

CSUS 834: Survey Research Methods

Spring 2022

Thursday 3:00 -5:50 pm

Room: A306 Wells Hall

Zoom Room; [914 4663 9599](https://msu.zoom.us/j/91446639599)

Passcode: CSUS834

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1. Introduction

The field of survey methodology draws on frameworks, theories, and practices developed over decades of academic research in social science disciplines including: economics, statistics, sociology, human dimensions of natural resources, agriculture, health, and psychology.

This course introduces students to a set of principles of (a) general research methods, (b) survey design, and (c) survey data analysis through basic statistical techniques using practical and “hands-on” experiences.

The course also covers alternative modes of data collection, field administration operations, the role of the survey interviewer, impacts of nonresponse or enumerator bias on survey statistics, the effect of question structure, wording and context on respondent behavior, models of measurement error, post-survey data processing, and estimation in surveys. The course is intended as an introduction to the field, taught at a graduate level.

2. Course Aims

This course has several specific aims related to introducing students how to conduct quantitative survey research. The course is therefore designed to:

- (1) Introduce students to a number of techniques that are used to collect and analyze quantitative survey data and to provide practical experience with each.
- (2) Help students think analytically about a given research question and to design an appropriate survey to answer that question or set of questions.
- (3) Examine the nature of quantitative research and to reflect upon what constitutes high quality survey research and how to design survey research based on these principles
- (4) Develop an appreciation for the interplay between (a) developing a theoretically based research question, (b) designing and administering a survey instrument to answer this question and (c) analyzing survey data and communicating the answer to the research question posed.

Learning Objectives

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

- (1) Design general research questions that can be answered through survey research methods
- (2) Design measurement instruments (surveys) and survey items (questions)
- (3) Administer surveys through appropriate sampling techniques
- (4) Analyze survey data by selecting appropriate statistical techniques
- (5) Communicate findings and survey results through appropriate venues (reports, academic papers, etc.)
- (6) Appreciate the virtues and limitations of a quantitative survey approaches to research and the role that it may play in addressing scholarly as well as practical questions.

3. Course Format

The class meets physical in A306 Wells Hall on Thursdays from 3:00 pm-5:50 pm. When MSU regulations around COVID dictate online instruction only, we will meet via [ZOOM](#). I hope to meet in person as much as possible. If you are uncomfortable meeting in person, please contact me and we will work something out.

This course is designed to give you hands-on experience developing, collecting, and analyzing survey data. I feel the best way to do this is give you a real problem to work on. Therefore, this course will center around developing a survey instrument to investigate the [Innovation Scholars Program](#) (ISP). The ISP has been “ran” three times at three different institutions in two different African countries since 2016. In this class, you will develop, administer, and evaluate a survey to capture some of the long-, medium-, and short-term impact of the project. My goal is to prepare you to do your graduate research and develop your academic research language skills. This course should provide you with some skills to move from being a student who takes courses to being a being a researcher who can collect, analyze, and communicate survey based research.

You will also be introduced to several of the survey and statistical support services at MSU. We will have speakers from the following MSU statistical support units: [Center for Statistical Training and Consulting \(CSTAT\)](#); [CANR Statistical Consulting Center \(SSC\)](#); and [MSU Libraries](#). All of these resources will help you implement your graduate school research.

This course will focus on the process of survey-based research. We will walk through the survey-based research starting with writing a research question, selecting research methodology, design a survey instrument, administrating the survey, survey data analysis and survey data presentation. In this course, you will learn to use [Qualtrics](#) to build and distribute and collect survey data. We will use [SPSS](#) to do basic data analysis, we will even look at using Excel to do some simple stuff. Several of our class periods will spend some time working in both Qualtrics and SPSS.

This will not be a standard lecture-based course. Instead, each time the class meets, we will work to advance your ISP survey data collection. Thru this project, you will learn new skills in survey design, administration, and analysis but also learn the challenges of field work. My career has been focused in the field. I have designed this course to bring the field into the classroom. Each class will focus on skills, challenges, and practice. As we encounter new challenges, I will bring into the class experts from around MSU to provide you with guidance. CSUS and MSU are full of experts with deep knowledge on how to best design, administer and analyze survey data. We will tap into this expertise throughout the semester. Think of me as your “guide” in this class who will help you think through the different challenges we will face.

Collegiality and adaptability is important in this course. Each of us should feel free to raise questions, share research experiences during class, bring interesting articles or issues to class, or make suggestions about how we do things. **Above all, the course is designed to be useful to you in your academic career and beyond. Therefore while this syllabus provides a basic structure, some assignments and activities will be adapted.** While the course is designed around providing you with content information and skills related to survey research in a structured format, overall this course is about engaging in a research and analytical process that can sometimes be messy and uncertain where there is no “right” answer. **This class is designed, in part, to embrace that messiness and uncertainty in a collaborative and comfortable environment.**

Most classes will be comprised of four major parts that include: (1) lectures that present basic information on survey research; (2) lectures that present basic information on statistical methods and survey data analysis (3) in-class exercises that use Qualtrics to collect data and statistical software package (SPSS) to analyze survey data and (4) opportunities for small group discussions and group-work related to designing surveys and analyzing survey data. Students are encouraged to bring questions related to their graduate research topic to class for group discussion. Students will also be asked to bring survey research examples from literature relevant to their field in order to analyze and critique studies that use survey techniques as the primary research method. Therefore, in addition to the lectures, the class is designed to provide students with hands-on experiences and discussions that prepare them to conducting their own survey research independently.

4. Course Materials and Resources

The course PowerPoint slides covered in lecture will be posted on-line on the class' D2L website under "Content." All of the required readings will be posted there, but some students may want to purchase the 2 textbooks from which many of the readings/lectures are derived. Both of these texts are good reference books for those doing survey-based theses or dissertations; take the opportunity to have a look at them and considering buying one or two.

4.1 Central Texts

Dillman, Don A., Jolene D. Smyth, and Leah Melani Christian. *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: the tailored design method*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Field, Andy. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Sage, 2009.

4.2 In-class Lab Exercises

For most classes, there will be at least some portion devoted to short lab exercises intended to orient students to using Qualtrics or SPSS and analyzing data using common statistical techniques. After lectures about different statistical techniques, we will be watching short videos and doing lab exercises using free online SPSS training models. While these lab exercises do not count toward your cumulative grade you may find them useful references in the future when you are working on analyzing survey data independently. All of these lab exercises can be found on the link below

Note: Midway through the course we will evaluate how it is going and try to make whatever changes we can to meet our course objectives and/or improve the experience.

5. Course Requirements and Assessment

This course will require a significant amount of time in and out of class to collect and analyze data if even in pilot data form so that you can analyze it for the final individual or group research project. It's important that you budget your time carefully and plan ahead for all the assignments, particularly the research exercises that lead up to the final project. With respect to grading, the percentages below reflect the relative weight of an assignment in determining your final grade.

Participation: 10%

Human Subjects Certification 5%

Research Project 20%

 Developing a Research Question

Developing a Research Design (Sampling, Data Collection)
Developing a Data Analysis Plan
Survey Design
Article Presentation 10%
Data Analysis Report 15% (Individual)
Final Report 30% (Group)
Presentations 10% (Group)

6. Course Policies

Active participation and interaction with group members is necessary to make this class a meaningful learning experience.

6.1 .Class attendance Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Absences will be noted. If you are sick, please stay home and get well. However, please notify me beforehand. If you miss class it is your responsibility to obtain notes from fellow students and check D2L for upcoming assignments.

6.2 Class conduct Collegiality is important in this course. Each of us should feel free to raise questions, share experiences during class, bring interesting articles or issues to class, or make suggestions about how we do things.

6.3 Readings All assigned readings should be completed before coming to class. Be ready to discuss them in depth. The readings are chosen carefully to give you background information about the different data collection and analysis techniques and are helpful resources when carrying out your final essay

6.4 Lab Exercises Most class days we will have short lab exercises. If you miss class, you are expected to have engaged in the online training assigned for that particular day.

6.5 Grading Throughout the course I will grade your work. To help those who are conscious of grades, I will also try to give students an indication of “where you stand in the class” from time to time. Although we try to focus on what we are learning rather than grades, I am sympathetic to students’ desire to have feedback about how they are faring in the class. If you feel unsure about this you should always feel free to come talk to me and ask me; it’s completely fair—so don’t be embarrassed if you are concerned.

6.6 Accommodations. If you need accommodations in this class related to a disability or religious holidays, please make an appointment with me to discuss as soon as possible.

6.7 Academic Integrity. Article 2.III.B.2 of the SRR states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. Therefore, unless specified otherwise, you are expected to complete all written course assignments on your own. This means you are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on

the assignment. Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty.

Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course.

7. Course Scheduling and Topics

	Date	Topic	Materials
Week 1	January 13 th	Introduction to the Course (and each other!) and research focus	Syllabus and Innovation Scholars Program Materials
Week 2	January 20 th	Work on Research Question Intro to Survey Research; Intro to SPSS	Miller, T. R., et al. Pouls
Week 3	January 27 th	Human Subjects Certification; Intro to IRB process; How to get ready for survey work – guest lecture	Chapter 1 Dillman Chapter 1 Field https://hrpp.msu.edu/msu-irb-onlineapplication-system-instructions https://hrpp.msu.edu/required-training
Week 4	February 3 rd	Student Presentations; Statistics and Surveys Research – guest lecture; Intro to SPSS (con't)	Chapter 2 Field Individual Presentations Begin
Week 5	February 10 ^h	Group discussions; SSC Presentation – guest lecture; Responding to Societal; Changes in Survey Intro to SPSS con't	Chapter 12 Dillman Work on surveys
Week 6	February 17 th	Selecting who to survey; Data entry and Transformation; Gender Issues Survey Peer Review	Chapter 3 Dillman Chapter 3 Field Group Research Questions Due
Week 7	February 24 th	; The fundamentals of writing questions; Interpreting Data output window in SPSS Surveys emailed at end of class	Chapter 2 Dillman Group Research Questions Due
Week 8	March 3 rd	Reducing Peoples Reluctance to Respond to Surveys Creating Graphs with data; Intro to Sigma Plot	Chapter 4 Dillman Chapter 4 Field

Week 9	March 10 th	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	March 17 th	How to write open-ended and close-ended questions; Descriptive Statistics and Frequencies Coding Qualitative Data – Guest Lecture	Chapter 5 Dillman
Week 11	March 24 th	Ordering questions; Comparing Means (t-test and ANOVA); GLM Focus Groups – Guest Lecture	Chapter 7 Dillman Chapter 9 Field <i>Data Analysis Plan Due</i>
Week 12	March 31 st	Mail questionnaires and implementation; Latent Constructs and Reliability; GLM; Economic questions – Guest Lecture	Chapter 10 Dillman Chapter 8 Field
Week 13	April 7 th	Web questionnaires and implementation; Factor Analysis	Chapter 9 Dillman Chapter 17 Field
Week 14	April 14 th	Mixed Mode questionnaires; Linear Regression	Chapter 11 Dillman Chapter 18 Field
Week 15	April 21 st	Logistic Regression	Chapter 19 Field <i>Dataset Analysis Summary Report</i>
Week 16	April 28 th	Group or Individual Presentations	Presentations

MSU Required Syllabus Components

MSU Grief Absence Policy

Michigan State University is committed to ensuring that the bereavement process of a student who loses a family member during a semester does not put the student at an academic disadvantage in their classes. If you require a grief absence, you should complete the “Grief Absence Request” web form (<https://www.reg.msu.edu/sitemap.aspx?Group=7>) no later than one week after knowledge of the circumstance. I will work with you to make appropriate accommodations so that you are not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

Disability Accommodations

Any student who feels that she or he may need accommodations based on a disability should discuss this with me as early as possible in the semester. It can either be after class or we can make an appointment to meet in my office.

MSU Guidelines for Handling Emergencies

In the event of an emergency arising within the classroom, the instructor will notify you of what actions that may be required to ensure your safety. It is the responsibility of each student to understand the evacuation, “shelter-in-place,” and “secure-in-place” guidelines posted in each facility and to act in a safe manner. You are allowed to maintain cellular devices in a silent mode during this course, in order to receive emergency SMS text, phone or email messages distributed by the university. When anyone receives such a notification or observes an emergency situation, they should immediately bring it to the attention of the instructor in a way that causes the least disruption. If an evacuation is ordered, please ensure that you do it in a safe manner and facilitate those around you that may not otherwise be able to safely leave. When these orders are given, you do have the right as a member of this community to follow that order. Also, if a shelter-in-place or secure-in-place is ordered, please seek areas of refuge that are safe depending on the emergency encountered and provide assistance if it is advisable to do so.

Academic Integrity

MSU recommends including the following language in all course syllabi:

[Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Spartan Code of Honor: Student leaders have recognized the challenging task of discouraging plagiarism from the academic community. The Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU) is proud to be continuing awareness of the Spartan Code of Honor academic pledge, focused on valuing academic integrity and honest work ethics at Michigan State University. The pledge reads as follows:

“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at

Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do."

You can learn more about the Spartan Code of Honor at honorcode.msu.edu.

Title IX

"Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at www.titleix.msu.edu."

Unless identified as a confidential source, all university employees are obligated to promptly report incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual misconduct, stalking, and relationship violence that:

- Are observed or learned about in their professional capacity
- Involve a member of the university community or
- Occurred at a university-sponsored event or on university property

Employees are only required to report relationship violence and sexual misconduct of which they become aware in their capacity as a university employee, not in a personal capacity.

Limits to Confidentiality

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.