Instructor:

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Thursdays 12:30-1:30

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or by appointment at CSR

**GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**PHS 7110/SOC 5110--SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS**

**Spring 2013**

This is a graduate seminar in survey methods with emphasis on methods used in public health sciences, sociology, and other fields of social science. The course is open to interested and qualified undergraduates as well as graduate students. My most important goal in this seminar is to work with students to create an atmosphere conducive to learning by all participants. The objectives of the course are to: familiarize you with the terms, concepts, resources and literature used by professional survey researchers in the social sciences and health sciences; develop your understanding of current research issues in survey methods; familiarize you with a range of modes and techniques of survey research; familiarize you with major surveys and the measures they use in health studies and social science studies; explore the most commonly used sampling methods, emphasizing practical issues in sampling for surveys; and develop key survey skills: survey study design, question-writing, questionnaire construction, interviewing, data quality control, and reporting of survey results. Upon completion of this course, you may not be a survey expert, but you will be well equipped to design and carry out a valid survey by mail, telephone, or the Internet.

**Prerequisites:** Students are welcome from all schools and departments of the university. Graduate students must have completed an introductory statistics course and at least one course in social science or public health research methods. Undergraduate sociology majors must have completed both SOC 3120 and SOC 3130 to take this course. Undergraduates from other majors must have completed comparable course work in introductory statistics and research methods.

**Format:** This course will be taught in a mixed format that combines lectures, seminar presentations, and discussion. In the seminar presentations, individual students will present summaries and lead discussions on a course topic, with all students in the class required to have read the assigned readings for that seminar. Lectures will be concentrated in the early part of the semester; seminar sessions on specific methods topics will be concentrated in the later part of the semester. Early in the semester, each student will share with the class key information about the “survey of the day:” an important health or social survey and key measures used in these surveys. The “survey of the day” summary will count toward the participation portion of your course grade.

**Books:** The following books are required for the course:

1. Don A. Dillman, Jolene D. Smyth and Leah Melani Christian. *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method.* Third Edition. Wiley, 2009.
2. Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler, Jrl, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. *Survey Methodology.* Second Edition. Wiley, 2009.
3. Patricia A. Gwartney. *The Telephone Interviewer’s Handbook: How to Conduct Standardized Conversations.* Jossey-Bass, 2007.

**Articles:** To be made available on line, through Collab. Students are responsible for downloading and printing the articles for the course.

**Assignments:** There will be several graded assignments during the course of the semester. Tentatively, the list of graded assignments will include:

Several sets of problems related to the textbook readings or lectures.

A questionnaire revision project.

An experience in actual interviewing using CSR’s CATI system [required but ungraded].

A survey study design project, submitted in two phases:

a) an outline of the design of a survey project that you devise

b) a narrative proposal describing and justifying the proposed study design.

In addition, there will be one or two short take-home assignments, related to material discussed in class, which will count toward the participation and preparedness portion of your grade.

**Oral presentation:** Each student will be assigned a seminar date and topic in which he or she is to lead discussion. Some readings for the session will be assigned by the instructor. The student presenter will be required to submit a list of possible readings for the topic, and will discuss the final class reading list for that session in advance with the instructor, at least *two weeks* before the presentation date. The presenter will submit a presentation outline to the instructor for discussion at least *one week* prior to the presentation date.

All students in the class will be expected to read a specified set of core readings for the seminar discussion. The student presenter will summarize some or all of the core readings and at least one other article that has not been read by all, and will then lead the subsequent discussion of the readings and the methods issues that they raise. In some cases, the presenter may be asked to make a short follow-up presentation at a later date if the discussion raises issues that call for further library research.

Presentations are graded on the following criteria: conceptual understanding and accurate coverage of the material (30%); organization and clarity of the presentation (30%); use of visual aids (20%); ability to generate discussion or participation (20%).

**Grading:** Your grade will have the following basis:

Homework assignments 35%

Oral presentation 25%

Proposal outline 10%

Narrative proposal 20%

Participation in class 10%

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100%

I reserve the right to change these proportions as the course develops. Attendance, preparation, timeliness of completion of work, and participation will count in your grades.

**Professionalization:** Students are strongly encouraged to become student members of AAPOR: The American Association for Public Opinion Research. Your first year of membership is *free*, includes a year’s subscription to *Public Opinion Quarterly* and will allow enrollment in AAPORnet, the online discussion group for professional survey researchers. The cost of annual renewal for students is only $25.00. Get details from the instructor or register online at [www.aapor.org](http://www.aapor.org).

**Schedule:**  A schedule of readings, seminar presentations, and due dates will be distributed separately. The schedule of readings will be posted on the Collab site.