Overview and Goals of Course:

This course will present research work which attempts to understand the effect of data collection decisions on major types of survey errors. This is not a “how –to-do-it” course on data collection, but instead examines the effects of key survey design decisions on the quality of the data collected. This course is designed to sensitize students to alternative design decisions and their impact on the data obtained from surveys.

The course will review alternative modes and methods of data collection used in surveys. The materials concentrate on the impact modes of data collection have on the quality of survey data, especially coverage error, nonresponse error, and measurement error. Methods of data collection will focus on advances in computer assisted methodology and comparisons among various methods (e.g. telephone versus face to face, paper versus computer assisted, interviewer administered versus self-administered). The statistical and social science literature on interviewer effects will also be examined, including literature related to the training and evaluation of interviewers. With respect to nonresponse, we will review current literature on the reduction of nonresponse and the impact of nonresponse on survey estimates.

Class Format, Instructor Access, and Course Materials:

This course will be taught via a traditional interactive presentation and discussion format in classrooms at the Odum Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University. The instructor’s office is based Research Triangle Park, NC. Office hours are available by appointment and students are encouraged to communicate by e-mail and phone as needed. All presentation slides, student assignments, and course reserves will be posted to the course website on https://sakai.unc.edu/portal: SOCI760.001.FA17.
Evaluation:

Grading will be based on …

- Participation in class discussion that demonstrates regularly completing the assigned readings (10% of grade). The participation portion of the grade will mostly be evaluated by the questions student submit prior to class each week. Questions can address any issues covered through the prior week’s class and must be submitted to the instructor via e-mail by 3:00 pm each Monday prior to class sessions. The instructor will select a few questions each week to discuss during the first few minutes of each class and answers others during the class.

- Three assignments (about 3-4-pages each) that will sequentially develop a proposal for a survey data collection project (20% for each assignment, total of 60% of grade)

- A final proposal for a survey data collection project that incorporates instructor feedback on the three assignments and addresses all relevant sources of survey error discussed in the class (30% of grade).

The schedule below indicates dates when the assignments will be available to students and when they will need to be completed and submitted. Assignments should be submitted to the instructor via e-mail; the instructor will confirm receipt via e-mail. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangement with the instructor.

Text and Readings:

The only text for this course is:


Multiple chapters from this book will be assigned as weekly readings. These chapters are marked with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule below and will not be included with the reserved readings made available to the class. Copies of all other additional readings can be accessed through the course website.
Course Schedule, Topics, and Readings:

Week 1 – August 29
Topics:
Overview; Goals, concepts, and challenges
Readings:

Week 2 – September 5
Topic:
Key dimensions of survey modes
Readings:

Week 3 – September 12
Topics:
Comparing modes, mixing modes, and responsive design
Readings:

Week 4 – September 19 (Assignment 1 posted)
Topic:
Survey modes and survey errors, case study
Readings:

Week 5 – September 26
Topic:
Computer-assisted survey methods, self-interviewing
Readings:

Week 6 – October 3 (Assignment 1 due)
Topic: Web surveys, future of survey technologies
Readings:

Week 7 – October 10 (Assignment 2 posted)
NO CLASS MEETING – Duke fall break

Week 8 – October 17
Topics: Respondent selection procedures, proxy reporters
Readings:

Week 9 – October 24 (Assignment 2 due)
Topics: Interviewer effects, interviewer training
Readings:

Week 10 – October 31 (Assignment 3 posted)
Topics: Interviewer quality control, interviewing techniques
Readings:
Week 11 – November 7
Topics:
Nonresponse definition, trends and consequences
Readings:
(2) Groves, R. (2006). Nonresponse rates and nonresponse bias in household surveys.”
   Public Opinion Quarterly 70: 646–675 (special issue).

Week 12 – November 14 (Assignment 3 due)
Topics:
Nonresponse theories, actions, and assessment
Readings:
equal: Reduction of nonresponse bias and nonresponse error. Public Opinion Quarterly
73: 785–806.
level correlates to evaluate nonresponse effects in a telephone survey. Public Opinion
Quarterly 70: 704–719.

Week 13 – November 21
Topic:
Longitudinal surveys
Readings:

Week 14 – November 28
Topic:
Surveys of organizations
Readings:
301-318.
establishment surveys: Using an ensemble tree model to create nonresponse
propensity scores and detect potential bias in an agricultural survey. Journal of Official

Week 15 – Final proposals due December 8