Instructor:

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**GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**SOC 3110/SOC 5110/PHS 7110--SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS**

**Spring 2016**

This is course in survey methods with emphasis on methods used in sociology, health sciences and other fields of social science. This is a combined course for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. Requirements for graduate students differ in some respects from requirements for undergraduates. The course is open to students in all fields who have already completed a basic course in research methods. 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; develop your understanding of current research issues in survey methods; familiarize you with a range of modes and techniques of survey research; explore the most commonly used sampling methods, emphasizing practical issues in sampling for surveys; and develop your skills in survey design, question-writing, questionnaire construction, interviewing, data quality control, and understanding reports 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 via 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 (or be currently enrolled in) SOC 3120 and SOC 3130 to take this course. Undergraduates from other majors must have completed (or currently be enrolled in) comparable course work in introductory statistics and research methods.

**Format:** This course will be taught in a mixed format that combines lectures, seminar presentations, in-class workshops and discussion. The class will spend time throughout the semester, in and out of class, on exercises related to developing a survey of students regarding issues of free speech, political correctness, and microagressions on campus. In the seminar presentations, individual graduate 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.

**Books:**

The following book is required for all students in the course:

1. Don A. Dillman, Jolene D. Smyth and Leah Melani Christian. *Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method.* Fourth Edition. Wiley, 2014. Note: Prior editions of this book may NOT be substituted.

The following book is required for graduate students only:

1. Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler, Jrl, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. *Survey Methodology.* Second Edition. Wiley, 2009.

**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:

A detailed description of one recurrent sample survey project, based on published information on its design (undergrads).

A summary and critique of a published survey methodology article (grads).

A take-home quiz concerning types of survey error (undergrads).

A textbook exercise concerning trade-offs in survey design (grads).

A take-home quiz concerning choice of survey modes.

In addition, there will be several take-home assignments and some group work, related to material discussed in class and our class practicum project, which will count toward the participation and preparedness portion of your grade. Tentatively, these will include:

A personal essay on campus speech codes and freedom of speech.

Group work on problems in the statistics of survey sampling.

One or more exercises in re-writing survey questions.

Group work on developing questions for the class practicum survey project.

Group work on implementation materials (cover letters, reminders, etc.) for the class practicum project.

**Exams:** There will be one in-class, closed-book mid-term exam. There will NOT be a final exam.

**Graduate Student** **Oral presentation:** Each graduate 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.

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:

**Undergrads Grads**

Homework assignments 25% 25%

Mid-term exam 20% 15%

Oral presentation -- 15%

Proposal outline 10% 10%

Narrative proposal 20% 20%

Class participation & group work 25% 15%

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100% 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, after the first year, 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.

**About the honor system:** You must do your own work on all *graded* assignments. In-class exams are closed book, with no help permitted. You will be asked to pledge all exams, graded assignments, and papers. For ungraded, individual assignments I encourage you to attempt the work by yourself, but you are not prohibited from giving or getting help from other students on *ungraded* assignments. I encourage free exchange of ideas and sharing of work in all group assignments.

**About violence and mandatory reporting:** As a faculty member I support a safe and violence-free campus. I believe we can all play a role in preventing violence. We are all bystanders and we can make choices to contribute to a safer campus. If you or someone you know has been affected by power-based personal violence, more information can be found on the UVA Sexual Violence website that describes reporting options and resources available - [www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence).

As a faculty member, I am a responsible employee, which means that I am required by University policy and federal law to report what you tell me to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that they need, while also reviewing the information presented to determine whether further action is necessary to ensure survivor safety and the safety of the University community. If you would rather keep this information confidential, there are Confidential Employees you can talk to on Grounds (<http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential_resources.pdf>). There is no need for you (or your friend) to remain silent when there are so many here willing and able to help.