

PPHA 41800

Survey Questionnaire Design SPRING 2015

Location: TBD

Days/Times: Friday 12:30 PM -3:30 PM

Enrollment limit 25 students

Instructor:

Rene Bautista

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Office hours: Friday 10:00 to 11:00 am (NORC Room TBD)

Course email: quexdesign@norc.org

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.

Prerequisite:

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 scientific methods in the social sciences. Some background in psychology is helpful, but it is not required.

Class format:

Most classes will be a combination of lecture, presentations, discussion, and assignments using a seminar-style format. The purpose is to provide fundamental knowledge on theoretical basis for questionnaire design, but at the same time, 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 exercises are intended to offer practical experience by criticizing and developing a questionnaire on a topic of the student's choice. Weekly attendance is required.

Grading:

Grading is based on quality of the weekly student presentations and assignments. Each of these aspects has assigned points for a total of 400 points. Weekly personal presentations on theoretical principles will contribute 50 points and practical assignments will contribute 350 points. There is neither mid-term nor no final exam. Grading relies on continuous work during the quarter.

Week/ Date of class	(1) 5-10 min (max) weekly student presentations on supplementary readings	(2) Assignments due	Total points
W1/ April 3	--	Introductory lecture. No assignment due. (Attendance--10 points)	10 points
W2/ April 10		#1 Brief proposal for your survey research: Select topic & social constructs (45 points)	45 points
W3/ April 17	Optional Student Presentations* (10 points extra points)	#2 Evaluation of existing survey questions: Wording & Response Options (45 points)	45 points
W4/ April 24	Optional Student Presentations* (10 points extra points)	#3 Draft of your own questionnaire with 10 or more factual questions & 10 or more subjective questions (unformatted version) (60 points)	60 points
W5/ May 1	Optional Student Presentations* (10 points extra points)	#4 Evaluation of existing questionnaire: Mode & Format (45 points)	45 points
W6/ May 8	Optional Student Presentations* (10 points extra points)	#5 Formatted questionnaire with factual & subjective questions (60 points)	60 points
W7/ May 15	Invited Lecturer (Instructor out of town attending AAPOR Conference)		
	--	This week students will be conducting two 20-min <i>Cognitive Interviews</i> : Students will work in pairs during class time	
		This week students will be conducting <i>Expert Review</i> of formatted questionnaire: Anonymous Peer revision	
W8/ May 22	--	#6 Cognitive Interviewing report (35 points)	45 points
		#7 <i>Expert Reviewing Report</i> (10 points)	
W9/ May 29	--	#8(1 of 2) In-class presentation of <u>graduating students</u> (All students required to attend)	
W10/ June 5	--	#8(2 of 2) In-class presentation of students not graduating (All students required to attend)	75 points
W11/ June 12	--	No lecture. Convocation week.	
Total	*Max 10 extra points		385 points

Grading scale

	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	

Assignments:

Each week students are expected to read the assigned readings for the upcoming class (two core readings and one supplementary reading). The success of this course depends on student participation, and students are expected to participate constantly during the course. Also, students are expected to work on weekly assignments toward the development of their own questionnaire.

10 min (max) Optional Student Presentations

I will ask students to volunteer for doing 10 minute (max) PowerPoint presentation in Week 3 through Week 6 on an “optional” reading (worth 10 extra points). The student will highlight or discuss major points from the assigned supplementary reading. Supplementary or “optional” readings are listed in this syllabus. This is a good opportunity to increase your points if you feel you’re falling short. The instructor will determine the pool and order of presenters by taking a “sample” without replacement. This means that those already selected as presenters in a given week won’t be selected again for subsequent weeks (unless there are no new volunteers). The number of presenters per class will depend on the size of the group. If you choose to volunteer, your PowerPoint presentation is due on Thursday by 9:00pm prior to the class (to make sure I receive them by Friday morning and have them ready for class).

Description of Assignments

Students will work on eight assignments (#1 - #8) from Week 2 through Week 10. The intention of these assignments is to help students develop their own questionnaire, which is the “final project.” Each intermediate step toward the completion of final product (i.e., a questionnaire) will be graded. There is no late acceptance of assignments¹. Points will be deducted at the rate of 5 points per every half hour of late submission (due dates below) for assignments.

¹ Late submissions may be accepted only under special circumstances such as medical emergencies or unforeseen events. Special circumstances should be discussed in an individual basis with the instructor. If you anticipate special circumstances which may prevent you from completing assignments or readings, you should discuss those with the instructor beforehand.

Assignments are due Thursday by 9:00pm prior to the class in an electronic format (Word documents are preferred). You must submit your assignments to quexdesign@norc.org. Also, please cc the Teaching Assistant.

#1) Students will prepare a brief survey research proposal on a selected topic; namely, which topic you will be working on (i.e., why is important, what is the key theoretical framework, etc.), what kind of questions you have in mind for your respondents (i.e., demographic information, attitudinal questions, behavioral self-reports, administrative data, etc.) and how do you envision measuring them (i.e., web survey, telephone survey, face to face, tablet, smart phones, etc.). This proposal will be between 3 to 5 pages (max.) double spaced document, excluding references. Text beyond the fifth page won't be read. The topic can be from ongoing research (i.e., your thesis project), or a new topic that you'd like to investigate. I will be available to discuss topics during office hours. I will not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please do not present somebody else's research idea as your own, or use ideas without proper credit. Don't risk getting caught, you may fail the class; I'd rather discuss with you any (*modest but honest*) research idea you may have. I'm sure you all have great ideas!

Due date: April 9 @ 9:00pm.

#2) Students will identify an existing questionnaire used in an actual (past or current) survey. The student will write a brief evaluation of such questionnaire pointing out potential shortcomings. The focus of your criticism will be on the wording and corresponding response options (2 to 3 pages double spaced excluding references). The evaluation and discussion of the survey questions must include theoretical elements and principles learned from the readings, and must cite appropriate references. (Note: This assignment is linked to assignment #4.)

Due date: April 16 @ 9:00pm

#3) Development of a draft questionnaire based on your research proposal (i.e., the idea you presented in assignment #1) with at least 10 factual questions and at least 10 subjective questions. This is not a formatted version of the questionnaire, instead is a draft version where the focus is on wording and response options based on theory learned from the readings and discussions in class (the formatted questionnaire is expected in assignment #5).

Due date: April 23 @ 9:00pm

#4) This assignment is similar to #2 (evaluating an existing questionnaire), but with a focus on mode and formatting issues (instead of phrasing and response options). That is, the student will evaluate an existing questionnaire in terms of formatting. The evaluation and discussion of these issues must include theoretical elements and principles learned from the readings, and must make

explicit references to bibliography (readings) discussed class (2 to 3 pages double spaced excluding references).

Due date: April 30 @ 9:00pm

#5) Students will submit their formatted questionnaire of the questionnaire created in assignment #3. The focus of this assignment is on formatting and mode of data collection based on theory learned from the readings and discussions in class. If you're creating a web-based survey, smart phone-based survey, etc., you'll submit screenshots of your instrument in a Word document.

Due date: May 7 @ 9:00pm

#6) Students will work in pairs during class. Unless you have a *really* good excuse, all students are expected to attend. Each student will be randomly assigned to two classmates (who will serve as respondents) to be able to conduct a 20-min "Cognitive Interview" with each of them. Students will conduct two interviews based on training learned in class. Students will prepare a short report with main findings. Unlike other assignments (#1, #2, #4 and #7), there is no need to include bibliographical references for this report (2 to 3 pages double spaced).

Due date: May 21 @ 9:00pm

#7) Students will provide anonymous peer reviewing ("Expert Review") for a randomly selected classmate. Students will provide feedback on the formatted questionnaire submitted to the instructor as assignment #5. Students will receive an electronic version from the instructor (or TA) of the questionnaire they need to review. Student will submit their comments and feedback on how to improve the instrument to the instructor [The instructor will give the obtained feedback to the author of the questionnaire]. Peer reviewing reports must cite appropriate references to support any comments expressed (3 to 4 pages double spaced excluding references). Think of this assignment as akin to assignments #2 and #4. Additionally, students will grade the questionnaire they reviewed (the instructor of course reserves the right to veto any assigned grade to any student). This assignment is worth 10 points out of 385, which represents a very low percentage final grade (~2.6%), so not much risk here by letting students grade to one another.

Due date: May 21 @ 9:00pm

#8) In-class final presentation describing the different stages (including cognitive testing and expert review) as well as theory and principles used to develop the student's questionnaire. This will be a 12 minute presentation. PowerPoint slides are mandatory, and supporting materials are strongly encouraged. All students are required to attend.

Due date: May 29 @ 9:00pm (Graduating Students)
Due date: June 5 @ 9:00pm (Students Not Graduating)

Course materials:

Required book:

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: the tailored design method (4th ed.)*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley & Sons.

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

Suggested supplementary book

Gideon, L., (ed), (2012) *Handbook of survey methodology for the social science*, Springer

Miscellaneous readings will be posted on CHALK.

Important notes

- This syllabus might be slightly modified during the course at the discretion of the instructor.
- No academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Seriously.
- Any student who may need special accommodation should contact Student Disability Services.
- I welcome any comments you may have on the course, and I would like to hear about any difficulties you experience. The sooner I hear from you, the sooner I can act. Please speak to me directly or send an email.

Assigned readings:

Week 1: Introductory Context and Survey Research Background

- Chapter 2 (Dillman): Reducing people's reluctance to respond to surveys
- Chapter 4 (Dillman): The fundamentals of writing questions

Optional:

- Policy, Media and Surveys, an example: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/wp/2015/02/12/obamas-claim-that-one-in-five-american-women-have-been-raped/>

Week 2: The Total Survey Error approach and Questionnaire Design

- Bautista, R. (2012). *An overlooked approach in survey research: Total survey error*. In L. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences*. New York, NY: Springer., pp. 37-49
- Floyd J. Fowler, J., & Cosenza, C. (2008). Writing Effective Questions. In E. D. d. Leeuw, J. J. Hox & D. A. Dillman (Eds.), *International handbook of survey methodology*. New York: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Optional:

- TBD

Week 3: Writing questions

- 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
- Chapter 5 (Dillman): How to write open- and closed-ended questions
- 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:

- TBD

Week 4: From questions to questionnaire (1/1)

- Chapter 6 (Dillman): Aural vs Visual design of questions and questionnaires
- Albaum, G. and Scott M. Smith, (2012), *Why people agree to participate in surveys?* In L. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences*. New York, NY: Springer, pp. 179-193
- Tourangeau, R., Couper, M. P., & Conrad, F. (2004). Spacing, Position, and Order: Interpretive Heuristics for Visual Features of Survey Questions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68(3), 368-393.

Optional:

- TBD

Week 5: From questions to questionnaire (2/2)

- Chapter 8 (Dillman): Telephone questionnaires and implementation
- Chapter 9 (Dillman): Web questionnaires and implementation
- Chapter 10 (Dillman): Mail questionnaires and implementation

Optional:

- TBD

Week 6: Effects in questionnaires and testing

- Chapter 7 (Dillman): Ordering questions and testing for question order effects
- Presser, S. (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.

Optional:

- Willis, G. (1999), Cognitive interviewing: A “How to” Guide, pp.1-34
<http://fog.its.uiowa.edu/~c07b209/interview.pdf>
- Yan, T., Kreuter, F., & Tourangeau, R. (2012). Evaluating survey questions: A comparison of methods. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 28(4), 503-529.

Week 7: Cognitive and usability testing in practice

No readings (In-class exercise)

Week 8: Survey Implementation

- Chapter 11 (Dillman): Mixed-mode questionnaires and survey implementation
- Oberski, D. (2012). *Comparability of survey measurements*. In L. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences*. New York, NY: Springer., pp. 447-498

Optional:

- TBD

Week 9: In-class presentations for graduating students

[No readings assigned. Attendance is mandatory]

Week 10: In-class presentations students not graduating

[No readings assigned. Attendance is mandatory]

Week 11: No Lecture (convocation week).

[No readings assigned]