

**MMC 6936: Survey Research**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Section 1103, Wednesdays 1:55 p.m. to 4:55 p.m.**  
**Weimer 1090**

**Dr. Wayne Wanta**  
**wwanta@ufl.edu**

Office: 3061 Weimer Hall

Office hours: Tuesdays 9-11 a.m., Wednesdays 1-1:55 p.m., and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This class is an advanced research method class focusing on survey methods designed to test correlational hypotheses. The focus of the class is on concepts, issues, theoretical foundations and methods. Participants will read major articles and participate in discussions of survey research including ethical issues.

The class is an advanced methods course requiring that students prepare a conference quality paper based upon a survey conducted as part of this class. The format of the class is lecture/discussion. The class will work well only if participants spend the timenecessary (1) to read carefully and thoughtfully the assigned articles/chapters and (2) to prepare for class discussion/participation.

Class sessions will generally be informal, but all members of the class will be expected to attend class and participate in the activities for the day. Further, each member of the group will be asked to present the status of his/her project at different points in the semester.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Students will:

- \* Identify problems and questions best addressed by survey methods.
- \* Specify the goals of survey research, the nature of explanations generated and the limitations of those explanations.
- \* Examine the theoretical foundations of survey research.
- \* Investigate alternative survey designs with attention on the values and assumptions underlying the various approaches.
- \* Understand how to critically evaluate survey methods used in previous research.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

None.

Several additional readings will be required each week.

*NOTE: While not required, it is suggested that students have previously taken a methods class before enrolling in MMC 6423.*

**GRADING:**

Grading for the course will consist of the following components:

Class assignments (5)	30 percent
Class presentations (2)	10 percent
Class Participation/Attendance	10 percent
Final Research paper	50 percent

**FINAL PAPER:** Each student or group will turn in a final paper that, with some revision and polishing, would be of the quality acceptable for presentation at national conference proceedings (e.g., ICA or AEJMC). These papers are generally 18-25 pages of text. The product must be a complete research project, not just a literature review or research design. The papers will be written in sections:

**INTRODUCTION (Due Sept. 15):** Students will work individually or in groups on a research project. Students will develop a survey study design that will be conducted during the semester. The assignment will outline the study parameters and appropriate samples, include hypotheses and/or research questions and provide a clear calendar of how/when study will be conducted within the confines of the class. A theoretical framework should be suggested, although perhaps only briefly. Suggested length is 2-3 pages.

**LITERATURE REVIEW (Due Sept. 29):** Each group/individual will design a detailed questionnaire outlining each variable and how it will be measured. This will accompany a literature review citing previous research related to the study. Suggested length is 5-10 pages

**QUESTIONNAIRE/METHOD (Due Oct. 13):** The group/individual will turn in a basic methods section, demonstrating how each of its Hs and RQs are tested. This will include a textual explanation of the analysis. Suggested length is 3-pages.

**FINAL COMPLETED PAPER (Due Dec. 8)**

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:** Each student will find and discuss articles relating to their final paper and discuss how the authors: explained the purpose (Introduction), developed the theoretical framework (Literature Review) measured the main concept (Methods section), presented the findings (Results section) and discussed the results (Discussion section). Each assignment should be one to two pages long and should be sent via our class' canvas page by noon on Tuesdays.

**CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Each student will present two of the class assignments in class. The presentations should concentrate on the section of the articles under discussion for that week. The presentations should take 10 to 15 minutes. Students should turn in a three-page paper explaining their main points as well as any PowerPoint or other materials used in the class.

**FINAL GRADING:** The university's grading information can be found at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>. Final grades will be tallied using the following scale for the class:

92-100 A  
90-91.99 A-  
88-89.99 B+  
82-87.99 B  
80-81.99 B-  
78-79.99 C+  
72-77.99 C  
70-71.99 C-  
68-69.99 D+  
62-67.99 D  
60-61.99 D-  
Below 60 E

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Assignments and Readings:** All assignments must be turned in at the **BEGINNING** of class or earlier. No exceptions. All readings are to be completed before the start of lecture on the day assigned. Given the fluid nature of the research project, deadlines for assignments may be delayed depending upon circumstances. If a situation arises (personal or course-related) in which a student/group may need extra time for an assignment, the instructor must be informed **IN ADVANCE** and will determine the appropriate remedy. Extensions are they guaranteed. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**Plagiarism; Cheating or other Academic Misconduct:** The Academic Integrity Statement for the College of Journalism and Communications can be found here:

<http://www.jou.ufl.edu/grad/forms/Plagiarism-Guideline.pdf>

In addition, all students are bound by the university's Honor Code Policy at

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>. **Anyone who violates these policies in this course will receive a failing grade in this course and face further sanctions from the college and university.**

**Special needs:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. *This course conforms to all requirements of the ADA and handles with sensitivity all matters related to gender, race, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability. Please alert the instructor if any issues arise.*

**Syllabus Changes:** The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus or course schedule as the need arises. This includes the possibility of guest speakers and special presentations, some of which may be scheduled outside of classtime. Note: Some of the content for this syllabus was taken from syllabi from previous classes.

**Syllabus Disclaimer:** Much of the content of this syllabus was borrowed from previous syllabi for the course.

**Tips for getting good grades:** Come to class on time. Turn off your cellphone. Complete all of the readings before class. Laugh at my jokes.

**Covid-19:** Because of Covid-19, the schedule and requirements for the class will be flexible. At this point, all classes will meet in person. The same goes for office hours. All decisions will be made with the students' safety and health in mind. If you have any problems/issues at any time, please contact me as soon as possible.

**From the university on possible online class meetings:**

**Zoom Professionalism (JOU)**

Please be mindful of maintaining a professional appearance and conduct via our remote lecture meetings. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

*Virtual backgrounds*

You are encouraged to use virtual backgrounds for Zoom if you want to protect the privacy of your environment or surroundings.

If the coronavirus pandemic is not a problem later in the semester, we might possibly have some face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- We will meet in a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.](#)
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies.](#)

## **Tentative schedule**

### **August 25, Week 1: Getting started: Survey as a Research Tool**

Introduction

### **September 1, Week 2: Developing Research Papers**

Picking topics, study designs, forming groups

### **September 8, Week 3: Questionnaire design**

Developing questionnaire items, part 1

Types of questions, Using Qualtrics

**Assignment I:** Find a journal article that you feel effectively explains the purpose of a study similar to your final study. Be prepared to discuss the study in class.

### **September 15, Week 4: Measurement**

#### **Introductions Due**

Types of variables, coding, developing clear definitions

Conceptualization & Operationalization

### **September 22, Week 5:**

More on measurement

Sampling, Sample sizes, Response rates

**Assignment II:** Find a journal article that you feel effectively develops a theoretical framework similar to your final study. Be prepared to discuss the study in class.

### **September 29, Week 6: Survey types**

In person, mail, phone, online

**,Literature reviews due**

### **October 6, Week 7: Reliability and Validity**

### **October 13, Week 8: IRB**

**Methods sections due**

**Questionnaires due**

**October 20, Week 9: Data Collection**

**Assignment IV:** Find a journal article that you feel effectively explains the results of a content analysis study. Be prepared to discuss the study in class.

**October 27, Week 10: Data analysis**

Basics of SPSS for analysis

**Assignment V:** Find a journal article that you feel has an effective discussion section. Be prepared to discuss the study in class.

**November 3, Week 11: Writing results and conclusions**

Writing results, linking back to theory

**November 10, Week 12: Research ethics**

**November 17, Week 13: Group/individual meetings**

**November 24, Week 14: No class. Happy Thanksgiving!**

*In-class research presentations*

**December 1, Week 15: Class Presentations**

*In-class research presentations*

**December 8, Week 16: Class Presentations**

*In-class research presentations*

*Final papers due by noon December 8*