

# SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS

MMC6936 Section 1197  
Spring 2015

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an advanced-level graduate course designed to teach important concepts and skills necessary to conduct survey research. Students gain essential knowledge that guides decision-making in survey research design and apply that knowledge in planning and executing their own survey project. The course covers topics related to effective questionnaire development comprehensively and familiarizes students with types of sampling and issues associated with different sampling techniques. The course modules are organized in a manner to help students to complete an original research project in a semester and produce a conference quality paper at the end.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand reasons for conducting a survey project and challenges associated with survey research
2. Develop research topics appropriate for surveys
3. Become familiar with main concepts and types of sampling
4. Appraise advantages and disadvantages of different types of survey method
5. Develop and evaluate survey questions and questionnaires
6. Collect and analyze survey data
7. Summarize and interpret results in the manuscript form

## COURSE REQUIREMENT

Students must have access to SPSS.

## COURSE READINGS

### Required:

Blair, J., Czaja R. F., & Blair, E. A. (2014). *Designing Surveys* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

\*Peterson R. A. (2000). *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

### Highly Recommended:

In addition to the above required books, I use the following books to prepare my lectures. A few chapters of these books are required readings. Please refer to the course schedule.

\*DeVellis, R. F. (2012). *Scale Development: Theory and Applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

\*Fowler, F. J. (2009). *Survey Research Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

\*\*Pallant, J. (2011). *SPSS survival manual: A step-by-step guide to data analysis using SPSS* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Crows Nest, N.S.W., Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Additional readings will be posted on Sakai E-Learning.

\* These books are reserved for this course in Library West.

\*\* E-book is available on Course Reserves on the Sakai course page.

## COURSE CONTENT

This course consists of eight modules. The modules are constructed in order to facilitate students' research project. The topics that are most essential to design and execute a survey project are covered earlier in the semester, while the topics that introduce conceptual issues of survey research are covered later.

### **Module 1: Overview of Survey Research**

This module gives an introduction to survey research and provides an overview on its characteristics and common survey errors. The module also discusses the process of conducting a survey study and identifies important tasks to be done in each stage of the process.

### **Module 2: Theory & Measurement**

This module explains important concepts related to measurement and their relationship to theory. Theory and hypothesis are explained in terms of conceptualization and operationalization of constructs. The module also introduces concepts of measurement including indicators and measurement levels.

### **Module 3: Developing the Questionnaire**

This module covers important topics for students to write effective questions and develop a well-structured questionnaire. It first discusses key factors to consider in designing a questionnaire and writing questions. The module also covers a variety of specific questioning techniques including open-ended questions, close-ended questions, and scales.

### **Module 4: Sampling**

This module covers relevant concepts of sampling, types of sampling, and sample size determination.

### **Module 5: Evaluating Survey Questions**

This module introduces concepts related to evaluation of survey questions and questionnaire. Specifically, the module discusses methods of pretesting a questionnaire and tests of reliability and validity of multi-item scales.

### **Module 6: Data Collection & Analysis**

In this module, students collect data for their survey project and conduct relevant statistical analyses for their research questions. The module provides references and external resources that explain various statistical techniques and how to perform them using SPSS.

### **Module 7: Types of Survey Method**

This module introduces different types of survey method (e.g., mail, telephone, face-to-face, and Web) and compares and contrasts their advantages and disadvantages. It also discusses factors to consider when choosing a survey method.

### **Module 8: Ethical Issues in Survey Research**

This module discusses the researcher's ethical responsibilities for respondents and interviewers.

## ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments of this course are designed to help students to acquire necessary understanding and skills to conduct their survey project and to facilitate their research process. **All assignments must be word-processed and follow the assignment format rules** (see below). Assignments are due to Sakai E-Learning. Refer to the Course Schedule for deadlines.

### **Original Research Project**

Assignments 1, 3, 4, and 7 are concerned with the original survey research you are required to conduct for this class. You may work on the project alone or in teams (maximum three people in a team).

Assignment 1: Research Topic – Choose a topic of your interest that is appropriate for survey research. Provide the title and descriptions of the study including background and objectives of the research. The assignment may be single-spaced but must not exceed 1 page. Save the Word file as **ResearchTopic\_YourName.docx**. **Due Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

Although it is not recommended, you may change the research topic once without penalty after submitting Assignment 1. Each subsequent change to the research topic afterwards will result in a 10% grade reduction in the assignment.

**Assignment 3:** Research Proposal – This assignment consists of introduction, literature review, and proposed methods. Your research should be guided by theory and previous research findings. Introduction needs to introduce background of the study and conceptual and practical issues related to the study topic. It should also include potential implications of the study and expected contribution to the current body of literature and relevant sectors of the society. For literature review, provide a comprehensive review of relevant literature and present a theoretical framework. Research questions and/or hypotheses need to be included here. For proposed methods, describe a type of survey method chosen (e.g., Web, person-to-person, etc.), sampling frame (if you plan to use a particular sampling technique), criteria of respondent eligibility, method of respondent recruitment, and target sample size. Identify variables to be measured and describe instruments (e.g., scales) to measure the variables. Cite the source of any measure borrowed or adapted from a previous study. Include the measures (e.g., survey questions or scales) to be used in an appendix. Refer to an article of survey research (e.g., article you used for Assignment 2) and provide similar descriptions of the method. The introduction and literature review should be about 5 pages and the proposed methods should be about 3 pages. There is no page limit for appendices. The total assignment (without appendices) must be double-spaced and not exceed 8 pages.

It is recommended the research proposal including the appendices is one Word file (save the Word file as **ResearchProposal\_YourName.docx**). If you must make the appendix a separate file, save the Word files as **ResearchProposal\_Appendix\_YourName.docx**. Do not submit pdf files.

**Due Feb 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignments 4:** IRB Form – If you are conducting primary research (e.g., collecting your own data using human subjects), you must obtain an approval of the University’s ethics committee (IRB, Institutional Review Board). Download the IRB form from the University Website and complete the form with necessary supplementary documents. The form needs to be signed by an appropriate faculty member before submission to the IRB office. IRB form is not necessary if you conduct secondary analysis of existing data. Save the Word file as **IRB\_YourName.docx**. **Due Feb 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 5:** Analysis Plan – Submit a proposal on how data will be analyzed for the research questions/hypotheses described in the research proposal (Assignment 3). For each research question/hypothesis, identify specific statistical techniques to be used and explain how the results of data analysis (e.g., SPSS output) will be interpreted (e.g., The significance of the t-test would indicate the hypothesis 2 is supported by the data). The assignment may be single-spaced but must not exceed 2 page. Save the Word file as **AnalysisPlan\_YourName.docx**. **Due Feb 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 6:** Data Analysis – Based on your analysis plan (Assignment 5), conduct statistical analyses using SPSS for your research questions/hypotheses. Submit the SPSS output (**SPSSoutput\_YourName.spv**) and the Word file (**DataAnalysis\_YourName.docx**) providing a brief summary of each test result (e.g., The significant t-test shows men’s perspective is significantly different from women’s). The summary may be bullet-pointed. The Word document may be single-spaced but must not exceed 2 page. **Due Mar 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 7:** Results – Based on the results of data analysis (Assignment 6), write up the results section of the final paper. It should be in the manuscript form. The assignment must be single-spaced and not exceed 4 pages. Save the Word file as **Results\_YourName.docx**. **Due Mar 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 8:** Final Paper – The final paper should include the following sections. Refer to a conference paper or a journal article for a typical format.

- Cover: Study title, student name, and course information.

- Abstract ( $\leq 150$  words): A clear roadmap of the paper. Include the study title at the top. Page number 1 starts here.
- Introduction (about 1 page): Background, motivation of the study, study objectives, aimed contributions and implications of the study, etc.
- Literature Review (about 5 pages): Review of main constructs and theory of the study. Review of relevant empirical findings of previous research. Development of the theoretical framework of the study including research questions and/or hypotheses. It should be clear that research questions/hypotheses are drawn from the literature review.
- Methods (about 4 pages): Overview of the study design (e.g., rationale for the chosen survey method), sampling procedure (or participant recruitment procedure), respondent characteristics (e.g., demographic and other study relevant characteristics), procedure of the study (i.e., survey), and measures. Internal consistency (e.g., Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) should be reported for all multi-item scales. Statistical analysis may be necessary to describe respondent characteristics (e.g., % of male/female, mean and range of age, etc.)
- Results (about 4 pages): Organize the results by research questions/hypotheses and report relevant statistics in the body text. Use tables and/or figures for effective presentation of the results.
- Discussion (about 4 pages): Interpretation of the result in light of the theoretical framework presented in the literature review, study limitations, suggestions for future research, theoretical and/or practical implications, and conclusion. Do not repeat the descriptions of the results.
- Tables and/or figures: Number them sequentially and reference them in the body text.
- Bibliography: The APA style is recommended. Cite all that are referenced in the bibliography. Reference all that are cited in the body text.
- Appendices: A blank copy of the questionnaire and any other instruments used in the study.

The final paper should be double-spaced. Abstract through Discussion must not exceed 25 pages. (A penalty is applied for each line that exceeds the page limit.)

It is recommended the final paper including the appendices is one Word file (save the Word file as **FinalPaper\_YourName.docx**). If you must make the appendix a separate file, save the Word files as **FinalPaper\_Appendix\_YourName.docx**. Do not submit pdf files. **Due Apr 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

### Article Critique

Assignment 2 is a critique of survey research published in an academic journal. For the assigned article, write your analysis pertaining to the following:

- 1) Background and goal/objective of the study: What issue(s) motivated this study (e.g., a lack of research or data on the particular topic in the current literature, conflicting findings reported in previous studies, or a problem of significance that occurs in society)? Why was it important to investigate the issue? What are the goals/objectives of the study?
- 2) Research questions and/or hypotheses: What are research questions and/or hypotheses of the study? What relationships or effects did the researcher study?
- 3) Methods: What type of survey was conducted (e.g., mail, telephone, Web, etc.)? Who were the respondents and how were they recruited? How many people were invited (or contacted) to the study and how many people actually participated? What variables were measured?
- 4) Data analysis: How were survey responses analyzed? What kind(s) of statistical analysis was used?
- 5) Results: Summarize the results for each research question and/or hypothesis you identified in Q2.

You have an option of choosing an article in your field of study instead of the assigned article. The study reported in the article must have employed a survey method and provided empirical results (e.g., statistical analysis of data). In addition, the article needs to address all of the above topics. Submit the article (via email) by **Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, 5PM** for my review and approval.

Your assignment addressing the above topics should be written in Word and submitted to the Assignments tool on

Sakai. The Word document may be single-spaced but must not exceed 2 pages (A penalty is applied for each line that exceeds the page limit). If you analyze your own article, submit it in pdf as well. **Save the Word file as ArticleCritique\_YourName.docx. Due Feb 13<sup>th</sup>.**

### Assignment Format

Unless otherwise noted, Word documents (.doc or docx) must be formatted to have a 1” margin on all four sides. Use 12-point Times New Roman font (a larger font can be used for titles and headings) and insert page numbers at bottom center. Use one font style only including page numbers (i.e., Times New Roman). The document must be left justified and prepared according to the APA style.

For all assignments, indicate 1) assignment title (e.g., Assignment 1: Research Topic), 2) course title and semester (e.g., Survey Research Methods, Spring 2015), 4) date of submission, and 5) student name at the top of the first page. Do not use a cover page unless otherwise instructed.

The purpose of results tables is to help the reader to understand the results of analysis easily. Keep that in mind when constructing results tables. For instance, do not split a table over two pages. If a table is too large to place in the remainder of the page, use a page break and place it in the next page so that the entire table may fit in a page.

Proof-read your assignments thoroughly and check for any misspelled words, grammatically incorrect sentences, and unclear or confusing expressions. The fact that you are an international student is not an excuse for making the above errors. **A penalty is applied for each error in writing after three.**

### QUIZZES

A total of nine quizzes are given in the course and can be found in the Assessments tool on Sakai. Quizzes are based on lecture videos and required readings. Do not solely rely on lecture videos to study for a quiz, although lecture videos can be used as a guide to understand important topics to focus on. Each quiz is timed. Quizzes are graded immediately following your completion and the correct answers will be displayed.

### GRADING CRITERIA & SCALE

Grading Criteria		Grading Scale			
30%	Assignments 1-7	A	= 90 or above	C	= 70-75
50%	Assignment 8 (Final Paper)	B+	= 86-89	D+	= 66-69
20%	Quizzes	B	= 80-85	D	= 60-65
		C+	= 76-79	E	= below 60

### COURSE FORMAT & POLICY

This is a Web-based course and thus gives you flexibility of when and where you “attend” the class. However, it is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that you set aside a “class time” each week to study course materials and complete assignments. Students will not be excused for turning in the assignment late unless the reason is approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies & Research, your thesis/dissertation chair, or department chair/program director. Having an assignment deadline around the same time for another class is not an excusable reason for turning in an assignment late in this class, for example. Do not wait until the day before the assignment due to contact me with questions. Keep up with readings and lecture videos and start assignments early.

No extra credit projects are available. All assignments and quizzes are due on the specified dates (refer to the Course Schedule). Twenty percent of the assignment’s grade will be deducted each day the assignment is turned in late. All assignments must be prepared and presented professionally. Students must take special care to use proper words and spelling, grammatically correct sentences, and logically flowing content. A penalty is applied for each misspelled word, grammatically incorrect sentences and other writing errors after three errors.

### PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic honesty is expected on all assignments and quizzes. Cheating of any kind (including plagiarism) will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism is particularly a serious issue in graduate classes. It is YOUR responsibility to make certain you understand what constitutes plagiarism and to ensure that you give proper credit anytime you draw on someone else's writing. If you're not certain you understand what is acceptable and what is not, check out these Web sites or consult me. Your assignments will be checked for plagiarism with Turninit program:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>

<http://www.sja.ucdavis.edu/sja/plagiarism.html>

The students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

Students are strongly advised to view UF's academic honesty guidelines at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative course schedule. Additional lecture videos and readings may be added. The quizzes are accessible in the Assessments tool on the course site of Sakai E-Learning. Assignments must be submitted to the Assignments tool on Sakai. Quizzes and assignments are due by Friday noon of the week.

Week 1 -2		Module 1: Overview of Survey Research	
Jan 6 – Jan 16	<b>Required Reading</b>	Blair, Czaja, & Blair: Ch. 1, 2, 3	
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	Fowler: Ch. 1, 2	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	Welcome & Course Overview (Course Materials homepage)	
		1.1 Overview of Survey Research	
		1.2 Survey Errors	
			1.3 Stages of Survey Planning
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 1 (covers the syllabus and Welcome videos) in <a href="#">Assessments</a> by <b>Jan 9<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
	Take Quiz 2 (Module 1) in <a href="#">Assessments</a> by <b>Jan 16<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	Answer the questions on Discussion board to introduce yourself to the class by <b>Jan 9<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
Week 3		Module 2: Theory & Measurement	
Jan 19 – Jan 23	<b>Required Reading</b>	DeVellis: Ch. 1, 2	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	3.1 Theory & Hypothesis	
		3.2 Conceptualization & Operationalization	
		3.3 Indicators	
		3.4 Measurement	
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 3 (Module 2) in <a href="#">Assessments</a> by <b>Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	Submit Assignment 1 (Research Topic) to <a href="#">Assignments</a> by <b>Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> noon</b>		
Week 4-5		Module 3: Developing the Questionnaire	
Week 4		Module 3A: Considerations in Questionnaire Design	
Jan 26 – Jan 30	<b>Required Reading</b>	Blair, Czaja, & Blair: Ch. 8, 9	Peterson: Ch. 4, 7 (pp. 101-115)
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	Peterson: Ch. 1, 2	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	4.1 Key Factors for Questionnaire Design	
		4.2 Effective Question Writing	
		4.3 Questionnaire Structure	
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 4 (Module 3A) in <a href="#">Assessments</a> by <b>Jan 30<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
Week 5		Module 3B: Developing Survey Questions	
Feb 2 – Feb 6	<b>Required Reading</b>	Peterson: Ch. 3, 5 (pp. 61-76), 6	
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	DeVellis: Ch. 5	Fowler: Ch. 6
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	4.4 Open-end Questions	
		4.5 Close-end Questions	
4.6 Rating Scales			

		4.7 Common Questions	
	<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 5 (Module 3B) in <b>Assessments</b> by <b>Feb 6<sup>th</sup> noon</b>	
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Module 4: Sampling</b>		
<b>Feb 9 – Feb 13</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>	Blair, Czaja, & Blair: Ch. 5, 6, 7	
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	Fowler: Ch. 3, 4	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	6.1 Sampling Frames	
		6.2 Sampling Techniques	
		6.3 Sample Size Determination	
		6.4 Response Rate	
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 6 (Module 4) in <b>Assessments</b> by <b>Feb 13<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	Submit Assignments 2 (Article Critique) to <b>Assignment6s</b> by <b>Feb 13<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Research Proposal</b>		
<b>Feb 16 – Feb 20</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	Submit Assignments 3 (Proposal) & 4 (IRB Form) to <b>Assignments</b> by <b>Feb 20<sup>th</sup> noon</b>	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Module 5: Evaluating Survey Questions</b>		
<b>Feb 23 – Feb 27</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>	Blair, Czaja, & Blair: Ch. 10	Peterson: Ch. 5 (pp. 76-81), 7 (pp. 115-119)
		DeVellis: Ch. 3 (pp. 31, 45-47, 51-54), 4	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	5.1 Questionnaire Pretest	
		5.2 Reliability	
		5.3 Validity	
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 7 (Module 5) in <b>Assessments</b> by <b>Feb 27<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	Submit Assignments 5 (Analysis Plan) to <b>Assignments</b> by <b>Feb 27<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>		
<b>Week 10-11</b>	<b>Module 6: Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>		
<b>Mar 9 – Mar 20</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>	Pallant: Ch. 6, 10-11, 13, 16-19	
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	Pallant: Ch. 8-9, 22, 20	
	<b>Assignment</b>	Submit Assignments 6 (Data Analysis) to <b>Assignments</b> by <b>Mar 13<sup>th</sup> noon</b>	
Submit Assignments 7 (Results) to <b>Assignments</b> by <b>Mar 20<sup>th</sup> noon</b>			
<b>Week 12-13</b>	<b>Final Paper</b>		
<b>Mar 23 – Apr 3</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	Submit the Final Paper to <b>Assignments</b> by <b>Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> noon</b>	
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Module 7: Types of Survey Method</b>		
<b>Apr 6 – Apr 10</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>	Blair, Czaja, & Blair: Ch. 4	
	<b>Optional Reading</b>	Fowler: Ch. 5	
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	2.1 Mail Survey	
		2.2 Web Survey	
		2.3 Telephone Survey	
		2.4 Face-to-Face Survey	
2.5 Choosing a Survey Method			
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 8 (Module 7) in <b>Assessments</b> by <b>Apr 10<sup>th</sup> noon</b>		

Week 15-16	Module 8: Ethical Issues in Survey Research	
Apr 13 – Apr 22	<b>Required Reading</b>	Fowler: Ch. 11
	<b>Lecture Videos</b>	8.1 Ethical Responsibilities for Respondents
		8.2 Ethical Responsibilities for Interviewers
		8.3 Other Important Issues
<b>Quiz</b>	Take Quiz 9 (Module 8) in <a href="#">Assessments</a> by <b>Apr 17<sup>th</sup> noon</b>	