SO CI / SRAM 465 / 865: Survey Design and Analysis (3 credit hours)

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TA Email: nuttirudee5685@huskers.unl.edu TA Phone: 402-472-7758

A. Course Overview

This is a three-credit course designed to provide an overview of the fundamental aspects of survey methodology. In this class, we will cover basic aspects of survey design, including data collection modes, sampling, coverage errors, nonresponse, interviewer effects, questionnaire design, disclosure limitation, and ethics related to survey research. As a 400 / 800 course, this class is targeted to advanced undergraduates who have taken a research methods course, but want to learn more about survey methodology, and to graduate students who want to learn more about survey research. This class also provides an important introduction to the science of survey methodology for working professionals.

This is an asynchronous online course. The class week runs from Monday through Sunday; that is, we will start a new topic and discussion board each Monday. All discussion and assignments for the week will be completed by the following Monday. A detailed course schedule is in a separate document.

As with in person courses, online courses require considerable time commitments. You should set aside time each week to watch the weekly lecture videos, do the reading, actively participate in the discussion board, and do the homework assignments. Additionally, graduate students should spend time throughout the semester working on their final project.

B. Course Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this course is for you to understand the basic components of survey design, including errors that may occur during survey development, fielding, and post-survey processing. A second, but important, goal is for you to be able to apply the principles you learn to real-life problems that occur. The goal of this course is not to make you an ‘expert’ in any of these areas, but to identify the decisions that are made in survey development that may increase or reduce survey errors. In particular, when you have completed this class, you should be able to:

1. Describe the major data collection modes, including common survey errors associated with each mode
2. Identify various sample designs and use simple estimators
3. Compare and contrast methods for measuring and accounting for survey nonresponse
4. Develop and test survey questions to measure a construct of interest
5. Describe the roles that interviewers play in sample surveys, and how they may affect a survey estimate of interest
6. Evaluate how different design decisions may affect a survey estimate of interest
7. Develop an implementation plan for a survey on a topic of your choosing, and report on how your decisions may affect the quality of your final data

C. Instructor’s Role in the Course

My role in the class discussions is as a guide and a moderator. The TA and I will comment on posts to help identify important themes in the class readings, answer questions, and correct inaccuracies, but I will not reply to every post as this can become quickly unmanageable. The TA and I will read your posts at least twice during the week. If you have questions that need to be answered immediately, please email me at kolson5@unl.edu or the teaching assistant, Nuttirudee Charoenruk, at nuttirudee5685@huskers.unl.edu, with the subject SRAM 465/865: Question about [fill in your question]. I will respond to your email during normal business hours on weekdays, generally within 24 hours.

D. Required Texts and Materials

This course has three required textbooks, and a number of required articles. The required textbooks are:


The required journal articles are listed in the schedule of classes. The readings are divided into required readings for the students enrolled in SRAM 465, and additional required readings for students enrolled in SRAM 865. Students enrolled in SRAM 465 who want more information on a topic are recommended to review these additional materials.

As an asynchronous online course, you must have sufficient computer technology to complete the course requirements. This includes a computer with high speed internet access, an email account, a supported web browser, a word processor, Adobe Reader to view PDF files, and a media player.

E. Discussion posts

A key part of the course will be discussing the assigned readings with your classmates. Because this is an asynchronous online course, class discussion will take place on the course discussion board. You will be required to make one independent post each week, starting a new thread on the discussion board.
Your independent post must contain (1) one idea, concept, theory, or finding that you learned this week from the readings and (2) two questions about the readings.

Both your independent thread and your replies will be graded together. Below is a rubric for grading your discussion posts. To earn full credit, students should meet all of the criteria listed under the Excellent category. Note that use of any of the criteria under 0 (Poor) will yield a grade of 0 for that posting. The independent post must be made by Friday at noon (12:00 PM) (Central time) of the week. You will also be required to reply to two other students in the class by Monday at noon (12:00 PM) (Central time). Your independent thread must be created before you reply to other students in the class.

Note that an Excellent post will require forethought and planning. You may want to compose your post in a word processing program, and then paste it into the Discussion Board in Blackboard to provide enough time for thoughtful reflection on the class material for the week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 (Poor)</th>
<th>1 (Average)</th>
<th>2 (Excellent)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not make post. Did not include both one item learned and two questions. Did not respond to at least two other students. Used vulgarities or offensive comments. Disrespectful of fellow students. Did not submit post by deadline. Unprofessional writing style.</td>
<td>For initial: Made post. Included both one item learned and two questions. Cites either no class readings, or cites only lecture materials. Writing style, grammar, and/or spelling could be improved. For response: Responded to at least two other students. Response was minimal in content. Did not cite readings and/or lecture in at least one response. Did not elaborate or advance conversation.</td>
<td>For initial: Made post. Included both one item learned and two questions. Appropriate citations from multiple class readings and lecture. Synthesizes across multiple readings and/or lecture material. Uses excellent grammar, spelling, and writing style. For response: Responded to at least two other students. Integrated appropriate readings and/or lecture in at least one response. Elaborated or advanced conversation.</td>
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**F. Homework Assignments**

Homework will be assigned every week, and is due by 12:00 PM (noon, Central) on Mondays. Homework should be handed in through Blackboard. Homework that is handed in within 24 hours of the due date will have one letter grade deduction. Homework that is handed in more than 24 hours after the due date will not be graded.

Homework that is part of your final project will be handed in through a separate assignment link on Blackboard for each part of the final project. Final project assignments will count toward the final project grade.

**G. Midterm Exam**
The midterm exam will be an exam administered through Blackboard. Students will have three hours to complete the exam, completed in one sitting. Students may not sign out of the exam and sign back in. The exam is open-notes and open-book. All students must complete the exam independently. Any evidence of cheating, plagiarism, or copying answers from another student will result in immediate failure of the class. Students must complete the exam by 5:00 PM Central time on Friday of the Midterm exam week.

**H. Final Project**

All students will be required to complete a final project. This final project will require students to identify a survey topic of interest to them, and apply each of the concepts we discuss in the class to their topic. These projects will be presented to the class during the last week of classes. More details about the final project will be distributed over the course of the semester.

**I. Grades**

Grades will consist of discussion board postings, homework assignments, exam and a final project. Course grades will not be curved. Grades will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Final grades will be assigned as (Weighted Points Earned) / (Weighted Points Available).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>76.9-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>98.9-93</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72.9-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92.9-90</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69.9-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.9-87</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>66.9-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86.9-83</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62.9-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82.9-80</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0-59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9-77</td>
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Students may take the course pass/no pass. If taking the class pass/no pass, 465 students must earn a C or better grade to get a “pass.” Students in 865 must earn a B or better to get a “pass.” No incompletes will be given in the course.

**J. Technical Problems**

If you have any technical problems, you should contact the UNL Help Center. Information about the Help Center can be found at [http://its.unl.edu/helpcenter](http://its.unl.edu/helpcenter). You can also call the Help center at 402-472-3970 in Lincoln or (866) 472-3970 toll free in the U.S. or email [mysupport@unl.edu](mailto:mysupport@unl.edu).
You can also post technical questions in the Technical Questions forum of the class Discussion Board.

K. 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, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment with the Director, Veva Cheney, or the Assistant Director, Barbara Woodhead.

L. Students’ rights/responsibilities

The class schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced on the class web page. Not knowing about syllabus changes, including changes in assignments, because of not checking the class Blackboard website is not a legitimate excuse for failure to complete the course requirements.

Academic honesty is a vital element for preserving the integrity of all academic institutions and it is the responsibility of each one of us to maintain this integrity. Any academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism hurts us all and will result in an automatic failure in the class, and can mean dismissal from the university. Certain procedural rights are guaranteed to all students charged with academic dishonesty who are subject to disciplinary action; they are outlined in the Regent’s Bylaws and the Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin.

Any student who believes that he or she has been graded unfairly may appeal that grade with the following procedures: The student must provide a written explanation to the instructor identifying the assignment or exam in question, the grade assigned by the instructor, and a detailed discussion of what content in the assignment or exam was overlooked or graded unfairly. The instructor will review the information, and may choose to regrade the assignment or exam. Students with regraded assignments/exam may have their grade go up or go down for that assignment/exam. Students who wish to further appeal their grade may contact the Undergraduate Chair in Sociology (465 students) or the Graduate Chair in Sociology and/or SRAM (865 students), and provide a detailed written explanation of their appeal.

It is expected that you have read and understand your rights and responsibilities as a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student. These are available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins.
## Assigned readings

As listed in the course schedule, readings required of all students are marked with a *; readings only required for graduate students are marked with **.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Module 1: Course overview and an introduction to survey methodology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Module 2: Inference and error in surveys</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 **Module 3: Target populations, frames, and coverage error**

**Readings**


4 **Module 4: Sampling design and sampling error**

**Readings**


5 Module 5: Mode and Methods of data collection I: Single and multiple modes of data collection

Readings


6 Module 6: Mode and Methods of data collection II: Effects of different data collection methods on survey errors

Readings


Module 7: Nonresponse in sample surveys and nonresponse error I: Nonresponse, unit nonresponse, and response rate

Readings


Module 8: Nonresponse in sample surveys and nonresponse error II: Nonresponse error, item nonresponse, nonresponse reduction

Readings


Midterm exam
10 Module 9: Questions and answers in surveys: Survey question and cognitive process in answering questions
Readings


11 Spring break

12 Module 10: Evaluating survey questions
Readings


Module 11: Interviewer, survey interviewing, and interviewer effects
Readings


Module 12: Postcollection processing of survey data and processing errors
Readings


Module 13: Principles and practices related to ethical research

Readings


Student Presentations

FINALS WEEK - Final project due