Martin, Elizabeth (1999) "Who Knows Who Lives Here: Within Household Disagreements as a Source of Survey Coverage Error" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63(2): 220-236.

Pollner, Melvin and Richard E. Adams (1997) "Effect of Spousal Presence on Appraisals of Emotional Support and Household Strain" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(4): 615-626.

Sanchez, Maria Elena (1992) "Effects of Questionnaire Design on Quality of Survey Data" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 56: 206-217.

Fendrich, Michael and Connie M. Vaughn (1994) "Diminished Lifetime Substance Use over Time: An Inquiry into Differential Underreporting" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58: 96-123.

October 29: **Mode of Administration**

Dillman, Don A. (2000) *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Rogers, Theresa F. (1976) "Interviews by Telephone and in Person: Quality of Responses and Field Performance" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1.

Groves, Robert M. (1979) "Actors and Questions in Telephone and Personal Interview Surveys" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43(2).

Link, Michael W. and Robert W. Oldendick (1999) "Call Screening: Is it Really a Problem for Survey Research?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63(4): 577-589.

November 5: **Conducting Interviews and Offering Incentives**

Fowler, Floyd Jr. and Thomas Magnione (1986) *Reducing Interviewer Effects on Health Survey Data*. Boston, University of Massachusetts, Centre for Survey Research.

Singer, Eleanor, John Van Hoewyk and Mary P. Maher (1998) "Does the Payment of Incentives Create Expectation Effects?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62(2): 152-164.

Warriner, Keith, John Goyder, Heidi Gjertsen, Paula Hohner and Kathleen McSturten (1996) "Charities, No; Lotteries, No; Cash, Yes: Main Effects and Interactions in a Canadian Incentives Experiment" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60: 542-562.

November 12-19: **Pre-test and Multivariate Data Analysis**

Oppenheim, A.N. (1992) "Data Processing" pp. 261-290 in *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London: Pinter.

Agresti, Alan and Barbara Finlay (1997) *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

November 26: **The Budget and the Proposal**

Rea, Louis M. and Richard Parker (1992) pp. 13-29 in *Designing and Coordinating Survey Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fink, Arlene (1995) *The Survey Handbook*. Pp. 102-114 Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Additional Resources (on Reserve in Dafoe)

Delbert Miller (1991) *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Margrit Eichler (1988) *Non-sexist Research: A Practical Guide*. Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Schuman, Howard and Stanley Presser (1996) *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Reinharz, Shulamit (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford.

Other methodological journals (not on reserve) may be valuable reference sources for students: *Sociological Methods and Research*, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *American Sociological Review*, *Journal of Official Statistics*, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, and *Sociological Methodology*

WHAT CAN THIS CLASS DO FOR YOU?

This class is intended to introduce students to the basic principles behind conducting a major survey research project. By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- Prepare a journal article
- Conceptualize a research problem
- Link theories and literatures to research topics
- Operationalize independent variables
- Select an appropriate sample
- Design a questionnaire

- Apply appropriate data analysis
- Learn about research sensitive topics and ethical considerations
- Design and implement a survey research project from start to finish

In addition to the knowledge gained in learning to conduct a research project, this class has applications outside the course including:

- Critically evaluate journal articles, books and media reports
- Prepare professional research reports
- Learn to properly conduct interviews
- Training and hiring of interviewers
- Guidance in preparation of budgets and research grants
- Prepare appropriate statistical analyses with survey research data
- Organize and prepare effective professional presentations using Powerpoint

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on "plagiarism and cheating" and "examination personation" found in the *University of Manitoba Graduate Calendar*.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying papers from the Internet
- Plagiarizing from books, journal articles and research reports
- Copying other students' papers
- Having someone else write your paper
- Working with other students in completing assignments
- Paraphrasing an author's ideas without proper referencing

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this course. The instructor uses a variety of methods to check for academic dishonesty and has access to software geared to uncover plagiarism on the Internet. ***The penalties are severe and range from failing the course to expulsion from the university.*** Guidelines for properly referencing your papers and assignments will be distributed in class. If you would like clarification regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please arrange an appointment to see me.