

ESM 269: Survey Design & Env. Public Opinion

Syllabus updated 3/20/2024

Spring 2024 Instructor: Heather Hodges

Lectures: W 5-6:15 1424 Bren Hall

Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective: To learn best practices in survey DESIGN (not analysis, administration, etc), which will overlap with best practices in research design and therefore apply to group project work, academic research, and future jobs.

- o Applied Survey Research: You will all be expected to workshop your survey in this course, solo or with a group.
- o Survey Research Literacy: Through a deep dive into the survey design of your work and that of your peers you will learn best practices for all survey research, including ethical considerations, question wording, planning, and methodology.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- o Recognize when surveys or polls are an appropriate tool for data collection – surveys are not always the best or most appropriate way to gather data on a population
- o Distinguish the good (survey data and procedures) from the bad – you'll hear yourself thinking, 'These statistics are based on shady data' or 'Who did they poll?'
- o Understand the use of different types of questions and scales in survey research – some questions serve to create a scale/measure, others are more explorative, and the options you give respondents matter
- o Know the step-wise process for developing a questionnaire & appropriate analysis planning - from literature review to question development, pre-testing, expert review, recruitment, and analysis prep.
- o This is not a course on how to use R scripts to analyze your survey results, there are hundreds of great resources online that can cover that on your own time, and is more helpful once you have data in hand.

MATERIALS

- o Canvas: I will post all additional readings, assignments, resources, and links to our course page. Please check here for all your questions.

COURSE PLAN & ASSESSMENT

This is a *proposed* plan for what to expect (subject to change).

- o Before the lecture complete the week's readings/activities on Canvas, these may include:
 - o Watching a mini-lecture about the main concepts from the course text
 - o Reading news articles or watching a video
 - o Finding an article to share
 - o Submitting a reflection & skimming peers' reflections
- o During lecture:
 - o We will discuss prompts/activities assignments by the instructor in small breakout groups (I will on occasion cut lecture time to allow in-person workshoping of existing surveys that may or may not require the group's attention).

Option 2 (geared toward someone with/ an active or soon-to-be active survey)

Assessment	Details	Where / format	Course %
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Peer Review	Surveys are most improved through multiple peer review sessions. It's through the eyes of others that you often catch your biggest mistakes and it's through reviewing others' surveys that you're able to learn about how to improve your own. This grade will reflect your peer review of the following three assignments.	Canvas/Eli Review	30
Assignment #1	Survey brief (peer review)	doc	10
Assignment #2	Instrument V1 (peer review)	doc	20
Assignment #3	Instrument V2 (peer review)	doc	20
Final Ass.	Revision Plan (instructor)	doc	20

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Assignment #1 – Survey brief: write a one-page brief justifying the use of a survey to answer your research question. Include the research question, a description of the problem statement, why a survey is the best way to answer this research question, and a FAQ on other approaches considered.

Assignment #2 – develop your V1 survey instrument, focusing on key themes for your survey as well as possible questions for each theme.. This may include reliable & validated pre-existing questions as well as those you have developed yourself. These should stem from the literature and form the outline for what your final questionnaire may look like. This process will be discussed in more detail in class.

Assignment #3 – Now it's time to refine those questions and test them on innocent bystanders! (Well, you're friends, housemates, strangers on the sidewalk, etc.) This will consist of multiple iterations to lend opportunities for improvement. Examples from your work will be used in class for live editing sessions throughout the quarter.

DON'T FORGET

Accommodations: If you'd like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the [Disabled Students Program](#).

Plagiarism: If you use an idea or a fact without attribution, you are plagiarizing someone else's work. Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity. As specified by UCSB's academic conduct policy, such violations will result in disciplinary actions, including referral to judicial affairs. Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. For examples of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see this [flyer](#). For more information on UCSB's policies, go [here](#).