Survey Research Methods, E10.2139

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Spring 2009, M: 4:55-7:35

1 Contact Information

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

2 Prerequisites

At least one year of applied statistics (including multiple linear regression) and familiarity with the use of one or more standard statistical software packages (e.g. R, Stata, SAS, SPSS) is strongly recommended.

3 Overview

The social survey is an essential tool for researchers in the social, behavioral and policy sciences and in the applied professional fields, such as education, social work, public health, and marketing. The goal of this course is to provide a broad overview of the many aspects of survey research methodology including sampling, instrument design, the psychology of survey response, field testing, survey operations, nonresponse bias analysis and correction, and primary and secondary analysis of survey data. No prior experience in survey methods is expected and the course is designed primarily for those who intend to use surveys in their own research—whether designing original surveys or performing secondary analysis on survey data collected by others. Whenever possible, we will use examples and data from real surveys employed by academic researchers, professional survey firms, and Federal statistical agencies. Course assignments will require students to actively participate in every stage of the survey process, from initial design to final analysis.
4 Course Text

The only required text for this course is:


Additional materials will be available online at JSTOR, other databases on BOBCAT, or other websites as specified.

5 Course Requirements

- Problem Sets (approximately weekly) 30%
- Midterm project (take-home) 30%
- Final project (take-home) 40%

Problem sets will consist of about 2-5 short exercises drawn from either the book’s problems (including computer exercises) or other sources and will be assigned at most meetings of the class. They are due no later than the next meeting of the class, and they will be discussed at this time, so they may not be handed in late unless prior arrangements have been made with me. *Each student will be expected to turn in their own work*, which will be graded and returned. Students are welcome to submit problem sets electronically to my email addresses above if they are unable to attend a given class meeting.

The midterm and final projects will be of longer length and will require the synthesis of several course topics.

6 Accommodations

NYU is committed to facilitating equal access for students with disabilities, including hearing and visual impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, chronic illnesses, and psychological impairments. If you are not comfortable discussing your special needs with me, I encourage you to contact the Moses Center on 240 Greene Street, 2nd Floor, 212-998-4980, for assistance in ensuring that you receive any necessary accommodations.

7 Schedule

1. Introduction and overview. Readings: Ch. 1 and the material at http://www.whatisasurvey.info/
2. The lifecycle of a survey and sources of error. Ch. 2.
3. Introduction to sampling: populations, sampling frames, and coverage error. Ch. 3.
4. Sample design and sampling error. Ch. 4.

5. Sampling continued.

6. Methods of data collection. Ch. 5.

7. Methods of data collection continued.


8. Questions and answers in surveys. Ch. 7. MIDTERM PROJECT DUE


10. Survey interviewing. Ch. 9.

11. Survey nonresponse. Ch. 6.


12. Postcollection survey processing; imputing missing data. Ch. 10.


13. Postcollection analysis continued.

14. Survey ethics. Ch. 11

15. Advanced topics: getting answers to hard questions; comparing cross-cultural survey response.


16. FINAL PROJECT DUE