Introduction to Survey Methodology

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**Dates:** Monday-Friday, June 9-13, 1PM - 5PM

**Location:** G150, ISR-Perry

**Summary**
This course is an abbreviated introduction to the field of survey methodology, focusing on modes of survey data collection. It introduces principles of survey design that are the basis of standard practices in the field. The course examines research literatures that use both observational and experimental methods to test hypotheses about the quality of survey data. The course uses the total survey error as a framework to discuss modes of data collection, survey administration, survey interviewing, and nonresponse.

**1. Overview of the Course**
The field of survey methodology draws on theories and practices developed in several academic disciplines—mathematics, statistics, psychology, sociology, computer science, and economics. To become an accomplished professional in the survey research field requires a mastery of research literatures as well as experience designing, conducting, and analyzing surveys. Thus, this course introduces the student to a set of principles of survey design that are the basis of standard practices in the field. The course exposes the student to research literatures that use both observational and experimental methods to test key hypotheses about the nature of human behavior that affect the quality of survey data. The concept of total survey error is used as a framework to discuss alternative modes of data collection, field administration operations, the role of the survey interviewer, and impacts of nonresponse on survey statistics.

The course is intended as a much abbreviated introduction to the field, taught at a graduate level. Key concepts in survey methodology — survey sampling, sampling designs, questionnaire design, question evaluation, weighting and post-survey processing will not be covered. Lectures and course readings assume that students understand basic statistical concepts (at the level of an undergraduate course) and have exposure to elements of social science perspectives on human behavior. For those lacking such a background, supplementary readings are recommended.

**2. Prerequisites and course requirements**
No prior experience or course work in survey methodology is required. Some course topics are statistical in character. Students are required to bring a laptop computer to class.
3. Readings
Primary readings will be from:


3. Homework and Participation
There will be two homework assignments in addition to in-class group and individual assignments. Homework assignments that are to be completed outside of class should be emailed to the course grader by the beginning of class on the due date. Students are expected to come to class having completed assigned readings and should be ready to participate actively.

4. Class Schedule

Day 1: Introduction, Inference and Error in Surveys
Lecture: Introduction to survey methodology; Steps of the process of a survey
Readings: Groves, et al. (2009), Chapters 1 and 2
Exercise: Group exercise – Study design vignettes

Day 2: Modes of Data Collection, I
Lecture: Face-to-face, Telephone, Self-administered, and Administrative records
Readings: Groves, et al. (2009), Chapter 5
Exercise: Mode vignettes exercise (start in class, due Wednesday)

Day 3: Modes of Data Collection, II: Computer Assisted Data Collection
Lecture: Computer assisted data collection; Web surveys
Exercise: Group work – Web survey critiques
Day 4: Interviewers and Interviewing

Lecture: Recruiting and hiring of interviewers; Interviewer training; Approaches to interviewing; Evaluation of interviewing performance; Management of data collection effort

Readings: Groves, et al. (2009), Chapter 9
Fowler and Mangione (1990), Chapters 1-5

Exercise: Round-robin interviewing exercise (start in class; report due Friday)

Day 5: Nonresponse

Lecture: Contacting sample units; Gaining the cooperation of sample units
        Monitoring the progress of data collection; Response rates

Readings: Groves, et al. (2009), Chapter 6

Exercise: Group work — Computing AAPOR response rates