SOCI/PSYC 947: Questionnaire Design
Spring 2022
Monday 2:30-4:50
Oldfather Hall 204

Instructor: Jolene Smyth
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e-mail: jsmyth2@unl.edu
Office Location: 709 Oldfather Hall
Office Hours: Thursday and Friday 10:00-11:00, or by appointment. In-person or Zoom (https://unl.zoom.us/j/7516480088).

Prerequisites:
Graduate student standing.

Required Texts:


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 and Grading

40% Homework Projects
A series of homework assignments will be given throughout the course. Some of them will require individual work and some may involve instructor-assigned group work. These will give students the opportunity to practice applying what they are learning and to make empirically or theoretically informed questionnaire design decisions as well as to learn very practical skills used in designing questionnaires and implementation materials.

40% Final course project
For the final course project, students will work independently to create a mail 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.

20% Participation and in-class activities
Students can earn the participation portion of their grade by coming to class prepared, having done the assigned readings, participating in class discussions and activities, and contributing constructive questions and comments. For those with excused absences, these points can be earned by doing alternative assignments as determined by the instructor.

Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97 – 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 – 66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 63%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
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Where to Get Course Information
We will be using Canvas in this course. Students 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. You can expect a response to emails within two business days. If you don’t get a response within two business days, please resend your message. Please also be aware that I do not check or respond to e-mail most evenings, weekends, or holidays.

I do not have an office phone, but you can leave a message for me at the sociology front office (402-472-3631).

Course Policies
For additional UNL policies, see http://go.unl.edu/coursepolicies
Attendance

Attendance is required at all class meetings unless you have an excused absence. If you are ill, have been directed to quarantine or social distance because of COVID-19, have a personal emergency, etc. you must contact me as soon as possible and prior to class if possible, to request to be excused from in-person attendance. I will also consider requests to excuse absences for high-value professional development opportunities consistent with graduate education (e.g., attending a conference to give a presentation), provided your attendance has been regular during the semester and you are in good standing in the course. Whether you attend class or not and regardless of whether absences are excused, you are responsible for the material/content covered in the course.

To encourage students to avoid spreading COVID-19 or other viruses, I will do my best to make videos of my in-person lectures available after class when students are absent due to illness or quarantine, provided I have advance notice so I can prepare to do so. I will also arrange with students on a case-by-case basis to make up missed assignments or activities where it is possible to do so. However, because of their nature, some assignments or activities cannot be made up outside of class. If an activity cannot be made up and there is no reasonable alternative assignment, I will exempt excused students from the assignment.

Per the approved UNL attendance policy, “Instructors are not expected to accommodate a student who has missed so much of the critical components of a course, even for legitimate reasons, that arrangements for makeup work would not be reasonable.” In the event that absences are accumulating to this point, I will meet with the student to discuss appropriate actions, including possibly withdrawing from the course.

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.).

Video or Audiotaping Class Sessions and use of Lecture Videos
All classes are closed to the press/media. No video or audio taping of class sessions is allowed unless you obtain instructor permission to do so.

Use of any lecture recordings I provide is strictly limited to students in this course and for course purposes. Recorded lectures are my intellectual property. They also may include conversation with other students in the course. As such, sharing them outside the course without instructor permission violates the student code of conduct, may violate your classmates’ FERPA rights, and is subject to related penalties.

Face Coverings
All course participants must comply with current university face coverings policies, which is posted here: https://covid19.unl.edu/face-covering-policy. This website includes instructions for what to do if you need an exemption or alternative to required face coverings.
In the event that the university is not requiring face coverings at some point during the semester, all participants are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering while in class to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in this course.

Academic Honesty:
Academic dishonesty or complicity in academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. A first offense of cheating or plagiarizing in this course will result in a score of zero on the assignment. A second offense will result in failing the course. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Affairs and to the Graduate Chair, Chair, or other appropriate official in the students’ department.

Students should immediately become familiar with UNL’s policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism, including the student code of conduct (https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct) and the expectations of the Office of Graduate Studies (https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#about). As the graduate studies page explains, it is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the expectations in the student code of conduct, and ignorance is not a valid excuse.

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: https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism.

If you are ever unsure whether a behavior or practice constitutes academic dishonesty or how to avoid actions that are considered academic dishonesty, please reach out and ask the instructor. Don’t risk it; I am here to help.

Instructional Continuity if In-Person Classes are Canceled
If in-person classes are canceled, you will be notified of the instructional continuity plan for this class via email sent through Canvas.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let your instructor know immediately so that you can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, your instructor may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (https://www.unl.edu/ssd/home). If you are eligible for services and register with the office, make arrangements with your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD is located in 117 Louise Pound Hall and can be reached at 402-472-3787.

15th Week Policy
All courses at UNL must abide by the 15th week policy, which can be found here: https://registrar.unl.edu/academic-standards/policies/fifteenth-week-policy/
Diversity & Inclusiveness
UNL values diversity in the broadest sense – gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, physical and intellectual ability, religion, education and geography. We believe that acknowledging, building understanding and incorporating diversity throughout the curriculum will best prepare you for a career in a global society. The inclusive learning environment we seek to foster is one where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected, and therefore conversations within your course must be civil and respectful of individual ideas, experiences, and beliefs that may be different from your own. To challenge ideas or beliefs in a manner that is considerate of the individual expressing them is encouraged, but disrespect or hostility toward any person is not acceptable behavior in the classroom. According to our Student Code of Conduct, speech that is abusive, harassing, intimidating, or coercive is prohibited. Students who engage in such speech will be asked to leave the classroom and further disciplinary actions may be taken.

Student Wellness Resources
UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid in dealing with stress and adversity. Counseling and Psychological Services (https://caps.unl.edu/) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively to help you explore your feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve your mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached at 402-472-7450.

Big Red Resilience & Well-Being (https://resilience.unl.edu/home) provides one-on-one coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached at 402-472-8770.

The Center for Advocacy, Response & Education (CARE) (https://care.unl.edu/) provides support for individuals who have experienced relationship violence or sexual assault. CARE Advocates are a confidential resource who can provide information about services and support decision-making. CARE can be reached by calling 402-472-3553. For after hours and weekend support, you can call Voices of Hope at 402-437-9302 (https://www.voicesofhopelincoln.org/).

Changes to the Syllabus
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and course schedule as deemed appropriate for educational purposes. All such changes will communicated in class and/or via Canvas.
Course Calendar & Reading Assignments

Articles that are not available through UNL Libraries or freely online will be posted to the course Canvas site.

January 24: Course Orientation, Error Sources, Survey Modes
Assignment Start: Survey Design and Secondary Data Analysis Exercise (Due March 7)
Dillman et al. 2014, Chapters 1-3


Assignment Start: Critical Review of a Questionnaire (Due Feb. 21)


Schwarz 1996, Chapters 1-3
Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 4 and pages 127-134 of Chapter 5
Bradburn 2004 – Precoding section

Optional Readings:


**February 7: Closed-Ended and Nominal Questions**

Dillman et al. 2014, pages 134-150 of Chapter 5

Schwarz 1996, Chapter 4


**Optional Readings**


**February 14: Ordinal Questions**

Dillman et al. 2014, pages 150-167 of Chapter 5

Schwarz 1996, Chapter 5


Optional Readings


February 21: Question Order and Visual Design
Assignment Due: Critical Review of a Questionnaire

Schwarz 1996, Chapter 6 and 7

Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 6


Optional Readings

February 28: Visual Design (continued)


Optional Readings


March 7: Mail Surveys
Assignment Due: Survey Design and Secondary Data Analysis Exercise
Assignment Start: Build a Mail Survey and Draft Implementation Appeals

Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 10
March 14: SPRING BREAK

March 21: Implementation Approaches and Mail Survey Implementation

Assignment Start: Mail Merge Exercise

Dillman et al. 2014, Review Chapter 2


Optional Readings


March 28: Web Surveys

Assignment Due: Build a Mail Survey and Draft Implementation Appeals
Assignment Due: Mail Merge Exercise
Assignment Start: Program a Web Survey

Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 9


Optional Readings


April 4: Web Survey Implementation


Optional Readings


April 11: Telephone Survey Questionnaires
Assignment Due: Program a Web Survey
Assignment Start: Convert a Self-Administered Survey to Telephone

Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 8

Optional Readings

April 18: Testing Surveys (Cognitive Interviews)

Optional Readings
April 25: Testing Surveys (Other Methods)

Assignment Due: Convert a Self-Administered Survey to Telephone


Optional Readings


May 2 (DEAD WEEK): Mixed-Mode Surveys

Dillman et al. 2014, Chapter 11


Optional Readings


May 9-13 FINALS WEEK
Assignment Due: Final Project Due May 9th by 5:00 pm