Survey Research Methods

ERMA 8200

3 credit hours

Course Syllabus – Spring 2018

**Instructor:** David T. Marshall, Ph.D.

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334-844-5038

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:15-2:30pm by appointment

Thursdays 11:00-12:15pm by appointment

**Meeting Time and Space:**

Thursdays 5:00-7:50pm – 0015B Haley Center

**Course Description and Objectives**

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize and discuss the uses of survey research
2. Recognize and apply the appropriate estimates of reliability and validity
3. Prepare an IRB application and cover letter
4. Discuss the advantages and limitations of different sampling procedures
5. Compare and contrast different modes (paper, electronic, personal interview, etc.) of survey administration
6. Describe procedures used to increase response rate in survey research
7. Construct a measurement instrument in accordance with guidelines discussed in class and the research literature
8. Pilot test a measurement instrument developed in class
9. Determine the appropriate data analysis procedure(s) given a specific set of research questions
10. Prepare a report detailing instrument development, pilot study, sampling and procedures used to implement the measurement instrument

**Texts**

**Required**

Fowler, F. (2104). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

ISBN-10: 1452259003; ISBN-13: 978-1452259000.

**Recommended**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological*

*Association (*6th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J.D., & Christian, L.M. (2014). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The*

*tailored design method.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons Publishers.

## Course Activities and Deliverables

**Class Attendance**

Excellent attendance is expected. If you are not going to be able to attend class, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor and obtain notes from another student.

**Assignments**

***Assignment 1: Research Purpose (1-2 pages)***

1. **Describe your research topic.** What are the research questions you want to answer? Why is this topic important? Support your responses with citations and attach an annotated bibliography consisting of a minimum of three research studies.
2. **What are the variables or constructs to be measured?** Identify the variables in terms of constructs in the above research questions to be measured using a survey. Explain why a survey would be most appropriate to use to answer your questions. You will likely have to specify factors that define a construct (e.g. motivation cannot be directly measured; you have to use a specific theory of motivation to identify factors that comprise motivation that you could measure)

***Assignment 2: Survey Critique (2-3 pages)***

1. Find a survey, and a related research study, that pertains to your research interests.
2. Review the study and survey and identify the following:
   1. Purpose of the study/Research questions
   2. Variables intended to be measured by the survey
   3. Evidence provided to support the survey instrument or lack thereof (reliability/validity, etc.)
   4. Sampling procedures
   5. Survey administration procedures
3. Critique the survey and study. What are the strengths and limitations?
4. Describe how this study and instrument can be used to help design your survey research project.

***Assignment 3: Survey Blueprint***

1. Prepare a survey blueprint that summarizes the major components or sections of the survey. Define each component carefully and estimate the number of items per component.
2. Include supporting references that support the inclusion of each section or component.
3. Specify the types of items to be developed.

***Assignment 4: Sampling Plan (1-2 pages)***

1. Describe the target population as well as the accessible population. Who will be sampled?
2. Describe the sampling approach (random/stratified/etc.) and explain why this is most appropriate. Describe the pros and cons of the approach you selected.
3. How will the survey be administered? Explain why this approach is most appropriate. What are the pros and cons of the method(s) you selected.
4. What approaches will be used to maximize the response rate to your survey?

***Assignment 5: Reliability and Validity Plan (1-2 pages)***

1. For your survey study, what type(s) of reliability are most appropriate? How will you support them?
2. What type(s) of validity are most appropriate and how will they be supported? Specifically, what kind of data needs to be collected to provide each type of validity evidence?

***Assignment 6: Draft Survey***

Submit a full draft of your survey instrument, including your updated survey blueprint.

***Assignment 7: Peer Review Summary***

Submit your review of a peer’s survey instrument. This can take the form of written comments or

a marked up copy of the survey. In your review, provide constructive feedback pertaining to:

* 1. Overall layout, design, and flow of the survey
  2. Clarity of directions
  3. Survey item and response scale/formats, appropriateness, item order, validity, etc.

***Assignment 8: CITI Training***

CITI training is an online resource that provides training on ethical issues related to human subjects research. Completing these training modules is required by the university before you can conduct research with human subjects.

You must complete the basic course in Social and Behavioral Research (the one for AU personnel). It is also a good idea to complete any relevant optional courses related to your research interests (e.g. Research with Children, Students in Research, etc.). Visit the following site to begin. **You should not pay anything additional to complete this requirement!**

<https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/training>

If you have completed CITI training within the last three years, simply upload your completion certificates to Canvas for this requirement. **As long as you are current in your training, no new training is required.**

***Assignment 9: Pilot Testing (1-2 pages)***

1. Identify an appropriate pilot testing plan. (Can you collect enough data to do item analysis or should you do a think aloud with 2-3 people?)
2. Recruit an appropriate number of participants for your pilot test.
3. Summarize your findings. Include how you plan to respond to the results of the pilot test.

***Final Project***

1. **Paper.** This represents an integration and expansion of all of the assignments you have completed throughout the semester related to your survey. This paper should be written in APA format and include:

*Section 1 (2-4 pages)*

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review (expanded from Assignment 1)

*Section 2 (3-5 pages)*

1. Methods (updated Assignments 4 & 5)
2. Findings (expanding on Assignment 9, including greater detail)

*Section 3 (1-2 pages)*

1. Future Research Plans (summarize what you learned overall and outline future research to be conducted using your instrument)
2. **Cover Letter.** Prepare a cover letter or email to be sent to potential participants. It must be compelling and follow the guidelines covered in class and in your readings.
3. **Survey Instrument.** Revised copy of your survey with cover letter in Qualtrics.
4. **Consent Form.** Should contain the necessary IRB elements/guidelines.

**Grading Procedure**

The grading procedure is criterion-referenced, that is, grades are determined by performance as compared to standards. Grades will be determined by the following weights:

Assignments & Activities 75%

Final project 15%

Presentation 10%

**Grading Scale**

100 - 90 A

89.99 – 80 B

79.99 – 70 C

69.99 – 60 D

59.99 and below F

**Late Assignments Policy**

All assigned work is expected to be received by start of class on the date it is due unless otherwise stated. Open communication is the key. If you have a situation that interferes with your ability to complete an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as you are aware of this. Life happens, and individual circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Assigned work that is turned in late will receive a reduction of 5 points per day. The only exceptions will be documented emergencies and situations approved with the instructor in advance of the due date. All work is expected to be typed. The late penalty will be applied to work completed in writing and then turned in late in a typed format.

**Incompletes and Withdrawals**

Grades associated with incomplete course work or withdrawal from class will be assigned in strict conformity to University policy (see Auburn University Bulletin). If you wish to drop this course you may do so by the 10th class day with no grade assignment. From the 10th day of class to mid-quarter a W (withdrawn-passing) grade will be recorded in your transcripts. After this period withdrawal from the course will only be granted under unusual circumstances and must be approved by the Dean of the College of Education.

Note that a new incomplete grade (IN) policy is in effect. The new policy requires that students complete a form requesting an IN grade be assigned. If this form is not completed and given to the instructor of the class, a grade will be assigned with a score of zero (0) for work that has not been completed and turned in by the time the instructor reports grades.

**Academic Misconduct**

The Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology recognizes university policy regarding academic misconduct. Violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance during examinations, submitting another’s work product as your own, using another’s words as your own without appropriate citation, sharing unauthorized materials with another that contain questions or answers to examinations, altering or attempting to alter assigned grades. In accordance with University policy regarding academic misconduct, students may be assigned several sanctions upon violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code. See the Tiger Cub publication for the current year for specifics regarding academic misconduct as well as student’s rights and responsibilities associated with the Code.

**Disability Accommodations**

Students who need special accommodations in class, as provided for by the American Disabilities Act, should arrange a confidential meeting with the instructor during office hours in the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. You must bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have these forms but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 334-844-2096.

**Tentative Schedule**

This represents a tentative schedule of the assignments and activities for the semester. This schedule is subject to change. Assignments and activities may be added to the schedule per the needs of the learning community. The third column represents the readings, assignments, and activities to be completed by the date listed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **TO BE COMPLETED** |
| January 11 | Course introduction | * None |
| January 18 | Survey design basics; Survey blueprints | * Fowler Ch. 1 * Andres Ch. 2 & 3 * Assignment 1 |
| January 25 | Item development | * Thomas (1999) * Dillman * Assignment 2 |
| February 1 | Sampling | * Fowler Ch. 2-4 * Assignment 3 |
| February 8 | Validity and reliability | * Fowler Ch. 6 |
| February 15 | Validity and reliability; Item analysis | * Andres Ch. 7 * Assignment 4 |
| February 22 | Validity; Survey administration | * Fowler Ch. 5, 7-8 * Assignment 5 |
| March 1 | Peer review  **No class meeting** | * Assignment 6 (upload draft to Canvas and share with partner) |
| March 8 | IRB and recruitment | * Fowler Ch. 11 * Assignment 7 due by midnight |
| March 15 | **Spring Break**  **No class meeting** | * None |
| March 22 | Delphi method; Universal design; Cross-cultural research | * Thompson & Thurlow (2004) p. 3-9 * Pilcher (2015) p. 54-59 * Assignment 8 |
| March 29 | Peer revision | * Working on final products |
| April 5 | Pilot data; Presenting findings | * Sapsford (2007) Ch. 12-13 * Gather pilot data |
| April 12 | AERA  **No class meeting** | * Working on final products |
| April 19 | Presenting findings | * Assignment 9 * Presentations |
| April 26 | Final projects | * Final project due by midnight |

**Course Expectations**

The following course expectations were co-constructed during class on January 11, 2018. Expectations for students, the instructor, and for the community at large are included in this space. These can and will be updated as needed throughout the semester.

**Expectations for the instructor**

* Provide timely feedback; return assignments by the next class meeting
* Respond to email within 48 hours
* Provide explicit instructions
* Encourage collaboration
* Be open to different learning styles

**Expectations for the student**

* Actively participate in assigned activities
* Give a sincere effort
* Let the instructor know if expectations are unclear

**Expectations for everyone**

* Respect each other as individuals
* Respect each other’s time
* Be open to ideas that are not your own
* Assume good will
* Engage in and encourage open communication