A. Overview of the Course

This is an intermediate undergraduate research methodology course. This course gives practice in the statistical and methodological skills you learned in introductory statistics and methods classes. It does this while teaching concepts and principles of survey methodology.

The course introduces the principles that underlie the uses of surveys for social research. The course also provides practical experience in some of the basic techniques of survey research. Approximately one-third of the class focuses on issues of how to represent a population, that is, basic concepts of sampling and study design. The majority of the course focuses on measurement, that is, refining concepts, and writing and testing survey questions. There is a shorter module about study design and fielding surveys.

Responses to the readings, process assignments, papers, and lab complement the material in lecture. The assignments give students additional practice, for example, in conducting a literature review and testing questions. Process assignments provide support in developing papers. Papers require integrating course materials and general research skills in a professional presentation.

Readings, lectures, and labs present different material, and all are required and are integral to the course. Labs involve discussion of the readings, and practice in data analysis and other research skills.

The course provides a substantial experience with practical research skills that are relevant in research and non-research jobs in both the academic and private sectors. The techniques used in this class are relevant for many kinds of data collection and standardized measurement, such as experiments in social psychology or election polls, although this course does not cover either of these specialized methodologies.

B. Canvas Course URL

https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/121194

C. Assignments
There are several kinds of assignments for this course: readings and reading responses, process assignments, and short papers. In most weeks, readings are the equivalent of two or three articles. There is an assignment due almost every week. Assignments are of several types.

1. **Readings**
   a. Readings are outlined in detail below.
   b. One book is required for this course.
   c. Remaining sources (articles, book chapters, reference materials, etc.) are available on Canvas.

2. **Reading Responses**
   a. A summary or targeted response to a research article or chapter.
   b. Submit reading responses before lab and be prepared to lead or participate in discussion of readings.

3. **Process Assignments**
   a. Based on the material in readings, lecture, and lab.
   b. Process assignments provide building blocks for papers.
   c. These assignments are usually a few pages, though some may be longer.
   d. Some assignments require a formal draft of a Paper that you work on the following week.

4. **Papers**
   a. Structured reports of modest length – about four pages.
   b. Papers are more formal than other assignments and require integration of additional sources.
   c. Grading criteria weigh more heavily (compared to other assignments) whether the presentation is organized, clear, and professional.

D. **Grading and evaluation**

1. **Grading**

Assignments receive letter grades. Grades are combined using the grade point value of the letter grade and the following weights. Final grades are not curved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Process Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading responses</td>
<td>10</td>
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All assignments – including all Reading Responses -- must be completed to receive a grade for the class; however, we **drop the lowest grade** from the 11 Process Assignments (so only 10 are counted above). Attendance will be taken at lecture and lab and participation will be considered for grades that are 1 or 2 points below a boundary.

Grade point distribution is expected to be as follows:
- **A** = 93-100
- **AB** = 87-92
- **B** = 80-86
- **BC** = 77-79
- **C** = 70-76
- **D** = 60-69
- **F** = Below 60
In evaluating assignments, I consider how well the work applies relevant concepts and findings presented in lectures, class readings, and additional readings that you find in your own exploration. It is difficult to obtain a high grade without incorporating readings and additional literature for the papers. I also consider the practicality, comprehensiveness, and creativity of the solution to the problem presented in the assignments. Finally, I take into account of how well you present your solution—whether the presentation is organized, clear, and professional.

2. Anonymous grading

To the extent possible, grading is done anonymously such that your identity is not known at the time of grading. To achieve this standard, do not put your name on assignments. Instead, the title page for all assignments must show the last 6 digits of your student ID, which serves as your ID for the class. If you put your name on an assignment, I will return it to you unread.

3. Late penalties and incompletes

To receive a grade for the course, you must complete the assignments listed above. You must complete assignments and papers on time to avoid a penalty. All assignments must be completed to receive a grade for the class, even if you turn the assignment in too late to receive credit. To be fair to those who complete work on time, I deduct a letter grade for each day an assignment is late until the beginning of lab that week. Any assignment turned in after the beginning of lab gets no credit, but you must still turn the assignment in. We may discuss the content of assignments in class or lab after the due-date, so accepting late assignments is not fair to the other students. However, I recognize that emergencies happen, so I allow a one-day grace period for one assignment. If your life is disrupted and we need to talk about how that will affect your timeliness in this class, please let me know. Also note that there is a substantial penalty for exceeding the word limit for the papers.

4. Privacy of grades

Use only the last six digits of your UWID on all assignments; do not list your name on your assignment. To protect your privacy, I cannot give grades over the telephone or by email. If you want an assignment or grade given to someone else, you must give me a letter of authorization.

E. Attendance and participation

Attendance for lectures and lab is expected, required, and recorded. The TA provides substantial support for the assignments during the required labs. If you miss a class, I expect that you will get notes from a fellow student. Your participation in class enhances the experience for everyone and I expect that you will have completed the readings before class. If your grade for the class as a whole is borderline, I will take attendance and contributions to discussion into account in assigning the final grade. Participation can help your grade if you are within 1 or 2 points of a boundary.

F. Office hours

Office hours will be held TBD at Dr. Dykema’s office, 4308 Sterling Hall. Other meetings can be scheduled as needed by e-mail. Office hours are meant to be used in addition to, not instead of, attending lab.

G. Making an appointment for office hours

Please use the Scheduling Assistant within MyUW to schedule appointments with the instructor during office hours.

https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/

If you try to make an appointment, but I do not seem to be available or you have a conflict with my office hours, check with me by email, and we will find a time.
H. Communication and e-mail

Unless instructed otherwise, please communicate about this course by UW email. Send messages to the instructor or the TA, from whomever you wish a reply. The instructor and TA may each then add the other to a reply to help speed communication. **Begin the subject line with “Soc 351”**.

I. Language issues

If you are not a native speaker of English and you would like me to know this when your assignments are evaluated, indicate that you are “international” in the upper, right-hand corner of your assignment, under your ID.

J. Classroom comportment

Because this is a small class, please sit in the front half of the room. Be respectful of instructor, TA, and other students. Turn your cellphone off (not to vibrate) before the lecture or lab begins. No use of headphones and no texting during class; if you text or use your phone, you may be asked to stop or leave the class. If you need to leave the class and return (for example, because you need to take a telephone call for a medical emergency) arrange with the instructor in advance. Napping, reading a newspaper, shopping online and such are not appropriate during class.

K. CITI Human Participants Research Training

Dealing with issues surrounding human subjects is an important part of working as a survey researcher. Although you will not be conducting research as part of this course, you are required to complete CITI Human Participants Research Training if you have not already done so. Completing the training is needed for Exercise 11 (due at the end of the semester), but I suggest that you do it in Week 1; you will be very busy by the end of the semester.

Go to this link to get started:  [https://kb.wisc.edu/gradsch/page.php?id=32559](https://kb.wisc.edu/gradsch/page.php?id=32559)
Course Outline, Course Schedule, and Scheduled Readings and Assignments

- Do the readings from the textbook for the week before Tuesday lecture if possible. Lab activities assume that you have done the reading and completed any assigned Reading Response.
- **Reading Responses** are due by 11:59 pm on Thursday before lab. So Reading Response for WK02 is due at 11:59 on Thursday 13 September.
- **Process Assignments and Papers** are due at the beginning of class (9:30 am) on Tuesday of the following week, so WK01_Assignment is due on Tuesday of Week 2.

**Week 1 – Introduction & Total Survey Error & Planning the Survey**

**Text:** BCB Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 & Chapter 3 – read before lab

**Reading Response** None this week!

**Additional Reading(s):** Review of General Social Survey Design as part of Process Assignment (see below).

**Lab:** Listen to 2 modules of General Interviewer Training.
Exercise on interviewing each other
Stata start up – meet the data set.

**Process Assignment:** Report about interviews in lab
Review and summarize design of General Social Survey
Complete CITI training and snip certificate to include in weekly assignment. Snip of certificate for CITI training

**Week 2 – Sampling I – Basic Concepts**

**Text:** BCB Chapter 5 – Sampling I: Concepts of Representation and Sample Quality

**Additional Reading** BRFSS Overview for 2015 for Process Assignment (see below).

**Reading Response (Due in Canvas Thursday night)** Pew_2016_Twilight-of-Landline-Interviewing-FINAL-for-web.

**Lab:** Introduction to sampling distributions. Sampling frame evaluation.

**Process Assignment:** Report on lab activities: Sampling distribution exercises and evaluation of example sampling frame, including categories of problems with frame (e.g., blanks, duplicates, etc.).

**Other:** Notify instructor by Friday of Week 02 if you require accommodations because of a disability or rescheduling of assignments because of religious observances.

**Week 3 – Sampling II: Populations and Sampling Frames**
### Week 4 – Data Collection 1: Selecting a method

**Text:**
BCB Chapter 4 – Data Collection I: Selecting a Method

**Reading Response**
Use concepts from the sampling discussions to understand the issues in these articles:

**Lab:**
Work time to extend Week 3 Process Assignment to Paper 1

**Process Assignment:**
None this week. Revise Lab report for paper 1.

**Paper 1:**
Describe design and implementation of multistage sample drawn in lab including the research question, definition of target population, discussion of frame quality and coverage, implications for mode, and comparison of SRS and stratified designs.

### Week 5 – Data Collection 2: Address-Based Samples – Mixed Mode

**Text:**
None.

**Additional Reading(s):**

**Recommended Reading**
Lab: Organizing a literature review. Then begin a formal literature review of the impact of the features of advance letters on participation. The literature review spreadsheet includes one meta-analysis to get the review started. Collaborate in lab to identify six different experiments that are relevant and six that are not. Each student will be assigned one relevant and one irrelevant article from those identified.

Logic of experiments (Chang & Krosnick; Amaya et al.)

Process Assignment: Contribute to a formal literature review of the impact of the features of advance letters on participation (either response rate or cooperation rate). Add assigned articles to the literature review spreadsheet.

Week 6 – Measurement: Split-ballot experiments and Literature Reviews

Text: BCB Chapter 8 – Questionnaire Development I: Measurement Error and Question Writing


Lab: How it works: Talk by UWSC staff about obtaining and fielding addressed-based sample (ABS) in Wisconsin FHS

Discuss additional examples of split-ballot question wording experiments.

GSS Experiment:
• What is the research question?
• Frequencies on variables for GSS experiment

Process Assignment: Prepare for measurement topic with questions about BCB.
To prepare for paper 2, describe the structure of the GSS split ballot experiment, identify outcomes and relationships, and formulate hypotheses.

Week 7 - Measurement

Text: None


Lab:
- Review tables: How to title, how to interpret.
- Prepare for GSS analysis: Look for missing values. Create SRH from HEALTH and HEALTH1 and record so that “5” = excellent and check. Compute binary variables to identify where in the distribution the difference comes. Compute chi-sq for form difference for total variable and binary variables.

Process Assignment (Draft of Paper 2):
- Replicate Smith’s analysis.
- Write up analysis of split ballot experiment: Issues identified, hypotheses, results, recommendations

**Week 8 – Measurement**

Text:
- BCB Chapter 9 – Questionnaire Development II: Questionnaire Structure

Note that the correct link for Martin et al. 2007 given in the text is: [https://www.census.gov/srd/mode-guidelines.pdf](https://www.census.gov/srd/mode-guidelines.pdf)

Additional Reading(s):

Reading Response:

Lab:
- Training in QUAID
- Analyze 5 items from the ClassQuex.
- Use QUAID to analyze problems in ClassQuex in Week08_Practice_ItemAnalysis

Continue analysis of GSS split-ballot experiment. Add education and one (?) other continuous variable.

**Paper 2**
- Analysis of GSS questions about self-reported health

**Week 9 - Measurement**

Text:
- None.

Additional Reading(s):

Reading Response:

Lab:
- Add CCS to items in ClassQuex Draft cognitive interview probes for ClassQuex.
- Cognitive interview training
Practice Cognitive interviews on ClassQuex. (Will add to this and upload as part of Process Assignment.)

**Process Assignment**

Analysis of ClassQuex cognitive interviews and revision of items.

Use QUAID and CCS for news questions in News_Pew_ItemAnalysis, and draft list of issues for the items.

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**Week 10 - Measurement**

**Text:** BCB Chapter 10 – Questionnaire Development III: Pretesting
Methodology Appendix 3 – Cognitive Interviewing Workshop

**Additional Reading(s):**

**Reading Response**

**Lab:**
Bring CCS.
Develop cognitive interviewing probes for news questions and add to News_Pew_ItemAnalysis
Conduct practice cognitive interviews for news questions and revise probes as needed.

**Process Assignment:**
Conduct two cognitive interviews about news item; record results of the interviews in News_Pew_ItemAnalysis. Draft analysis for Paper 3.

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**Week 11 - Measurement**

**Text:** Methodology Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Evaluation Workshop

**Reading Response**

**Lab:**
To practice revising questions revise some of standardized questions in Text, Methodology Appendix 2 and discuss various revisions.


- What is Pew’s conceptual definition of “the news”?
- What would your conceptual definition of the news be?
- What aspects of “news” are not measured with the Pew questions that you have been analyzing?
- Any implications for the revision of the questions?

Work time for paper 3 – discuss analysis?

**Paper 3:** Report on cognitive interviews of news questions, making suggestions for revisions
Week 12 – Data Collection - Survey Design – One class this week! No lab! Thanksgiving!

Text: None


Reading Response: No lab this week.
Lab: No lab this week. Thanksgiving weekend.

Process Assignment: None! Questions about readings only! Happy thanksgiving!

Week 13 – Data Collection and Error

Text: BCB Chapter 11 – Data Collection II: Controlling Error in Data Collection


Lab: Discuss elements of advance letters
Analysis of advance letter for NSCG
Discussion of proposal for experiment for advance letters for Paper 4
Continue literature review for experiment proposal for Paper 4
Organizing literature reviews: Advance letters

Process Assignment: Review and analyze packet of survey materials - advance letter, etc.
Write advance letter for the news questions.
Draft sections of Paper 4.

Other announcements: Class meets in 4327 Sterling on Thursday 29 November for talk by John Stevenson, Associate Director of UWSC and former CAR student, and brief UWSC tour.

Week 14 – Post-survey Processing and Reporting

Text: BCB Chapter 12 - Postsurvey Statistical Adjustments and the Methodology Report


Lab:
1. Response rates
   Calculating response rates
   Using the AAPOR RR Calculator

2. Transparency Initiative and reporting
   Analyze compliance of sample methodology report

Paper 4: Experimental design about features of advance letter for the news questions. Due 14 December.

Week 15 – Survey Documentation and Reporting – Only one class this week! No lab.

Text:


Lab: No lab.

Paper 4: Paper 4 due Friday 14 December at noon.

Other Announcements: Last class is Tuesday of this week.

No lab this week. Office hours TBA.
University and Departmental Notices

Credits and credit hour policy standards
This is a 4-credit course that includes lecture and a lab. The course meets the credit hour policy standard as follows: This class meets for three, 75-minute class periods each week over the fall/spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc) for about 3 hours for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Accelerated Honors available!

Official course description
“Introduces the principles that underlie the uses of surveys for social research and experience in some of the basic techniques of survey research. Specific topics include the basic concepts of sampling and survey measurement. Readings, lectures, and labs present different material, and all are required. Labs and short reports are an integral part of the course. They illustrate how survey researchers apply the methods presented in the class and provide students the opportunity to practice applying the concepts and methods they learn every week. The techniques used in this class are relevant for many kinds of data collection and standardized measurement, such as experiments in social psychology or political polls, although neither of these specialized methodologies is covered in this course. Provides a substantial experience with practical research skills that are relevant in many academic and private sector contexts.”

Course learning outcomes
1. Identify basic sampling concepts and apply them when drawing and documenting a sample.
2. Describe basic concepts of error in surveys, total survey error, variable errors and bias.
3. Analyze the components of experiments with a variety of outcomes and designs relevant to survey methodology.
4. Apply fundamental methods for question testing.
5. Apply principles of question design in developing survey questions.
6. Analyze split-ballot experiment, contextualize analysis with well-focused review of relevant literature, accurately describe results, and draw appropriate conclusions.
7. Document work in professionally written reports.

Department learning outcomes
Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content, I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to provide students opportunities to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

1. Conduct Research and Analyze Data (quantitative or qualitative). Although professional-quality research requires graduate-level training, we expect that all undergraduate majors will be able to conduct small-scale research in which they formulate a research question, collect data, analyze results, and draw conclusions.
2. Critically Evaluate Published Research. Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
3. Communicate Skillfully: Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.
4. Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market: Students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for employment or further study, assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their qualifications. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications and to learn how to present their accomplishments. Students will understand, recognize, and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.
5. Work effectively in groups: Students will improve their skills in understanding group dynamics and working well with people from different backgrounds with different strengths and weaknesses.
6. Improve project management skills: Students will improve their skills in time management, ordering and executing a series of complex and inter-related tasks, and integrating distinct components of a project into a final product.
Accommodations for students with disabilities
McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.”
http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

Accommodations for religious observances
If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the University’s web page for details: https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698.

Academic integrity
By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:
- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website.

My tolerance for plagiarism or other academic misconduct is very low. If you plagiarize or engage in other misconduct in this course, you will probably be required to discuss the matter with the Dean of Students. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor.

Sexual harassment and misconduct
Professional conduct and appropriate behavior are critical to create a safe learning environment for students and instructors alike. Here is a statement about sexual harassment from the University:

What is Sexual Harassment? Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
- submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, academic progress, or participation in a university program; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct influences employment, academic or university program decisions; or
- the conduct interferes with an employee's work or a student's academic career, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, learning, or program environment.
Tangible Action or Quid Pro Quo (This for That) Sexual Harassment and Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment are both illegal and unacceptable.

One practical implication is that instructors (faculty or graduate students) may not date students to whom they will be assigning grades. If you believe that you have been harassed, contact the chair of the Department of Sociology (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu), The Title IX office (TitleIX_Coordinator@wisc.edu), or see this link for confidential sources (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/campusprocedures/reporting/complainant/).

Diversity and inclusion
Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Feedback
I am interested in hearing your reactions to the course, and your suggestions for improvement. At one point during the semester, we may have an informal evaluation at which time you are able to write comments or make suggestions anonymously. In addition, please feel free to e-mail comments or suggestions to dykema@ssc.wisc.edu or make an appointment to see me.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights
The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu).