

PPHA 41800
Survey Questionnaire Design
SPRING 2024

Instructor:

Ipek Bilgen, PhD
Email: Bilgen-Ipek@norc.org

Instructor office hours: Wed 3:00-4:00pm (CST) at 1155 60th East Street, 2nd Floor, (NORC at the University of Chicago). Ask NORC front desk office to let me know that you are there looking for the instructor.

Teaching Assistants (TA):

TBD

TA office hours: To be announced by TAs

Time: Wed 4:30 PM - 7:20 PM U.S. Central Standard Time
Room: KELL1022

We'll use CANVAS for class assignments and group communications

Class format

This class will follow Harris School guidance for format. At the time of preparation of the syllabus, the class is planned to be in person.

We ask students to do readings posted for class on Canvas the week before the class meets and come prepared with questions for class. PowerPoint slides will be posted before each class. The first part of the class will be lecture, and the second part hands-on activities (e.g., answer questions, group discussions, invite guest speakers, and provide any clarification on materials or assignments).

Course Description

The questionnaire has played a critical role in gathering data used to assist in making public policy, evaluating social programs, and testing theories about social behavior (among other uses). This course offers a systematic way to construct and evaluate questionnaires. We will learn to think about survey questions from the perspective of the respondent and in terms of cognitive and social tasks that underlie responding. We will examine the impact of questions on data quality and will review past and recent methodological research on questionnaire development. The course will help students to tell the difference between better and worse types of survey questions, find and evaluate existing questions on different topics, and construct and test questionnaires for their own needs.

In general, the purpose is to provide fundamental knowledge on theoretical basis for questionnaire design and to provide opportunities to develop critical thinking related to design. The course intends to cover the basics of major stages of questionnaire design. The assignments and live discussions are intended to offer practical experience.

Prerequisite

No prerequisites. The course is part of the Survey Methods Certificate.

Graduate standing (no undergraduate standing). Students enrolled in this class are expected to have completed at least one course on research methods OR to be familiar with the scientific method applied to social science; that is, students are expected to have a basic understanding of motivation of research, formulation of hypotheses, collection of data, testing of hypotheses, empirical analysis, and dissemination of results, etc. Some background in psychology is helpful, but it is not required.

Course materials

Required book:

- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: the tailored design method (4th ed)*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley & Sons.

Note: the 4th edition has been substantially revised for various chapters. Previous editions won't be useful for this class.

➤ (You may want to purchase an e-copy from Wiley.com or an e-text from Amazon.com)

Optional book:

- Fowler F. J. 2014. *Survey Research Methods* Fifth ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Gideon L., (ed) (2012). *Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences*. New York: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3876-2>.

Miscellaneous readings and PowerPoint slides will be posted on CANVAS, or links will be provided. Required readings are listed at the end of this syllabus. Some readings may change over the course of the quarter at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading

This course relies on continuous work during the quarter (**weekly assignments**). Grading is based on quality of assignments and timeliness of submissions. Quality of assignments mean addressing all aspects asked on a given homework. For example, if there are 3 aspects to be developed and only 2 are addressed, only 2/3 of the points will be granted.

Each of these aspects has assigned points for a total of 385 points (no grading scale based on percentage distribution; it's based on points).

At the end of the quarter, if you are the upper end of any range, you **will not** automatically go up to the next range; for example, if you earned 365 points in the quarter, you wouldn't go automatically to 366. I encourage you to make sure to work so you are well within the range where you would like to be. **There is neither a mid-term nor a final exam in this course, but a series of homework and a final assignment.**

Grading points for this class

Grade letter	Range	
	Min	Max
A	366	385
A-	345	365
B+	332	344
B	319	331
B-	305	318
C+	291	304
C	277	290
C-	265	276
F	<265	

Notes

- This syllabus might be modified during the course at the discretion of the instructors.
- Any student who may need special accommodation should contact Student Disability Services or alert the instructor to make any necessary arrangements.
- The University's policies regarding students with disabilities are available [here](#). Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Currently registered students are asked to reach out to Marley Mandelaro — Assistant Director of Academic Advising & Academic Services (mbmandelaro@uchicago.edu) for more information by the end of the first week of the quarter.
- The University's policies on diversity and inclusion are available [here](#). The Harris School's commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available [here](#).
- I welcome any comments you may have throughout the course, and I would like to hear about any difficulties you experience. The sooner I hear from you, the sooner I can resolve these difficulties.
- Always feel free to speak to me directly or send an email to coordinate a conversation.
- There is a late-submission policy on assignments. Three points will be deducted per each hour past.
- **NO ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL BE TOLERATED.**
- The Harris School's student policies are available on the [policies page of our website](#).
 - The Academic Honesty and Plagiarism section expresses the main principles.

Weekly Topics and Assignments (subject to change)

Week of	Class topic	Homework Number & Description	Points	Cumulative points
(1) March 20	Introduction to class and initial discussion. Survey Research Background/ Best Practices & Ethics	Class: Wed 3/20, 4.30pm CT HW#1: Your background & Ethics questions. HW#1 Due: Saturday 3/25, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW1: 40 pts	--
(2) March 27	Fun 101: Research Plan	Class: Wed 3/27, 4.30pm CT HW#2: Proposed research (or topic of choice) HW#2 Due: Saturday 4/1, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW2: 40 pts	80 pts
(3) April 3	Total Survey Error	Class: Wed 4/3, 4.30pm CT HW#3: Selection of 20 survey questions on assigned topic (or topic of choice) HW#3 Due: Saturday 4/8, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW3: 40 pts	120 pts
(4) April 10	Writing Questions	Class: Wed 4/10, 4.30pm CT HW#4: Draft 1 of proposed questionnaire HW#4 Due: Saturday 4/15, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW4: 60 pts	180 pts
(5) April 17	Visual principles	Class: Wed 4/17, 4.30pm CT HW#5: Draft 2 of proposed questionnaire HW#5 Due: Saturday 4/22, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW5: 65 pts	245 pts
(6) April 24	Measuring Attitudes & Measurement Effects	Class: Wed 4/24, 4.30pm CT HW#6: Feedback to assigned peers on HW5. HW#6 Due: Saturday 4/29, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW6: 60 pts	305 pts
(7) May 1	Cognitive Testing & Evaluation Methods	Class: Wed 5/1, 4.30pm CT HW#7: Cognitive testing protocol and report. HW#7 Due: Saturday 5/6, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW7: 40 pts	345 pts
(8) May 8	Cognitive Testing & Evaluation Methods	Class: Wed 5/8, 4.30pm CT HW#8: Final questionnaire HW#8 Due: Saturday 5/13, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW8: 40 pts	<u>385 pts</u>
(9) May 15	Practical considerations in surveys	Class: Wed 5/15, 4.30pm CT (AAPOR week) HW#9: TBD - Maybe provided for extra points.		
(10) May 22	No Class (Reading Period)	Class: Wed 5/22, 4.30pm CT (NO CLASS)	--	

Class Readings

Week 1 (March 20) Introduction to class and initial discussion, Survey Research Background, Best Practices & Survey Research Ethics

- No “official” readings prior to class

Optional:

- Oldendick, R. W. (2012). *Chapter 3: Survey research ethics*. In *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences* (pp. 23-35). Springer New York.
- American Association for Public Opinion Research Code of Ethics https://aapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AAPOR-2020-Code_FINAL_APPROVED.pdf

Week 2 (March 27) Fun 101: Research Plan & Conceptualizing Survey Questions

- Chapter 4 (Dillman): The fundamentals of writing questions
- Bautista, R., Bilgen, I., & Truesdale, D. (2019). Design and Evaluation of Survey Questions. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J.W. Sakshaug, & R.A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*. <https://methods-sagepub-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/foundations/design-and-evaluation-of-survey-questions>
 - Read the following sections:
 - *Introduction*
 - *Basic Survey Questionnaire Elements*
 - *Conceptualizing Survey Questions*

Optional:

- *Chapter 1 (Dillman): Sample surveys in our electronic world*
- *Chapter 2 (Dillman): Reducing people’s reluctance to respond to surveys*
- *Wright & Marsden (2010), Chap 1: Survey Research and Social Science: History, Current Practice, and future proposes. In Marsden & Wright (2010) Handbook of Survey Research, 2nd edition, pp. 3-25*

Week 3 (April 3) Total Survey Error

- Robert M. Groves, Lars Lyberg, Total Survey Error: Past, Present, and Future, Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 74, Issue 5, 2010, Pages 849–879, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfq065>
- Optional (but strongly recommended): 3A: Drawing Inferences from Public Opinion Surveys: Insights for Intelligence Reports, page 51; The National Academies Press <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26390/measurement-and-analysis-of-public-opinion-an-analytic-framework> (Free download available)

Optional:

- Tourangeau, R. (2017). *Mixing Modes. Tradeoffs Among Coverage, Nonresponse, and Measurement Error*. In P. Biemer, E. de Leeuw, S. Eckman, B. Edwards, F. Kreuter, L. E. Lyberg, N. C. Tucker, & B. T. West (Eds.), *Total Survey Error in Practice* (pp. 115-132). New York: Wiley.

Week 4 (April 10) Writing Survey Questions

- Chapter 5 (Dillman): How to write open- and closed-ended questions
- Floyd J. Fowler, J., & Cosenza, C. (2008). Chapter 8: Writing Effective Questions. In E. D. Leeuw, J. J. Hox & D. A. Dillman (Eds.), *International handbook of survey methodology*. New York: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Optional:

- Gideon, L. (2012). *The art of question phrasing*. In L. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences*. New York, NY: Springer., pp. 91-107
- Malhotra Neil, Krosnick J. & Randall K. T., *Optimal Design of Branching Questions to Measure Bipolar Constructs* (2009), *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73(2), pp. 304-324

Week 5 (April 17) Visual Principles for Questionnaire Design

- Chapter 6 (Dillman): Aural vs Visual design of questions and questionnaires
- Krosnick, J. A., & Presser, S. (2010). *Question and Questionnaire Design*. In P. V. Marsden (Ed.), *Handbook of survey research* (2nd ed.). Bingley, UK: Emerald. pp. 263-313

Optional:

- Yan, T., & Kusch, F. (2015). *The Effects of the Direction of Rating Scales on Survey Responses in a Telephone Survey*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 79(1), 145-165.

Week 6 (April 24) Measuring Attitudes & Measurement effects

- Bautista, R., Bilgen, I., & Bulgar-Medina, J. (2019). Measuring Attitudes. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J.W. Sakshaug, & R.A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*. doi: 10.4135/9781526421036880908
<https://methods-sagepub-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/foundations/measuring-attitudes>
- Chapter 7 (Dillman): Ordering questions and testing for question order effects

Optional:

- Presser, S. et al (2004). *Methods for testing and evaluating survey questions*. In S. Presser, J. R. Rothgeb, M. P. Couper, J. T. Lessler, E. Martin, J. Martin & E. Singer (Eds.), *Methods for testing and evaluating survey questionnaires*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Interscience.
- Goerman & Caspar (2010), *Managing the Cognitive Pretesting of Multilingual Survey Instruments: A Case Study of Pretesting of the U.S. Census Bureau Bilingual Spanish/English Questionnaire*. In Harkness et al, *Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts*, Wiley.
- Rothgeb, J., Willis, G., & Forsyth, B. (2007). *Questionnaire pretesting methods: do different techniques and different organizations produce similar results?* *Bulletin of sociological methodology*, 96(1), 5-31.
- Yan, T., Kreuter, F., & Tourangeau, R. (2012). *Evaluating survey questions: A comparison of methods*. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 28(4), 503-529.

Week 7 (May 1) Cognitive testing and Evaluation Methods

- Willis, G. (1999), *Cognitive interviewing: A “How to” Guide*, pp.1-34
- Chapter 1 & 3, Geisen, E., & Bergstrom, J. R. (2017). *Usability testing for survey research*. Morgan Kaufmann.

Optional:

- Hofmeyer, A., Sheingold, B. H., & Taylor, R. (2015). Do You Understand What I Mean? How Cognitive Interviewing Can Strengthen Valid, Reliable Study Instruments and Dissemination Products. *Journal of International Education Research*, 11(4), 261-268.

Week 8 (May 8) Cognitive testing and Evaluation Methods, Continued.

- Chapter 8-11 (Dillman)

Week 9 (May 15) Practical considerations in surveys

Optional (but strongly encouraged):

Applications of an Analytic Framework on Using Public Opinion Data for Solving Intelligence Problems: Proceedings of a Workshop (2022); Free download available:

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26548/applications-of-an-analytic-framework-on-using-public-opinion-data-for-solving-intelligence-problems>

Other suggested sources (good references for your professional life):

- <https://academic.oup.com/jssam>
- <https://academic.oup.com/poq>
- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-001-x/index-eng.htm>
- <https://ojs.ub.uni-konstanz.de/srm/>
- <https://sciendo.com/journal/JOS>

General Resources Available to Students

- [Harris Academic Support Programs and Handbook](#)
- [Student Wellness](#)
- [University Learning Resources](#)

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

- [Harris School Policies](#)
- [University General Policies](#)
- [University Academic Policies](#)
- Policies on audio and video [recordings](#) and [deletion](#).