Overview of the Course

- This is a graduate research methodology course that provides: an introduction to the conceptual issues raised by collecting measurements using self-reports in surveys; an overview of the literature that addresses theoretical and practical problems in questionnaire design; and practice in developing, writing, evaluating, testing, and implementing standardized questions and questionnaires.
- The course is structured around the stages of designing a standardized questionnaire including: developmental interviewing, evidenced-based question writing, question evaluation and testing, and questionnaire implementation.
- Assignments use face-to-face interviews with paper instruments, but issues surrounding phone and self-administered (mail and web) surveys will be considered at several points.
- The material covered in this course is relevant for standardized measurement in many social and related research contexts in addition to surveys, such as laboratory experiments.
- This course is pre-statistical in the sense that it considers issues that are dealt with before data analysis begins; the course assignments require no statistical analysis. However, you do need to be able to read and interpret research that includes statistical analysis.
- The course provides conceptual and practical tools to use in planning and executing your own research.
- Note: This course is about standardized measurement. If you do not know what a standardized questionnaire is, or if you have limited experience with standardized questions and questionnaires, see “Sources for Standardized Questions and Questionnaires” available in the “Resources” module on Canvas.

Course learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the survey research literature, specifically that which pertains to standardized measurement and questionnaire design.
- Develop an understanding of survey measurement and evidence-based best practices of questionnaire design through coursework and assignments.
- Evaluate social science literature and employ most appropriate methods and practices in their course
assignments.

- Complete a small original standardized questionnaire design project.
- Design a split-sample experiment with appropriate methods for evaluating data quality.
- Apply principles of question design in developing survey questions that measure events and behaviors and ask for evaluations and judgments.
- Apply fundamental methods for question evaluation and testing.
- Document work in professionally written reports.
- Develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to making decisions related to standardized measurement and designing standardized survey questionnaires.
- Communicate in a clear, organized, and engaging manner using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.

**Course URLs**

- Lecture will be held in person.
- URL for the course: [https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/244962](https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/244962)

**Assignments**

- Assignments for this course include weekly readings, 8 structured reports, and human subjects training.
- Most of the structured reports require you to conduct interviews to develop and test survey questions.
- An assignment is due roughly every other week.
- Assignments should be submitted via Canvas. Detailed instructions for submitting assignments are provided on Canvas.

1. **Readings**

   - Readings include articles, book chapters, blog postings, and reference materials.
   - In most weeks, readings are the equivalent of three articles or chapters.
   - Readings are listed in the Course Outline and available on Canvas.
   - Lectures assume that you have completed the assigned readings before the lecture, and lectures do not systematically summarize the readings.

2. **Structured Reports**

   - You will summarize your work in structured reports. The reports must be written in a professional style. All questionnaire drafts must be typed.
   - You must complete all assignments in order to receive a grade for the course.
   - These assignments provide you with an opportunity to work on a single topic through most stages of questionnaire design, one step at a time. Your final product will be a complete, though limited, questionnaire on that topic. In addition, there is an assignment in which you design a split-sample experiment.
   - You select a topic. I must approve your topic and target population. In addition, your topic must allow you to
     - Specify a target population
     - Write questions about events and behaviors
     - Write questions asking for evaluations and judgments
     - Find members of that target population to test your standardized questionnaire with
   - Assume that the following conditions hold in the survey for which you are developing a standardized questionnaire, unless we arrange otherwise
The questionnaire will be administered in a face-to-face standardized interview, as part of a survey that uses trained survey interviewers.

- Respondents are randomly selected and 18 years of age or older.
- The standardized questionnaire you develop for this course will be used with the selected respondent.
- The questionnaire will be formatted and administered on paper (not CAPI, computer-assisted personal interview).
- In a standardized questionnaire all questions are scripted, the instrument includes comprehensive instructions for the interviewer, and answers are recorded in a standardized format.

- Word counts
  - Reports have fixed word counts. Calculate from the first heading – usually the “Introduction” – and count to the last word, excluding references, appendices, tables, or figures.

3. Work Groups

- You will be assigned to a work group of 4-5 students.
- Many assignments require you to interview or be interviewed by a student in the course and the work group provides people with whom you can collaborate.
- Work group members can also give and receive feedback from each other on the various stages of developing your standardized questionnaire.

Grading and evaluation

1. Grading

- Grades for this course are primarily based on 8 structured reports and evaluated out of a possible total of 700 points. In addition to the structured reports, you will need to complete human subjects training.
  - Final grades are not curved.

- Assignments: overview of tasks, point allocation, weight, availability, and due date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Brief overview of tasks</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Assigned</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#00</td>
<td>Complete human subjects training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Sept 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#01</td>
<td>Identify a topic and the constituent constructs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#02</td>
<td>Select a central construct to measure and develop a conceptual analysis</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#03</td>
<td>Explore how to operationalize the construct -- measure it -- in developmental interviews</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#04</td>
<td>Write and test structured questions to measure events and behaviors</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#05</td>
<td>Write and test structured questions to measure evaluations and judgments</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#06</td>
<td>Write a proposal for a split-sample experiment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Nov 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#07</td>
<td>Evaluate and test your standardized instrument using cognitive interviews</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#08</td>
<td>Revise your work from previous assignments, conduct final pretests, and prepare a final, complete, questionnaire</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Dec 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade point distribution is expected to be as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>651 – 700 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>609 – 650 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>550 – 608 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>539 – 549 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>490 – 538 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>420 – 489 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 420 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria for evaluation

- In evaluating assignments, I consider how well your work applies relevant concepts and findings presented in lectures, assigned readings, and additional readings that you find in your own exploration. The structured reports should explicitly refer to relevant results from the readings and show that you have read and understand the material; I consider how well you deploy the readings when I grade the reports. In grading your questionnaires, I also consider the practicality, comprehensiveness, and creativity of the solution to the problem presented in the assignments. For the final report, I expect you to refer to research beyond that on the course syllabus. Finally, I consider how well you present your solution -- whether the presentation is organized, clearly written, and professional.

For questionnaires, I consider
- Whether you followed instructions
- How well you solved technical problems in instrument design
- The usability of your instrument for respondents, interviewers, and analysts
- Application of principles from the course materials
- The substantive usefulness of your instrument for the target population and topic
- Application of additional readings

For reports, I consider
- Whether you followed instructions
- Thoughtfulness, clarity, organization
- Creativity of solutions to measurement problems
- Appropriate use of course materials
- Appropriate use of additional readings

2. Late penalties and incompletes
- You must complete all assignments to earn a grade for the course, and you must complete assignments on time to avoid a penalty.
- To be fair to those who complete work on time, assignments may be turned in one day late (up to 24 hours) but I will deduct a letter grade. Any assignment turned in more than 24 hours after the due date will not receive credit.
- I recognize that emergencies happen and I allow a one-day grace period for one assignment excluding the final assignment, which must be submitted on time to avoid a penalty.
- If your life is disrupted and we need to talk about the impact on the schedule for this class, let me know as soon as possible.

3. Anonymous grading
- To the extent possible, I grade assignments anonymously such that your identity is not known during the grading process.
- To achieve this standard, do not put your name on assignments.
• Instead, all assignments are formatted so that you enter the last 7 digits of your UWID number.
• Save your files by adding the last 7 digits of UWID number to the name of the file before you upload to Canvas.

4. 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.

5. Privacy of grades
• To protect your privacy, I will not give grades by email or over the phone.
• If you want your grade given to someone else, you must provide me with a letter of authorization.

Attendance and participation
• Class attendance is expected and required. Attendance will be recorded for lecture.
• Your participation in class enhances the experience for everyone.
• Please let me know immediately if you have any known conflicts with the schedule.
• If you must miss a class, email me as soon as you can.
• If your grade for the class as a whole is within 5 points of a boundary, I will take your attendance and contributions to discussion into account in assigning the final grade.

Office hours
• Office hours are intended to be informal! Do not feel pressured to have a polished set of questions or comments prepared in advance of a meeting. I am happy to answer any questions you have about the course.
• To schedule an appointment during regularly scheduled office hours:
  o In Canvas, click on "Calendar" on the left sidebar.
  o Click on “Find appointment” on the right sidebar and select “SOC 752” to find scheduled time slots.
  o Select your preferred time slot and click “reserve.”
  o If you wish, you can add notes specifying what you want to talk about, but it is not mandatory.
• If the regularly scheduled time does not work for you, email me to find an alternative time.

Communication and e-mail
• Unless instructed otherwise, please communicate about this course by UW email.
• Begin the subject line with “Soc752”.

Human subjects and IRB (Institutional Review Board)-related notes
• This course includes assignments in which you develop a standardized questionnaire.
• As part of these assignments, you will administer your questionnaire in interviews with respondents.
• You may conduct these interviews as part of the course without obtaining a separate approval for your research project from the IRB, as long as you do not disseminate the results of the research. If you plan to do so, as you might if your research is for your dissertation, you must notify me and, under the direction of the faculty advisor for your research, obtain IRB approval before beginning the interviews.
  o See: https://irb.wisc.edu/
• Regardless of whether you are conducting these interviews only as part of this course or to obtain knowledge that you will disseminate, you must complete human subjects training for the “UW Social & Behavioral Course”

• Upload a screen shot of your Completion Certificate (e.g., use SNIP) to Canvas by September 23, 2021.

• When you are conducting these interviews, you must obtain informed consent from everyone you interview and protect their privacy. No information that would identify the person you interviewed should be attached to their answers. We will discuss the “Required Elements of Informed Consent” in lecture.

  • See: https://kb.wisc.edu/sbsedirbs/page.php?id=57722

• Do not record any of the interviews you conduct.

Auditors

• Auditors may sit in by arrangement with the instructor.
• Please formally register for this class as an auditor if possible.
• Auditors and students sitting in on the class must complete assignments 1 and 2 and the questionnaire portion of assignments 3 through 6. Auditors do not need to conduct interviews or write reports.
• I will review these assignments, but not comment on them systematically or grade them.
## Course Outline
### Schedule for Readings and Assignments

### Week 1
**Measurement in Surveys**

**Readings**

**Assignments**
- Assignment #00: Complete Human Subjects Training
  - Assigned: September 9 at 9:00am
  - **Due**: September 23 by 4:00pm
- Assignment #01: Topic
  - Assigned: September 9 at 9:00am
  - **Due**: September 16 by 4:00pm

### Week 2
**Fundamentals in Questionnaire Design**

**Readings**

**Assignments**
- Assignment #01: Topic
  - **Due**: September 16 by 4:00pm
- Assignment #02: Analysis of Survey Concepts
  - Assigned: September 16 at 9:00am
  - **Due**: September 30 by 4:00pm

### Week 3
**General Guidelines: Part I**

**Readings**

**Assignments**
- Assignment #00: Complete Human Subjects Training
  - **Due**: September 23 by 4:00pm
### Week 4
**Generating and Developing Survey Questions**

**Readings**

**Assignments**
- **Assignment #02:** Analysis of Survey Concepts  
  **Due:** September 30 by 4:00pm
- **Assignment #03:** Developmental Interviews for Question Design  
  **Assigned:** September 30 at 9:00am  
  **Due:** October 14 by 4:00pm

### Week 5
**General Guidelines: Part II**

**Readings**

### Week 6
**Writing Standardized Questions about Events and Behaviors**

**Readings**

**Assignments**
- **Assignment #03:** Developmental Interviews for Question Design  
  **Due:** October 14 by 4:00pm
- **Assignment #04:** Writing Standardized Questions about Events and Behaviors  
  **Assigned:** October 14 at 9:00am  
  **Due:** October 28 by 4:00pm

### Week 7
**Writing Standardized Questions about Events and Behaviors**

**Readings**
### Week 8
**Writing Standardized Questions Asking for Evaluations and Judgments**

#### Readings

#### Assignments
- **Assignment #04:** Writing Standardized Questions about Events and Behaviors  
  **Due:** October 28 by 4:00pm
- **Assignment #05:** Writing Standardized Asking for Evaluations and Judgments  
  **Assigned:** October 28 at 9:00am  
  **Due:** November 11 by 4:00pm

### Week 9
**Writing Standardized Questions Asking for Evaluations and Judgments**

#### Readings

### Week 10
**Special Topics: Measuring Social Characteristics**

#### Readings

#### Assignments
- **Assignment #05:** Writing Standardized Asking for Evaluations and Judgments  
  **Due:** November 11 by 4:00pm
- **Assignment #06:** Split-Sample Experiment  
  **Assigned:** November 11 at 9:00am  
  **Due:** November 23 by 4:00pm
**Week 11**

**Question Evaluation and Testing**

**Readings**


**Assignments**
Assignment #06: Split-Ballot Experiment

Due: November 23 by 4:00pm

Assignment #07: Cognitive Interviews

Assigned: November 23 at 9:00am

Due: December 7 by 4:00pm

**Week 12**

**Question Evaluation and Testing**

**Readings**
https://www.hkr.se/contentassets/9ed7b1b3997e4bf4bba8d4eceed5cd87/gordonwillis.pdf


**Week 13**

**Question Evaluation and Testing**

**Readings**


**Week 14**

**Mode and Implementation**

**Readings**


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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Assignment #07: Cognitive Interviews</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> December 7 by 4:00pm</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Assignment #08: Final Standardized Questionnaire and Split-Sample Experiment Proposal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assigned:</strong> December 7 at 9:00am <strong>Due:</strong> December 17 by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 15: Mode and Implementation</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Assignment #08: Final Standardized Questionnaire and Split-Ballot Experiment Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> December 17 by 11:59pm</td>
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</table>
University and Departmental Notices

Instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic
During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community. For Fall 2021, instructors and students should consult the following website for current campus health and safety guidance: covidresponse.wisc.edu.

Official course description (https://guide.wisc.edu/courses/soc/)
Analysis and presentation of survey results through contingency table analysis. Techniques for assessing the quality of data produced by survey methods. Practical application of course material to a specific research problem through research reports and other exercises involving data analysis on a topic of the student’s choice.

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

Regular and substantive student-instructor interaction
The course meets the regular and substantive student-instructor interaction requirement by engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment through direct instruction, providing feedback on student work, providing information about course content, and facilitating discussion of course content. Regular interaction is provided at a minimum through weekly lectures.

Accommodations for students with disabilities 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 faculty [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. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [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.

See: McBurney Disability Resource Center

Academic calendar and 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: https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances

Academic integrity statement
By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

See: https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/
According to UWS Chapter 14, academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to):

- Plagiarism (turning in work of another person and not giving them credit)
- Having a friend answer your clicker questions when you are absent
- Stealing an exam or course materials
- Copying another student’s homework
- Cheating on an exam (copying from another student, using unauthorized material)
- Working on an assignment with others when you are supposed to do so independently
- Claiming credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Using unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forging or falsifying academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others;
- Engaging in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- Assisting other students in any of these acts.

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 discuss these with me.

Diversity and inclusion statement

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.

See: https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Teaching and learning data transparency statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students’ personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully evaluates and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through learning analytics, and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university’s full teaching and learning data transparency statement.


Students’ rules, rights, and responsibilities

Consult the following website for information on your rights and responsibilities, including information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

See: https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#rulesrightsandresponsibilitiestext

Privacy of student records and the use of audio recorded lectures statement

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1]. Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.
See: https://instructionalcontinuity.wisc.edu/2020/04/03/privacy-of-student-records-and-the-usage-of-audio-recorded-lectures/

Course evaluations
I am interested in hearing your reactions to the course, and your suggestions for improvement. Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me.

UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called AEFIS. For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

At one point during the semester, we may also 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 instructors 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).