SOCI 905: PRACTICUM IN SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an applied workshop in sample survey design and implementation. It is a required course for students in the Odum Institute’s Certificate Program in Survey Methodology. Students receive 1 UNC course credit hour for successful completion of this course.

The student will work in a data collection center (the Odum Institute Call Center, the Carolina Survey Research Laboratory in the Biostatistics Department, or another partnering survey organization) under the guidance of the instructor. There the student will encounter many of the problems of transforming a survey design into a physical data collection activity and other issues associated with collecting survey data and preparing it for analysis. The focus of the course is on real world problems in data collection and their practical, cost effective solutions.

INSTRUCTOR

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FORMAT OF THE COURSE

At the beginning of the course, each student will meet one-on-one with the instructor to discuss his or her prior exposure and experience with survey data collection. The instructor will then arrange and oversee an appropriate hands-on, apprenticeship-type assignment tailored to the individual student. The goal is to expose the student to one or more parts of the survey data collection process that he or she has not previously had experience with. The primary focus is on live, real interviews with survey respondents, unless the student already has extensive experience in this area. The student must spend a minimum of 25 hours in the assigned setting/project.

In addition to the hands-on assignment, students will gather for class meetings with the instructor approximately four times during the semester. During these meetings, students will share their hands-on experiences with classmates and hold discussions about additional “nuts and bolts” topics in survey data collection. To enhance the discussion, students will read articles and other materials in advance of the class meetings, as assigned by the instructor. Topics of discussion will be tailored to the needs, experiences, and requests of the class members, and will be determined in collaboration with the instructor before and during the first meeting. As examples, topics and readings from a past semester are shown below.
Session 1: Questionnaire Development and Testing (with Focus on Computer Assisted Interviewing)


Session 2: Implementing Sampling Procedures and Calculating Response Rates, and Call Scheduling


Session 3: Protection of Human Subjects and Dealing with Institutional Review Boards


IRB Approval Request Forms for UNC-CH and other organizations with whom students are affiliated
Session 4: Surveys in Multiple Languages


GRADING

Pass/Fail grades will be assigned on the basis of students’ successful completion of their 25 hours of hands-on apprentice work and participation in group discussions.