UCONN | COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
COMMITTEE ON CURRICULA AND COURSES

Proposal to Add a New Graduate Course

Last revised: September 24, 2013

1. Date: April 8, 2014
2. Department requesting this course: Public Policy
3. Semester and year in which course will be first offered: Summer 2015

Final Catalog Listing

Assemble this after you have completed the components below. This listing should not contain any information that is not listed below!

PP 5378. Methods of Data Collection
3 credits. Seminar.

An exploration of the many challenges of survey data collection and the points in the data collection process where survey error can be introduced.

Items Included in Catalog Listing

Obligatory Items

1. Abbreviation for Department, Program or Subject Area: PP
2. Course Number: 5378
3. Course Title: Methods of Data Collection
4. Number of Credits (use digits, "3" not "three"): 3
5. Course Description (second paragraph of catalog entry): An exploration of the many challenges of survey data collection and the points in the data collection process where survey error can be introduced.
6. Course Type, if appropriate:
   __Lecture __ Laboratory _X_ Seminar __ Practicum

Optional Items

7. Prerequisites: None.
8. Recommended Preparation: PP 5379 Principles and Methods in Survey Research
9. Consent of Instructor: Not Required.
10. Exclusions: None.
11. Repetition for credit: None.
12. S/U grading: A-F Graded.

Justification

1. Reasons for adding this course: This is a new course developed for the online Graduate Program in Survey Research which began offering courses in 2011.

2. Academic merit: This course builds on and deepens student understanding of topics introduced in our foundational course, Principles and Methods in Survey Research. It offers key skill development to students in the Survey Research Master of Arts and graduate certificate programs who work, or aspire to work, in measurement and evaluation.

3. Overlapping courses: None
4. Number of students expected: about 20
5. Number and size of sections: 1 section
6. Effects on other departments: none
7. Staffing: Staffing for the course will be provided by the Department of Public Policy. No new staff is necessary to offer this course.
8. Dates approved by
   Department Curriculum Committee:
   Department Faculty:
9. Name, Phone Number, and e-mail address of principal contact person:

Ken Dautrich
860-570-9090
K.Dautrich@uconn.edu

Syllabus

A syllabus for the new course must be attached to your submission email.

Additional Approval

New graduate courses must also be approved by the Graduate Faculty Council.

- Syllabus PP 5397 -

- Methods of Data Collection -

June 3 - Aug 23, 2013

Course Information and Requirements

Course Title: Public Policy 5397
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: Admission to the Graduate Program in Survey Research or Public Administration
Instructor: Matt Jans, PhD

E-mail: Contact me via email as needed (matthew.jans@uconn.edu). Please only email me at this address, and send email from your UConn address. I ask that you do this so there is an electronic trail for the University. See more below about communication expectations.

Tel: 617-276-6596 - I live in Los Angeles, Pacific Standard Time. Please keep calls to between 8 AM and 8 PM PST (including weekends). Otherwise use freely (see below).

Welcome to the course! There is a lot in this syllabus, but please read it all. It has usual syllabus content like assignment due dates, but also has a number of things specific to online classes (e.g., online interaction expectations, my availability). Some of the material in this document is also in other parts of course system, but you can consider the syllabus your master reference document for the course. When course details change, I will update the syllabus, too.

I'm looking forward to working with you over the next weeks and months!

Communication and Course Expectations: Below are some logistical details about communication in this course, and some guidelines for productive and constructive participation in online discussions. First, let me tell you what I expect of you (and you can expect of me) in our communications this semester

1) I expect you read everything I send you individually or to the course as a whole. I expect you to read everything already posted on the course site. I will read everything you send me.

2) Read below for more details on deadlines, grading, and due dates. Other than what's written in this syllabus, or situations allowed by the university (e.g., disability accommodations), there are no extensions or exemptions.

3) I expect that we will have mutual respect for each others' work and life commitments outside of the course. To hold up my end, I will usually reply to your inquiries (email, phone, or discussion posts) by midnight on the second day after you post (e.g., midnight Wed if you post on Monday). Keep in mind the logistics of our asynchronous

communication. For example, if you email me on Monday with a question about something that's due Friday, I'll reply by midnight Wed at the latest. If you still need clarification, make sure you write back quickly b/c I may not get back to you for another 2 days.

4) Except for unforeseen emergencies, I will let you know if I will be unavailable or have limited availability for periods that would delay my review and response (e.g., conference or personal travel). You don't need to be as responsive to me, but you can be if you want to. In the end, it's your grade and your learning experience. I'm here to facilitate that.

5) We'll keep as much communication open as possible. For example, rather than emailing me directly with a question that everyone may have, use our discussion area on the course site. That way someone else can clarify, I can reply to the group, and all the information will be shared and saved in one place. You should feel free to contact me privately for situations that are too personal to share with the group, but otherwise we want to "crowd source" information.

6) Because we don't have a regular in-person meeting time/place, we need to treat our interactions like project work you might be used to. Thinking logistically, make an assessment about whether it's better to write and send an email (better emails take longer to write, but quicker emails often require more "back-and-forth"), or call.

My Availability: I have a full-time job in addition to teaching for UConn, I will check the course website about once a day on average (more on weekends and around major milestones), but I won't be on all day. I also check email once a day most days. Phone is best in emergencies, but I may not answer in the middle of the day. Always leave a message. We can arrange one-on-one or group calls as needed, and everyone will have at least one one-on-one meeting over the semester.

Required Texts:
Groves, R. M., Fowler Jr., F. J., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E., & Tourangeau, R. (2007). *Survey Methodology, 2nd ed.* Wiley: Wiley Series in Survey Methodology. Hoboken, NJ.

This is the most comprehensive and accessible text in survey methodology written from the Total Survey Error perspective. It's a great text for its breadth and examples, so it's a good text for a course like this.. We'll also read a number of classical and contemporary research articles in survey methodology.

Strunk, Jr., W. & White, E. B. (2000). The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition. Longman Publishers. New York, NY.

From my experience, including editing my own work, we can all use more practice and guidance in writing. This course will be writing-heavy, some of it more formal and some of it less formal. I'm requiring this book because I want you to use it as a resource throughout the semester. I'll refer to it actively and expect you to use it when editing your work.

The other required readings, including journal articles and websites, will be made available via the course website. You will be reading approximately one chapter from the Groves et al. book and 4-6 journal articles or other chapters each week.

Software Requirements

- Word processing software with an equation editor (note: this is standard in contemporary versions of Microsoft Word, and should be available in Open Office, Libre Office, etc.). We will not be doing extensive mathematical work, but being able to express survey methodology concepts (e.g., nonresponse error) in mathematical and statistical terms is a goal of the course.
- Spreadsheet software, like Excel, that handles formulas (also standard in major programs)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Internet access
- Registration with Diigo.com: At the beginning of the course, you will receive an invitation from me to join a course group at Diigo.com. Diigo is a web-based bookmarks/favorite manager, but its most useful feature for an online class is the ability to highlight and annotate web pages and share them with class members. I will share hyperlinks that I find throughout the semester via Diigo, and you may find it useful for your group project.

This course only meets online via HuskyCT with ocassional one-on-one or small group meetings by phone online using the learning management platform, HuskyCT. Ensure your Internet browser settings are HuskyCT compatible (vew settings). If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, call the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at (860) 486-1187, or visit its online help (including instant chat) at http://lrc.uconn.edu/help, and let me know immediately. Only in the most extreme cases will technology problems be acceptable reasons for not completing coursework.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats (e.g., Word .doc or .docx).
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files. Knowing how to annotate and highlight PDFs will be helpful for your note-taking if you choose not to print them.

Course Topic Overview

This course explores the many challenges of survey data collection, and highlights points in the data collection process where survey error can be introduced (intentionally or unintentionally). Using the Total Survey Error framework and supporting that framework with contemporary and classical research findings, you will learn how to evaluate potential survey errors related to various methods of data collection. The course goal is to help you become a savvy consumer and designer of survey research. Along the way you will learn about new techniques and facets of survey methodology, but this is not a "how to" course. Rather than learning one or two ways to design a questionnaire or a sample, you will learn and practice methods for assessing the quality of survey data and survey designs. This kind of training is rare, but it will prepare you to work in a variety of

survey research jobs, whether you are more of a statistician or more of a social scientist, and whether your interests are on the academic side or the applied side of our field. We will cover the full range of data collection components and error sources, including coverage, sampling, nonresponse, and measurement. Mode effects and interviewer effects will be studied, and there will be lessons that focus specifically on paradata and web surveys.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, you will be able to...

- Identify major conceptual frameworks and theories used in survey research methodology.
- Demonstrate knowledge of methods and techniques used in data collection, including paradata and survey process data.
- Express and evaluate survey error both statistically and in terms of social and behavioral science research findings.
- Analyze the mechanisms attributed to survey error and the role of paradata and special research designs to study those mechanisms.
- Explain the application of various survey design components (e.g., sampling, questionnaire design, nonresponse avoidance and adjustment) to research questions, and analyze those design components through critical review of existing surveys.
- Assess contemporary issues in survey research and methodology relating to different sectors of the survey industry.

Weekly Discussions

One of the advantages of taking your course online is that you can engage in online discussions with your instructor and fellow students at times when it is convenient for you. The course discussions are designed to to encourage lively, informative exchanges about course-related topics, and increase your knowledge of those topics--but it's up to you to make this happen.

Each week we will have two required discussion topics. One will be a more formal assessment of the topic(s) of the week. The second topic will be in the form of a less-formal reflection journal. Guidance for both will be provided in the first week's discussion. Each week I will provide an open-ended question or "seed topic" for you to assess or reflect on. It can be hard for some students to get used to expressing themselves in written words, and to clearly and concisely make intellectual assessments of complex topics. I will give you feedback on your posts, and participate in the online discussion as well.

In addition to the two original posts each week, you will have two required responses to your classmates' posts (on in the formal assessment topic and one in the reflection journal topic).

There is no upper limit to the number of times you can contribute to a discussion, and you will find that a busy discussion is a good one. Each contribution should be well written and interesting to read, with evidence of originality and considerable reflection. It should also demonstrate that you have read the relevant course materials.

Here are some guidelines for fruitful participation in an online discussion:

1. When responding to classmates or the instructor, do more than state agreement or disagreement. Justify and support your opinion. The most persuasive opinions are supported by evidence, examples, reason, experience, and facts. If you disagree with something a classmate or the instructor said, explain why. If you really like something someone said, let people know what makes you think that way.
2. Do the appropriate preparation, such as a first pass at the reading and a first pass at any homework, before you make your first post. You're not expected to have mastered the material. After all, you're the student not the instructor! Yet the discussion will be better, and your learning will be faster if you do some preparation.
3. Consider the balance between brevity and content. In other words, edit your posts. A paragraph or two is usually plenty for an initial post or reflection journal entry unless you have more to say. They more you have to say, the more you need to edit and structure your response. We don't have any face-to-face time to engage in discussion, so the discussion forums fill tis gap.
4. Check your message before you send it. These are professional and intellectual writings (and the first two are graded assignments). They are not text messages or quick emails like you might fire off to your friends and family. Pay attention to your spelling and grammar, and be sure your message makes the point(s) you want to make in a clear and concise way. Remember, everyone will be reading your message, but not everyone may have the same knowledge base and experiences as you, and you're the one who knows what you're thinking best.
5. Help move the discussion along. When contributing to a discussion, read other people's comments first. Introduce new ideas, but also build on what others have said ("piggy-back" on other people's ideas).
6. Keep up with the discussion throughout the course. After you have made your contribution on a topic, check back a few times to find out how the discussion is evolving. Does someone's comment make you think twice about your view? If so, share your thoughts.
7. Share your experience with your fellow students. You may be able to offer advice to someone who is newer to the field.
8. Respect others' ideas and opinions. Feel free to disagree (in fact you should), but express your disagreement in a respectful and academic manner. Critique the idea, not the person, and remember that not every student will have the same amount of experience, knowledge, and talent in the same areas you do. Topics that come easy to you might not come easy to others. Disrespectful communication is poor communication and not acceptable in any professional setting.

- Instructor's Discussion Guidelines (pdf)
- Discussion Grading (pdf)

In addition to the required discussions, there will be a "Water Cooler" discussion room where we can discuss any topics that aren't being covered in the graded discussions, including tips, professional advice, expectations across the semester, etc. You will also have discussion space for organizing your group project. We can setup additional discussions if we find them helpful.

Assignments and Academic Honesty

There is a lot of reading and writing in this course, and a lot of temptation to cut corners. Avoid that temptation! You are being evaluated on your understanding of the material *for your educational/professional level.* Some of you may have years of experience doing surveys, and some of you may be new to the field. My expectation for written assignments (and all work in the course) is that you make an honest, good-faith effort to engage the material, complete assignments on time, and be a productive and engaged member of the class. On a more basic level, I expect that you do your own work in full, other than the shared components of the group project. An online plagiarism detection tool will be used on all written assignments. Even in weekly discussions, copying and pasting text from a website or other source without attribution is considered plagiarism. If I suspect plagiarism (either between students or from external sources), copying answers, etc., I will gather more facts from you first. If the evidence suggests academic dishonesty you will fail the assignment and risk failing the course. I will also report you through the proper university channels. That said, you may (and should!) discuss your ideas, questions, concerns, etc. with me or classmates via the class website or email. You may (and should) also share drafts of your papers and receive feedback from classmates. Just be sure that what you submit for grading is ***entirely*** your own work.

Lateness Policy

I expect you to submit ***all*** assignments, discussion questions, exams, and anything with a due date attached to it by the submission date and time noted in the syllabus and assignments area of the class website unless a announce a change to the class. Failure to do so without ***prior*** notification to me in writing (or notification as soon as possible if due to illness or emergency ***with a doctor's note***) will result in forfeiture of points for the assignment or evaluation. In other words ***no late assignments or make-ups without documented reason.*** I expect you to provide proof of illness, injury, family emergency, or technical problems if you do not submit on time. Only in *very* rare cases will I give exceptions without documentation.

We all get behind sometimes. If you find yourself in the position of having a partially-completed assignment that's incomplete due to some reason other than the excusable reasons listed above, you should submit it rather than hang onto it and bargain for extra time (which you can already see I won't accept). Don't just do this to save the points, but do this because it guarantees you'll get feedback. I can comment on partial work, but I can't comment on work you don't submit. Obviously, completed assignments will probably get better grades than partial ones, but it's easy to get behind in this class if you don't keep up with the work. Keeping forward momentum is important. I've structured the course in such a way that the work may be intense at times, but it should be manageable. If you find yourself struggling with material or finding time to get it all done, we should talk. Start off strong by setting up a good study schedule for yourself to help you keep on task.

Student Responsibilities

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. The sections below provide a brief overview to important standards, policies and resources.

Student Code

You are responsible for acting in accordance with the University of Connecticut's Student Code, available at http://www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html. Review and become familiar with these expectations. In particular, make sure you have read the section that applies to you on Academic Integrity:

- Academic Integrity in Graduate Education and Research

Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously at the University of Connecticut. As a student, it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. If you need more information about the subject of plagiarism, use the following resources:

- Instructional Module about Plagiarism

Student with Disabilities

Student with disabilities should contact both the instructor and the **Center for Students with Disabilities** as soon as possible, in order for appropriate accommodations to be provided in a timely manner.

Grading

Evaluation Type	**Percent of Final Grade**
Weekly Assignments	20%
Weekly Discussion Forum Primary Responses	20%
Participation and Responses to Classmates in Discussion Forum	10%
Special Assignment 1: Critical Article Review	10%
Special Assignment 2: Review a Questionnaire from Work or the Media	10%
Design Critique (Final Project due at the end of the semester)	30%
Total	100%

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM--I expect papers to be your own work. If any material is copied from other sources without attribution, that is grounds for failure--both for the paper and, at my discretion, for the course. If you're not sure how to recognize and avoid plagiarism, click here.

Overview of Topics Covered

(see Week-by-Week Outline Below for Specific Topics Dates and Assignment Deadlines}

Introduction to Total Survey Error (TSE)

What is survey error and how does the TSE framework help us understand it?

Focus Area 1: Errors Related to the Process of Sampling Units (Modules 2-5)
Coverage Error and Sampling Error

How do we assess the representativeness of samples?

Nonresponse Error

What errors can arise when we attempt to contact and collected data from respondents and other sample units? How and why do they occur and what can we do about it?

Adjustment Error

What known and unknown errors can creep in when we attempt to adjust the data we've collected? What benefits and risks come along with weighting and imputation?

Focus Area 2: Errors in Taking Measurements on Sampled Units (Modules 6-7)
Validity, Measurement Error and Processing Error

Once we've sampled and contacted a respondent, what errors can we introduce when we try to collect data from them? Which errors are due to the questions we write, and which are due to memory and cognitive challenge of respondents? How do those two forces interact? What methods can we use to study errors in measurement?

Psychometric Notions of Measurement Error v. Survey Notions of Measurement Error

How does the TSE perspective on measurement error differ from similar concepts in psychometrics and test theory? Where are they similar or different? Are there any types of survey research that could (or do) benefit from one or the other perspectives?

Focus Area 3: Causes of Errors That Cut Across Representation and Measurement (Modules 8-12)

In the first part of the course we reviewed various survey error sources as they affect a survey statistic or survey data. Now we discuss facets of survey design that can cause one or more of those errors.

Mode Effects
Interviewer Effects
Web Surveys
Paradata

General Outline

(Last Updated: 5/12/2013)

Each week we will cover a component of survey error and related data collection techniques. On select weeks, we will also cover general professional development topics (e.g., writing, organization).

Module	Open Date:	Close Date:*
Introductory Module	June 3, 2013	- -
Module 1: Overview of the Total Survey Error (TSE) Paradigm Professional Development: Writing well in science and survey methodology	June 10, 2013	June 16,
Module 2: Coverage Error	June 17, 2013	June 23,
Special Assignment 1: Due June 23		
Module 3: Sampling Error Professional Development: Getting and staying organized	June 24, 2013	June 30,
Module 4: Nonresponse Error	July 1, 2013	July 07, 2
Module 5: Adjustment Error	July 8, 2013	July 14, 2
Module 6: Validity, Measurement Error and Processing Error Professional Development: How to design surveys	July 15, 2013	July 21, 2
Module 7: Psychometric Notions of Measurement Error v. Survey Notions of Measurement Error	July 22, 2013	July 28, 2
Module 8: Mode Effects	July 29, 2013	August 4 2013
Special Assignment 2: Due August 11		
Module 9: Interviewer Effects Professional Development: Evaluating the Survey Field and Finding your Niche	August 5, 2013	August 1 2013
Module 10: Web Surveys	August 12, 2013	August 1 2013
Module 11: Paradata	August 19, 2013	August 2 2013
Submission of Final Projects	August 23, 2013	

*Close date refers to the assignments and new discussion submissions or replies. You will be able to view all course material and discussion posts

throughout the class. Refer to the actual assignments and discussions for official due dates.

Updated: 01/13/2012