

Updated: 3-27-2022
PPHA 41800
Survey Questionnaire Design
SPRING 2022

René Bautista, PhD

Office hours: Wed 1:00-2:00pm (1155 60th East Street, 2nd Floor, Chicago IL 60637).

We'll use CANVAS for class assignments and group communications

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Teaching Assistants:

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Instructor office hours: 1-2pm: 1155 60th East Street, 2nd Floor (NORC at the University of Chicago, Room 271. Please bring an official ID and proof of vaccination to enter NORC facilities. Ask NORC front desk office to let me know you are there looking for me.

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

Room: Keller 1022

Class format

This class will follow Harris School guidance for format. At the time of writing, the class is planned to be in person. (Occasionally we may use Zoom, or video recordings).

Students should not attend if they are experiencing COVID19 symptoms. They will not be penalized so long as they let the instructor know and work on arrangements to comply with readings and assignments. I 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

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:

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

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 will not 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, but a series of homeworks. The final assignment is a survey questionnaire designed by the student.

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 instructor.
- 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 notify the Harris Student Disability Liaison, Eman Alsamara (ealsamara@uchicago.edu) of their access requests 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 act.
- 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. SERIOUSLY.**
- 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.

Calendar of Topics and Homeworks

Week of	Class topic	Homework Number & Description	Points	Cumulative points
(1) March 28	Introduction to class and initial discussion. Survey Research Background/ Best Practices & Ethics	Class: Wed 3/30, 4.30pm CT HW#1: Your background & Ethics questions. HW#1 Due: Sunday April 3, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW1: 40 pts	--
(2) April 4	Fun 101: Research Plan	Class: Wed 4/6, 4.30pm CT HW#2. Proposed research (or topic of choice) HW#2 Due: Sunday April 10, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW2: 40 pts	80 pts
(3) April 11	Total Survey Error	Class: Wed 4/13, 4.30pm CT HW#3. Selection of 20 existing survey questions on assigned topic (or topic of choice) HW#3 Due: Sunday April 17, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW3: 40 pts	120 pts
(4) April 18	Writing Questions	Class: Wed 4/20, 4.30pm CT HW#4. Draft 1 of proposed questionnaire HW#4 Due: Sunday April 25, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW4: 60 pts	180 pts
(5) April 25	Visual principles	Class: Wed 4/27, 4.30pm CT HW#5. Draft 2 of proposed questionnaire HW#5 Due: Sunday May 1, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW5: 65 pts	245 pts
(6) May 2	Measuring Attitudes & Measurement Effects	Class: Wed 5/4, 4.30pm CT HW#6 : Feedback to assigned peers on HW5. HW#6 Due: Sunday May 8, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW6: 60 pts	305 pts
(7) May 9	Cognitive Testing & Evaluation Methods	Class: Wed 5/11, 4.30pm CT (AAPOR week) HW#7: Cognitive testing protocol and report. HW#7 Due: Sunday May 15, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW7: 40 pts	345 pts
(8) May 16	Cognitive Testing & Evaluation Methods	Class: Wed 5/18, 4.30pm CT HW#8: Final questionnaire HW#8 Due: Sunday May 22, 8:00 pm CT (via Canvas).	HW8: 40 pts	<u>385 pts</u>
(9) May 23	Practical considerations in surveys	Class: Wed 5/25, 4.30pm CT HW#9. TBD>These may be extra points.		
(10) May 30	No Class (Week of finals)	Class: Wed 6/1, 4.30pm CT (NO CLASS)	--	

Required Readings

Week 1 (March 28) Introduction to class and initial discussion, Survey Research Background, Best Practices & Survey Research Ethics

- No readings prior to class, but I ask you to read **during** Week 1:
 - Oldendick, R. W. (2012). Chapter 3: Survey research ethics. In *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences* (pp. 23-35). Springer New York.

Optional:

- Singer, E. (2007). Chapter 5: Ethical issues in surveys. *International handbook of survey methodology*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York.
- American Association for Public Opinion Research Code of Ethics <https://www.aapor.org/getattachment/Standards-Ethics/AAPOR-Code-of-Ethics/AAPOR-2020-Code-FINAL-APPROVED.pdf.aspx>
- Singer, E. (2012). The Empirical Study of Ethical Issues in Survey Participation. In S. Salzborn, E. Davidov, & J. Reinecke (Eds.), *Methods, Theories, and Empirical Applications in the Social Sciences* (pp. 67-74). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Week 2 (April 4) Fun 101: Research Plan & Conceptualizing Survey 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>
 - Introduction
 - Basic Survey Questionnaire Elements
 - Conceptualizing Survey Questions
- Chapter 4 (Dillman): The fundamentals of writing 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 11) Total Survey Error

- 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

Week 4 (April 18) 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 25) 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., & Keusch, 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 (May 2) 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 9) 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 16) Cognitive testing and Evaluation Methods, Continued.

TBD

Week 9 (May 23) Practical considerations in surveys

Optional:

- Chapter 8-11 (Dillman)

Other recommended readings (Optional)

- Mercer, A., Caporaso, A., Cantor, D., & Townsend, R. (2015). How much gets you how much? Monetary incentives and response rates in household surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 79(1), 105-129.
- Scherpenzeel, A., & Toepoel, V. (2012). Recruiting a probability sample for an online panel: Effects of contact mode, incentives, and information. *Public opinion quarterly*, 76(3), 470-490.
- Singer, E., & Ye, C. (2013). The use and effects of incentives in surveys. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 645(1), 112-141.

- Toepoel, V. (2012). Effects of incentives in surveys. In *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences* (pp. 209-223). Springer, New York, NY.
- Chapter 12 (Dillman): Responding to societal change and preparing for what lies ahead
- Krosnick, J. A., Presser, S., Fealing, K. H., Ruggles, S., & Vannette, D. (2015). Section 1 – Conventional Survey research- Section 2- Opportunities to expand data collection, *The future of survey research: challenges and opportunities*. The National Science Foundation Advisory Committee for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Subcommittee on Advancing SBE Survey Research. Available online at: [http:// www. nsf. gov/ sbe/ AC_ Materials/ The_ Future_ of_ Survey_ Research.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/AC_Materials/The_Future_of_Survey_Research.pdf).