

PPHA 41800
Survey Questionnaire Design
SPRING 2025

Instructor:

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

Students are asked to do the readings posted for class on Canvas the week before the class meets and come prepared with questions for class. Course 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., group discussions, in-class exercises, guest speakers, and Q&A).

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 survey 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 books:

- Callegaro, M., Manfreda, K., & Vehovar, V. (2015). *Web survey methodology*. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529799651>.
- Saris, W. E., & Gallhofer, I. N. (2014). *Design, evaluation, and analysis of questionnaires for survey research* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

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 450 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 424 points in the quarter, you wouldn't go automatically to 425. 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	425	450
A-	405	424
B+	390	404
B	375	389
B-	360	374
C+	345	359
C	330	344
C-	315	329
F	<315	

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 26	Introduction to Class Survey Research Background/ Best Practices & Ethics	Class: Wed 3/26, 4.30pm CT HW#1 Due: Sunday 3/30, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW1: 30 pts	--
(2) April 2	Creating a Research Plan and Construct Mapping	Class: Wed 4/2, 4.30pm CT HW#2 Due: Sunday 4/6, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW2: 40 pts Course Attendance (CA): 10 pts	80 pts
(3) April 9	Total Survey Error	Class: Wed 4/9, 4.30pm CT HW#3 Due: Sunday 4/13, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW3: 40 pts CA: 10 pts	130 pts
(4) April 16	Writing Questions	Class: Wed 4/16, 4.30pm CT HW#4 Due: Sunday 4/20, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW4: 60 pts CA: 10 pts	200 pts
(5) April 23	Visual Principles	Class: Wed 4/23, 4.30pm CT HW#5 Due: Sunday 4/27, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW5: 60 pts CA: 10 pts	270 pts
(6) April 30	Measuring Attitudes & Measurement Effects Web Questionnaires	Class: Wed 4/30, 4.30pm CT HW#6 Due: Sunday 5/4, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW6: 60 pts CA: 10 pts	340 pts
(7) May 7	Designing an Instrument for Different Modes	Class: Wed 5/7, 4.30pm CT HW#7 Due: Sunday 5/11, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW7: 40 pts CA: 10 pts	390 pts
(8) May 14	Cognitive Testing & Evaluation Methods	Class: Wed 5/14, 4.30pm CT Work on your final assignment	CA: 10 pts	400 pts
(9) May 21	Practical Considerations in Surveys The Use of AI during Questionnaire Design and Assessment	Class: Wed 5/21, 4.30pm CT Final Assignment Due: Sunday 5/25, 11:00 pm CT (via Canvas)	HW8: 40 pts CA: 10 pts	<u>450 pts</u>
(10) May 28 Finals Week	NO CLASS	NO FINAL EXAM		

Class Readings

Week 1 (March 26) 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.
- 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://aapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AAPOR-2020-Code_FINAL_APPROVED.pdf

Week 2 (April 2) 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*.
 - Read the following sections: Introduction; Basic Survey Questionnaire Elements; and 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 9) 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>
- 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.

Optional:

- Stern, Michael, Ipek Bilgen, and Don A. Dillman. (2014). *The State of Survey Methodology in the 2010s*. *Field Methods*. 26 (3): 284-301.
- De Leeuw, E. (2018). *Mixed-Mode: Past, Present, and Future*. *Survey Research Methods*, 12(2), 75-89.

Week 4 (April 16) 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. 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 23) 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 (April 30) Measuring Attitudes & Measurement effects

- De Leeuw, E., Hox, J., Silber, H. et al. Development of an international survey attitude scale: measurement equivalence, reliability, and predictive validity. *Meas Instrum Soc Sci* 1, 9 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42409-019-0012-x>
- Chapter 7 (Dillman): Ordering questions and testing for question order effects

Optional:

- Bautista, R., Bilgen, I., & Bulgar-Medina, J. (2019). *Measuring Attitudes*. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J.W. Saksbaug, & R.A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*.
- 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 7) Designing an Instrument for Different Modes

- Chapters 8-11 (Dillman)

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.

Week 8 (May 14) 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:

- Bilgen, I., and Belli, R. F. (2010). *Comparison of Verbal Behaviors between Calendar and Standardized Conventional Questionnaires*. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 26(3), 481-505.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Week 9 (May 21) Practical Considerations in Surveys & The Use of AI during Questionnaire Design and Assessment

- Yan, Ting, Hanyu Sun, and Anil Battalahalli. 2024. "Applying Machine Learning to Survey Question Assessment." *Survey Practice* 17 (May). <https://doi.org/10.29115/SP-2024-0006>.
- Olivos, F., & Liu, M. 2024. ChatGPTTest: Opportunities and Cautionary Tales of Utilizing AI for Questionnaire Pretesting. *Field Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X241280574>.
- Argyle, Lisa P., Ethan C. Busby, Nancy Fulda, Joshua R. Gubler, Christopher Rytting, and David Wingate. "Out of One, Many: Using Language Models to Simulate Human Samples." *Political Analysis* 31 (2023): 337-351. <https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2023.2>.

Optional:

- *Applications of an Analytic Framework on Using Public Opinion Data for Solving Intelligence Problems: Proceedings of a Workshop* (2022); Free download available: <https://nao.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://sciendocom/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](#).