**Questionnaire Design**  
**SOCI 998**  
**Spring 2019**  
**Monday 2:00-4:30**  
**Oldfather Hall 707**  
**Oldfather Hall 738**

Instructor: Jolene Smyth  
724 Oldfather Hall  
Office Phone: (402) 472-0662  
e-mail: jsmyth2@unl.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30-4:30, Friday 2:00-3:00, or by appointment  
Prerequisites: Graduate student standing.

**Required Texts:**


Willis, Gordon. 2015. *Analysis of the cognitive interview in questionnaire design (understanding qualitative research)*. Oxford.

Articles as assigned throughout the course. Those unavailable through the UNL Libraries will be put on electronic reserve on the course Canvas site (http://my.unl.edu).

**Recommended Texts:**


**Overview:**
This course focuses on theoretical and practical tools for developing and writing survey questions and constructing questionnaires. The major emphasis is on how to construct individual survey questions and then put them together into a questionnaire. Topics include sources of survey error, response theories, visual design, open-ended questions, nominal and ordinal closed-ended questions, mode issues, pretesting, and implementation. The course will consist of lectures, readings, discussion, and in-class activities. Throughout the course, students will apply what they are learning to the development and/or improvement of several questionnaires and implementation materials.

**Objectives:**
The primary objective of this course is for each student to obtain and be able to demonstrate a full working knowledge of the science (concepts, theory, and empirical research) of questionnaire design and the practical application of that science.

**Assignments, Grading, and Attendance:**
40% Workshop work and presentation  
Students will work in instructor-assigned groups to create and/or revise several surveys during the semester. Each group will be responsible for presenting their final product to the class. Each student will be required to present at least once during the semester. The final product and the presentation will be graded by the instructor.
35% Final course project.  
For the final course project, students will work independently to create a survey and implementation materials on a topic of the instructor’s choosing. The final products of this effort will be a survey, implementation materials, and a report detailing the major decisions that were made in the construction of the materials and justifying them with appropriate literature. More details about this project will be forthcoming.

15% Weekly reading reports  
Submit to the Canvas Discussion board a brief report by 8:00 am each class day that summarizes the most important point you took away from each of the assigned readings for that week. You should be able to do this in three sentences or less per reading (i.e., you should not be writing a full and comprehensive summary). I will use these reports as a check that you are completing the readings and absorbing the most important content in them. Once you have posted your own report, you will be able to read what others have written to get a sense of what they took from the readings.

10% Attendance, Participation, and other activities/homework  
Attendance is mandatory. Only under extenuating circumstances will students be excused for absences. You can earn the participation portion by participating in class discussions and group work with constructive questions and comments.

Late Assignments:  
Late assignments will be penalized 10 percentage points per day (counting weekend days and holidays) except in cases where arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance or in cases of reasonable unforeseen events (i.e., family emergency, illness, etc.).

We will be using Canvas in this course. You can log into Canvas at http://my.unl.edu. Please check the course Canvas site regularly. Also, please make sure you have an e-mail address that you check regularly registered with the University so that you get any course communications I send through Canvas.

How to Contact the Instructor:  
• E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. I check my phone messages irregularly so only use the phone in the event that you cannot e-mail me.
• In any e-mail contacts, please put your name and “SOCI 998” in the subject line. I get a lot of e-mails every day and this will help me make sure I prioritize things correctly and get you a response within a reasonable time.
• I may not respond to your e-mail immediately, but you should expect a response within two business days of my reading your message. If you do not get a response within two business days, please send your message again. Please also be aware that I do not check or respond to e-mail most evenings, weekends, or holidays.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:  
Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 232 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or 472-0053 TTY (https://www.unl.edu/ssd/).

Academic Honesty:  
Academic dishonesty or complicity in academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in failing the course and referral to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Students should immediately become familiar with UNL’s policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism. These can be found in the student code of

Grading Scale
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 – 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conduct (https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct). See the following website for helpful information: http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#about

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that many students struggle with. The Office of Graduate Studies has put together a nice website to help students better understand plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you are ever unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or if you just want a refresher, please take advantage of this resource, which can be found at: http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism. If you are unsure how to use or cite a particular work and the above website doesn’t help, ask me; I’m happy to help.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and course schedule (including reading assignments) as deemed appropriate for educational purposes. All such changes will be announced in class.

Course Calendar

January 7: Survey modes and error sources
Dillman et al. 2014: Chapters 1 and 2

January 14: Defining the construct of interest, question banks, general rules for questionnaire design, open-ended questions, and nominal closed-ended questions
Dillman et al. 2014: Chapter 4 and pages 127-150 of Chapter 5
Schwarz 1996: Chapters 1, 2, and 3

January 28: Closed-ended ordinal questions, ordering questions, and visual design
Dillman et al. 2014: Pages 150-168 of chapter 5, Chapters 6 and 7
Schwarz 1996: Chapters 4 and 5

February 4: Design issues specific to mail, internet, telephone, and face-to-face and pretesting
Dillman et al. 2014: Chapters 8, 9, 10,
Schwarz 1996: Chapters 6 and 7

The course will meet at its regularly scheduled time throughout the remainder of the semester. This time will be spent workshopping questionnaire design challenges. Weekly readings will be assigned as we go along. The readings will be chosen to either (1) broaden students’ knowledge of questionnaire design literature or (2) address issues of difficulty or reinforce needed information for the survey design work students are undertaking at a given time.

Notable Dates:
March 18: No class – spring break
April 29: Final project due by 8:00 am