Questionnaire Design  
UNC: Soc 761  
Fall, 2019

**Time:**  Fridays, 1:00 – 3:30 (August 23 – December 9)

**Location:**  Davis Library 219

**Instructors:**  Emilia Peytcheva, Ph.D.  
Research Survey Methodologist  
RTI International  
peytchev@email.unc.edu

Emily Geisen, M.S.  
Survey Methodologist  
RTI International  
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**Office Hours:**  By appointment

**Overview:**
This course focuses on the design of questions and questionnaires used in survey research. The course will provide an overview of the theoretical and experimental literature related to question and questionnaire design as well as focusing on practical issues in the design, critique, and interpretation of survey questions that are often not taught in formal courses. Discussion will focus on the measurement of both subjective and objective phenomena. Topics include cognitive guidelines for question construction to ensure respondent comprehension, techniques for measuring the occurrence of past behaviours and events, the effects of question wording, response formats, and question sequence on responses, an introduction to the psychometric perspectives in multi-item scale design, combining individual questions into a meaningful questionnaire, special guidelines for self-completion surveys versus interview surveys, strategies for obtaining sensitive or personal information, issues associated with translating survey questions, and an introduction to techniques for testing survey questions.

The expectation is that assigned readings are completed prior to attending the class for which the materials are assigned.

**Evaluation:**
Grading for the course will be based on five homework exercises, class participation and a final exam. The exercises will focus on solving practical problems related to questionnaire design and will account for 50% of the total grade. The final exam will assess participants’ mastery and critical appraisal of the required readings (textbooks and articles in course pack) and will account for 50% of the grade.

**Prerequisite:**
An introductory course in survey research methods or equivalent experience.
Required Texts


Course Website:
Sakai.unc.edu – look for SOCI761.001.FA19

Copies of the instructor's PowerPoint slides will be available on the course website each week on the Thursday morning before the Friday afternoon class. In addition, homework assignments and the final exam will be posted to the website on the schedule outlined below.

Reading Schedule

August 23
Class 1. Introduction, Measurement Error, Standardization, and Operationalizing Constructs
Assignment 1 available on the class website
Instructor: Peytcheva

Fowler, Chapter 1: pages 1 – 7.


August 30
Class 2. Cognitive Processes Related to Answering Questions
Instructor: Peytcheva

Willis, Chapters 2 and 3: pages 12 – 41.
Tourangeau, et al., Chapters 1 and 2 and pages 313 – 323.


September 6
Class 3. Writing Factual and Behavioral Questions / Memory Issues I
Assignment 1 due at 4:30pm
Assignment 2 available on the class website
Instructor: Geisen

Fowler, Chapter 2, pages 8 – 33 only.
Tourangeau, et al., Chapters 3 – 5, pages 62 – 164 and Chapter 8, pages 230 – 249 only

September 13
Class 4. Writing Factual and Behavioral Questions / Memory Issues II
Instructor: Geisen


September 20
Class 5. Constructing Attitude and Other Non-Factual Questions
Assignment 2 due at 4:30pm
Assignment 3 available on the class website on
Instructor: Peytcheva

Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski (2000), Chapters 6, 7, 239-254

September 27
Class 6. Constructing Attitude and Other Non-Factual Questions II
Instructor: Peytcheva


October 4
Class 7. Design of Self-Administered Questionnaires
Instructor: Geisen


October 11
Class 8. Web and Mobile Phone Surveys
Assignment 3 due by 4:30 pm
Instructor: Geisen

October 18: FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

October 25
Class 9. Questionnaire Pretesting Methods 1
Assignment 4 available on class website
Instructor: Peytcheva


November 1
Class 10. Questionnaire Pretesting Methods 2
Instructor: Geisen

Geisen and Romano Bergstrom (2017), Chapters 1-3, 7

November 8
Class 11. Mode Differences and Mixed-Mode
Assignment 4 due by 4:30pm
Assignment 5 available on class website

Instructor: Geisen

Tourangeau, et. al., Chapter 10: pages 289 – 312.


November 15
Class 12. Translation and Other Issues Related to Surveys in Multiple Languages
Instructor: Peytcheva


November 22
Class 13. Sensitive Questions and Designing Questionnaires for Special Populations
Assignment 5 due by 4:30pm
Instructor: Geisen

Fowler, Chapter 3: pages 33 – 44 only

Tourangeau, et. al., Chapter 9: pages 255 – 288.


November 29: THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

December 2: Final Exam Available on the class website

December 9: FINAL EXAM DUE by 6 pm