Course Syllabus
Survey Management (STAT 6238)
Fall Semester 2011
Mondays, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Alexandria Graduate Education Center, Rm. 218

Instructors

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Office hours for both instructors are by appointment.

Course description

The goal of this course is to describe good practice in the conduct and reporting of survey research, with a focus on survey operations. Course material covers the spectrum of survey management activities, from determining project scope and client objectives through training, field work, data processing, data analysis, report writing, and presentation of results. Professional standards, quality management, and identifying common mistakes and oversights will be emphasized.

This course is focused on the practice of survey research and will develop in students the basic skills necessary to conduct research judged as credible by experts in the industry. Since practice skills are best developed through hands-on experience, a major component of the course is the group survey project. Significant portions of class time each week and of students’ time commitment to the course outside of class will be dedicated to this endeavor.

Required text

Additional readings

Additional readings listed on the syllabus are available through Blackboard or will be handed out in class. Web links to readings available online are provided in the syllabus or will be provided through e-mail.

Student learning objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to integrate the major components of survey leadership and survey management and ensure quality management practices are followed at every stage, including the (1) survey process, (2) survey planning and operations, (3) project management, (4) survey instrument and sampling design, (5) data collection, and (6) data analysis and reporting.

Teaching style

We will take a seminar-style approach in class, using a mixture of reading assignments and practical hands-on exercises to develop survey management skills. Seminar-style courses require a different learning mindset than lecture courses. Seminar-style courses are fundamental to graduate-level training in all disciplines because they encourage students to develop critical thinking skills in the face of complex course material, the application of which is context-dependent. Such is the case with Survey Management. This type of interaction also mirrors what is required of survey researchers in research team settings, an important skill to develop in its own right.

The first part of each class will be devoted to class discussion of the week’s assigned readings and other topics. It is imperative that students come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings and completed any homework assignments. Students will be asked to lead at least one discussion during the semester, placing each student explicitly in the role of learning facilitator for her/his peers. The second part of each class will be devoted to working in small groups on the survey project. The instructors will provide advice and guidance to groups during this time.

Class policies

Attendance:
Due to the fact that graduate courses only meet for 14 sessions, students are expected to be present for all sessions. Students who have to miss a session must obtain prior approval and arrange to turn in any assignments at a mutually agreed upon time.

Late assignments:
Assignments are expected to be turned in on the due dates listed in the syllabus. Students must obtain instructors’ approval in advance if an assignment needs to be turned in late. Points will be deducted for late assignments.
University policy on religious holidays:
1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

Students in this course will also be asked to sign a pledge to abide by the AAPOR code of ethics.

Support for students outside the classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS):
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

University Counseling Center (UCC): 202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
  http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. Additional emergency information may be obtained by visiting the Campus Advisories webpage (http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu) or calling the GW Information Line at 202-994-5050.
Grading criteria

Students will earn final grades for the semester based on the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group survey project:</td>
<td>40 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data file</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>14 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home midterm</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home final</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-led class discussion</td>
<td>6 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 100 points

Partial points will be awarded for each assignment and requirements for each assignment will be provided in advance. Final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A = 94 to 100
- A- = 90 to 93
- B+ = 87 to 89
- B  = 83 to 86
- B- = 80 to 82
- C+ = 77 to 79
- C  = 73 to 76
- C- = 70 to 72
- D  = 69 or below

All assignments should be submitted via attachment in an email to the instructors before the start of class or by the time specified in the syllabus on the due date. MS Word and MS Excel (when appropriate) are preferred. Attachments must be formatted for PC.

**Group survey project (40 total points)** — The best way to learn survey management is to develop, conduct, and analyze the results from a survey you manage yourself. Students will work in small groups to choose a topic, design the sample, develop the instruments, collect and edit the data, analyze the data, and develop a written and oral report. Students will be given the second half of each class period to work in groups on the assignment and instructors will provide guidance during this time. The written paper (20 points) and data file (10 points) will be due by 11:59 p.m. on December 12. Students will also give an in-class presentation (10 points) on December 5. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to provide oral progress reports on their survey projects.

**Class participation (14 points)** — Students are expected to attend every class and fully participate in class discussions. Students will also e-mail the instructors their short written answers to the assigned questions for each week.
Take-home mid-term and final (20 points each)—Students will prepare written essay answers to 5 or 6 questions that challenge students to integrate the course material and group work. Students will be given 1 week to complete the midterm and final, due October 24 and December 15, respectively.

Student-led class discussion (6 points)—Each student will lead one class discussion of the week’s assigned readings. Students who are leading that week’s discussion are also expected to submit written responses to the discussion questions assigned by the instructors. The discussion leader’s role is to facilitate a conversation about (1) students’ answers to the week’s discussion questions, (2) the most important aspects of the week’s reading, and (3) pose additional questions and present additional material to further explicate the topic. In the past, students have contributed to the course by providing examples from their employment settings or other previous experience, further exploration of articles referenced in the assigned readings or listed as optional, designing short exercises to highlight concepts from the readings, and bringing to class newspaper or magazine articles that discuss survey management topics relevant to the assigned readings.

Additional readings and resources for students new to the program

This course will cover almost all aspects of survey design but will attempt to not duplicate material covered in other certificate program courses. The Survey Methodology (SM) textbook contains several chapters that cover material taught in other courses. These chapters are not required reading, but may be a good resource for students new to the program and for students who would like a refresher on the following topics:

Sampling: SM, Chapter 3: Target Populations, Sampling Frames, and Coverage Error
SM, Chapter 4: Sample Design and Sampling Error

Questionnaire design and testing: SM, Chapter 7: Questions and Answers in Surveys
SM, Chapter 8: Evaluating Survey Questions

Course Outline

August 29: Introduction to survey management

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 1: An Introduction to Survey Methodology
→ AAPOR’s Best Practices
http://www.aapor.org/Best_Practices.htm

Optional readings/additional resources:
→ “What is a Survey?” at http://www.whatisasurvey.info/
→ Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance on developing statistical surveys:
September 5: HOLIDAY--no class

September 12: Ethics in survey management

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 11: Principles and Practices Related to Ethical Research
→ AAPOR’s Code of Ethics
http://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Code.htm
→ AAPOR’s Standards for Minimal Disclosure
http://www.aapor.org/Disclosure_Standards.htm
→ Survey practices that AAPOR condemns
http://www.aapor.org/Survey_Practices_that_AAPOR_Condemns.htm

Optional readings/additional resources:
→ Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice (ASA)
http://www.amstat.org/about/ethicalguidelines.cfm
→ AAPOR’s IRB guidance
http://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Statement_for_IRBs.htm

Assignment due:
→ Bring signed ethics pledge to class
September 19: Survey project design: developing research questions and mode choice

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 2.1-2.2: Lifecycle of a Survey from a Design Perspective (pp 39-48).
→ SM, Chapter 5: Methods of Data Collection

September 26: Intercept survey methodology

Required readings:
→ Elections and Exit Polling, Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-15)
→ Elections and Exit Polling, Chapter 3.2.1: Evaluation of Edison/Mitofsky Election System (pp. 66-68)
→ Elections and Exit Polling, Chapter 6.2: Recommendations for the Future (pp. 190-193)
→ Elections and Exit Polling, Chapter 6.3.1: Exit Polls and Ethnic Diversity (pp. 194-202)
→ Elections and Exit Polling, Chapter 6.4.2: WAPOR Guidelines for Exit Polls and Election Forecasts (pp. 215-219)

Optional readings/additional resources:

Assignment due:
→ Group survey project topics due

October 3: Data quality

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 2.3-2.7: Inference and Errors in Surveys (pp. 49-64).
→ Data Quality, Chapter 2: What is Data Quality and Why Should We Care? (pp. 7-15)

Optional readings/additional resources:
→ Statistics Canada’s Quality Assurance Framework
→ SM, Chapters 7 & 8: Questionnaire Design and Testing

October 10: Managing projects and client relationships

Required readings:
→ Managing Projects in Organizations, Chapter 6: Tools and Techniques for Keeping the Project on Course
Assignment due:
Survey instruments for group projects due; presented in class

October 17: Measuring and minimizing nonresponse

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 6: Nonresponse in Sample Surveys
→ AAPOR’s Standard Definitions

Optional readings/additional resources:
→ Elections and Exit Polls, Chapter 2.3.1: Applying AAPOR’s Final Disposition Codes and Outcome Rates to the 2000 Utah Colleges’ Exit Poll (pp. 37-49).

Assignment due:
Survey project plan due; presented in class

Comments:
Take-home mid-term exam distributed

October 24: No CLASS

Assignment due 11:59pm:
Take-home mid-term exam (20 points)

October 31: Managing survey staff and interviewer training

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 9: Survey Interviewing

Optional readings/additional resources:

November 7: Managing survey data

Required readings:
→ SM, Chapter 10: Post Collection Processing of Survey Data
→ Data Quality, Chapter 5: Basic Data Quality Tools (pp.37-48)
November 14: Data analysis workshop (class will be held in the computer lab)

*Required readings TBD based on class experience and needs*

November 21: Current topics in survey management: cell phones and other mobile technology

*Required readings:*
→ AAPOR Cell phone task force report (2010)

November 28: Current topics in survey management: web surveys and online panels

*Required readings:*
→ AAPOR Report on online panels (2010)

December 5: In-class presentations (group survey projects, 10 points)

*Comments:*
→ Last day of class
→ Take-home final exam distributed

December 12: Assignments due by 11:59pm:
→ Group survey paper (20 points)
→ Group survey data file (10 points)

December 15: Assignments due by 11:59pm:
→ Take-home final exam (20 points)