

PSY 720 Psychological Survey Operations Spring 2006

Instructor: K.W. Klein

Office: 708 POE Hall. Tel: 515-1719. E-mail: kitty_klein@ncsu.edu

Office Hours: Tues. 1130-1230; Wed: 1115-1205; and by appointment

Course Goals: This course is essentially a "skills" course which will attempt to give you experience in:

1. Questionnaire design and format
2. Data collection methodology
3. Sampling strategies
4. Data analyses procedures
5. Report writing

The rationale behind your acquisition of these skills is twofold: first, to prepare you to conduct surveys yourself; and second, to promote knowledgeable interpretation of survey based results. We are going to be applying the skills to issues (theories, hypotheses) of interest to psychologists. Students are presumed to be competent in data analysis using SPSS or similar statistical package

Course grades. Eighty per cent of the course grade will reflect performance on four evaluation opportunities: 3 take home tests, a class presentation, and effort toward the class project. Each test will contribute 20% to the final course grade. The class presentation will contribute another 20% toward the total course grade. The presentations should last 45 -60 minutes and be on an approved topic. In addition, class attendance and participation will count 15% of the course grade. The final 5% of the grade will be based on the student's work on the class project.

The grading scale is

97 - 100	A+	77 - 79	C+
93 - 96	A	73 - 76	C
90 - 92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	77 - 79	D+
83 - 86	B	73 - 77	D
80 - 82	B-	70 - 72	D-

Take home test due dates are:

February 8: Instrument design

April 17: Implementing the survey

May 8: Sampling and interpreting the results

Class Project. In order to give students practical experience in the realm of survey development, administration and analysis, each semester the class conducts a survey.

Approximate dates for the maximal effort for different phases of the project are:

Instrument design: January 18 - February 20

Implementation/Sampling: February 1 - March 1

Data collection: March 6 - March 17

Analysis: March 13 - April 12

Report: April 3 - April 26

All class members participate in the evaluation of their colleagues' input to the project using the traditional grading scale: A-F. Because many people may have had little experience with a project of this nature, we use a relative system that reflects both outcome (effectiveness) and process (effort). The following grading system is used.

A = high and effective effort to do one's best

B = moderate effort but effective

C = moderate effort, and moderately effective

D = either amount or effort or effectiveness was marginal

NC = person exerted little or no effort and added very little to the team (i.e. you would have been better off without them)

The following factors are graded:

“Spent appropriate amount of time on team assignment”

“Assumed fair share of team workload”

“Contributed ideas and enthusiasm”

“Was reliable (attended necessary meetings; completed work on time; kept promises)”

Student Presentations: The major goal of this requirement is to provide the presenter an opportunity to prepare a formal presentation to illustrate competency (even expertise) on the topic and to demonstrate appropriate communications skills. The real world counterpart to this exercise is a presentation you might make to a staff meeting, a colloquium during a job interview, or as a consultant asked to present a briefing on the topic. You will be evaluated on the following points:

1. *Adequate coverage of the topic selected in the time allowed.*

To achieve this, be sure you understand the background readings and practice the presentation. The 45 to 60 minute time limit is a genuine time frame. Do not prepare too much or too little.

2. *Well-organized review of current knowledge.* You will need to integrate several articles for your presentation. It is generally unwise to attempt to do these in sequential book report fashion. If you outline the topic area as you plan your presentation you will find the task much easier. BE SURE you do a literature review on the topic to see if you should include additional more recent material than what I provide.

Most of the topics are techniques or practices of current interest to survey researchers. Depending on the topic, you may want to include a history of its use, why it's an important technique, whether there are empirical tests of its effectiveness, whether there is any disagreement about the topic, etc.

3. *Ample use of concrete examples.* The easiest way to achieve this goal is to apply the topic to your own interest areas. A second way is to use the class project as a source of illustrations. It is probably confusing to include examples from many different areas, although in some cases, using different areas may be appropriate.

4. *An evaluation of the topic.* Your knowledge of the topic should allow you to recommend its use under certain conditions. Some conditions to consider are the cost of application, whether an expert is required to implement a technique, whether it's an adjunct to a more sophisticated approach, etc. Who should use the information you provide and when?

5. *Professional presentation skills.* Under this heading are the use of supporting materials (overheads, handouts, tape recordings, computers, etc.) and your own demeanor (confidence, eye contact, posture, speech clarity, etc.). Your audience may ask questions; be prepared to be interrupted, but keep the time under your control.

Student presentation topics include:

The influence of response scale format on responses

Magnitude estimation techniques

Randomized response technology

Surveying special populations

Emotion and memory for events

Using focus groups to design survey instruments and methodology

Deciding on a survey methodology

Increasing response rates in self-administered surveys

Selection and training of interviewers

Comparison of sampling designs
 Sample size and estimation procedures
 Random digit dialing
 Sampling PPS
 Preparing data for analysis
 Reporting survey findings to the organization

Other topics may be offered with the approval of the instructor. The list above is roughly the order in which the presentations will be scheduled.

Schedule, Spring 2006

2006 dates for readings and other materials

Dates	Assignments		
January 9/11/18	Measurement of psychological variables	Feb 22/March 1	Designing Computer Assisted/Electronically Administered Forms
January 23/25	Obtaining behavioral reports	Mar 13 /20	Self-administration: Paper and pencil
January 30	Sensitive questions	Mar 22/29	Telephone surveys
February 1	Obtaining biographical data	April 3/10	Personal interviews
February 6	Dreamweaver instruction in AF Training Facility, Room 37	April 12	Response Rates
February 8	Dreamweaver instruction in AF Training Facility, Room 37	April 17/24	Review of sampling techniques. Exam 2 due
Feb 13	Using forms instruction in AF Training Facility, Room 37. Exam 1 due	April 26	Understanding and reporting survey findings
February 15/20	Planning	May 8, 1-4 p.m.	Wrap up. Test 3 due.