Overview and Goals:
This course reviews research focused on understanding the effect of data collection design features on major sources of survey error and, therefore, the quality of the data. Materials and sessions concentrate on how data collection methods specifically relate to coverage error, nonresponse error, and measurement error. The Total Survey Error paradigm informs the consequences of alternative survey design decisions and the quality of the data collected with different design conditions.

Understanding the consequences of alternate data collection methods requires attention to how basic design features relate to major sources of error. For examples, choices must be made between a probability or non-probability sampling frame, paper versus computer-assisted data collection, and self-administration versus interviewer-administration. Tradeoffs in errors and costs between the most common single mode versus common multiple mode surveys are also considered.

The course includes a review of the literature on interviewer effects, in terms of both potential reduction in survey error and potential contributions to survey error. With respect to nonresponse error, the course includes literature on methods for reducing nonresponse error and methods of assessing nonresponse error in survey estimates. Finally, design considerations for longitudinal household surveys and surveys with organizations as the unit of analysis (as opposed to households or individuals) are also examined.
**Format and Materials:**
For Fall 2020, this course will be online only. Readings, materials, and recorded presentations will be available for students to review prior to each online class session on the course website. Each class session will be conducted via Zoom for all students. The class sessions will focus on discussion of the recorded presentations, questions on the weekly readings, and exercises and demonstrations to illustrate and expand on key concepts.

Instructor office hours are available by Zoom or phone appointments and students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor by email as needed. All recorded presentation, course materials, reserved readings, and student assignments will be posted to the course website on https://sakai.unc.edu/portal under SOCI760.001.FA21. Please let the instructor know immediately if you experience any difficulties accessing the course website or specific materials on the site.

**Grading:**
All course assignments function as components of a survey data collection proposal to be completed by each student over the course of the semester.

Grading will be based on:

- Participation in online class discussions that demonstrates reviewing the weekly recorded presentation and the assigned readings will count for 10% of the final grade. The participation portion of the grade will be evaluated by (1) questions students submit prior to each weekly online class and (2) contribution to the online class discussion. Weekly questions can address any topics covered through the current week’s presentation or readings. Questions should be submitted to the instructor via email at least 24 hours before each online class session. Each class session will allow time for students to ask questions and discuss answers.

- Three assignments of about 5-6 pages each will be designed to sequentially develop a proposal for a survey data collection project will each count for 20% of the final, for a total of 60% of the final grade.

- The fourth and final proposal for a survey data collection project addressing instructor feedback on the three prior assignments and the most important sources of survey error for the proposed data collection will count for 30% of the final grade.

The schedule below indicates dates when the assignments will be available to students and when they will need to be completed and submitted. Assignments
should be submitted to the instructor via Sakai or email; the instructor will confirm receipt via email. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangement with the instructor.

**Text and Readings:**

The only textbook used for this course is:


Multiple chapters from this book will be assigned as weekly readings. These chapters are marked with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule below and are not included with the reserved readings made available to the class. Copies of all other additional readings can be accessed through the course website.

**Schedule, Topics, and Readings:**

**Week 1 – August 24**

**Topics:**
Overview; Goals, concepts, and challenges

**Readings:**

**Week 2 – August 31**

**Topic:**
Key dimensions of survey modes

**Readings:**
Week 3 – September 7

**Topics:**
Comparing modes, mixing modes, and responsive design

**Readings:**

Week 4 – September 14 *(Assignment 1 posted)*

**Topic:**
Survey modes and survey errors, case study

**Readings:**

Week 5 – September 21

**Topic:**
Computer-assisted survey methods, self-interviewing

**Readings:**

Week 6 – September 28 *(Assignment 1 due)*

**Topic:**
Web surveys, future of survey technologies

**Readings:**
Week 7 – October 5 (Assignment 2 posted)
Topics:
Respondent selection procedures, proxy reporters
Readings:

Week 8 – October 12
Topics:
Interviewer effects, interviewer training
Readings:

Week 9 – October 19 (Assignment 2 due)
Topics:
Interviewer quality control, interviewing techniques
Readings:

Week 10 – October 26
Topics:
Nonresponse definition, trends, and consequences
Readings:

Week 11 – November 2 (Assignment 3 posted)
Topics:
Nonresponse theories, actions, and assessment
Readings:
Week 12 – November 9

**Topic:**
Longitudinal surveys

**Readings:**

Week 13 – November 16 *(Assignment 3 due; Final Assignment posted)*

**Topic:**
Surveys of organizations

**Readings:**

Week 14 – November 23 *(NO CLASS, Thanksgiving week)*

Week 15 – November 30 *(NO CLASS, but instructor will be available for Q&A)*

Friday, December 3 – Assignment 4–Final proposals due by midnight