

Political Science 702: Questionnaire Design

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 Tuesday, Thursday 11:30-1:18
 272 Baker

This course will present psychological theories of the survey response process and their implications for questionnaire construction. The course is part of the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Survey Research.

Requirements and Grading

1. Reading required assignments prior to the class sessions at which they are discussed and participating in those discussions (10%)
2. In-class presentation and critique of a published survey (10%).
3. Mid-term examination (30%)
4. Final project, consisting of a verbal and written report of an original survey of the student's own design, due by **Midnight, Wednesday, March 15** (50%). This project includes timely completion of weekly assignments.

Readings

Two books are required for purchase: *The Psychology of Survey Response*, by Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski (Cambridge University Press, 2000); and *Asking Questions: The Definitive Guide to Questionnaire Design...* by Norman Bradburn, Seymour Sudman, and Brian Wansink (2004 Revised edition, Jossey-Bass). Additional readings are available online or from the instructor.

Week 1: Theories of the Response Process (January 3, 5)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Introduction and Point of View." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 1.

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Respondents' Understanding of Survey Questions." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 2.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "The Social Context of Question Asking." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 1.

Assignment: Turn in a 1-paragraph description of your research area.

Week 2: Memory (January 10, 12)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "The Role of Memory in Survey Responding." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 3.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Asking Nonthreatening Questions about Behavior." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 2.

Asher Koriat, Morris Goldsmith and Ainat Pansky. 2000. "Toward a Psychology of Memory Accuracy." *Annual Review of Psychology* 51, 481-537.

Michael Ross and Roger Buehler. "Creative Remembering." *The Remembering Self: Construction and Accuracy in the Self-Narrative*.

Assignment: Meet with your research team to discuss common interests

Week 3: Objective Questions (January 17, 19)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Answering Questions about Dates and Durations." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 4.; "Factual Judgments and Numerical Estimates." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 5.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Asking and Recording Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 5., "Asking Questions that Measure Knowledge." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 6.

Norman M. Bradburn, Lance J. Rips and Steven K. Shevell. 1987. "Answering Autobiographical Questions: The Impact of Memory and Inference on Surveys." *Science* 236, 4798157-161.

Assignment: Turn in at least one formal research hypothesis and two additional hypotheses or research questions.

Week 4: Opinion Questions (January 24, 26)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Attitude Questions." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 6.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Asking Questions about Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 4.

John Zaller and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions Versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36, 3579.

Milton Lodge, Marco R. Steenbergen and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89, 2309.

Assignment: Turn in draft questionnaire

Week 5: Attitudes and Non-Attitudes (January 31, February 2)

Philip E. Converse. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *Ideology and Discontent*.

Howard Schuman and Stanley Presser. 1981. *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context*.

George F. Bishop. 2005. *The Illusion of Public Opinion: Fact and Artifact in American Public Opinion Polls*.

Take-home midterm examination distributed January 31, due February 6

Week 6: Context Effects (February 7, 9)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Attitude Judgments and Context Effects." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 7.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Asking Standard Demographic Questions." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 9.

Roger Tourangeau, Eleanor Singer and Stanley Presser. 2003. "Context Effects in Attitude Surveys: Effects on Remote Items and Impact on Predictive Validity." *Sociological Methods & Research* 31, 4486-513.

Katherine Bischooping and Howard Schuman. 1992. "Pens and Polls in Nicaragua: An Analysis of the 1990 Preelection Surveys." *American Journal of Political Science* 36, 2331.

Leslie Anderson, Katherine Bischooping, Howard Schuman and John A. Booth. 1994. "Neutrality and Bias in the 1990 Nicaraguan Preelection Polls: A Comment on Bischooping and Schuman." *American Journal of Political Science* 38, 2486, 495,.

Week 7: Question Wording (February 14, 16)

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Organizing and Designing Questionnaires." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 10., "Questionnaires from Start to Finish." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 11.

Thomas E. Nelson, Zoe M. Oxley and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. "Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects." *Political Behavior* 19, 3221-246.

Hans-J Hippler and Norbert Schwarz. 1986. "Not Forbidding Isn't Allowing: The Cognitive Basis of the Forbid-Allow Asymmetry." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50, 187.

Assignment: Turn in final questionnaire

Week 8: Sensitive Questions (February 21, 23)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Editing of Responses: Reporting about Sensitive Topics." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 9.

Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink. "Asking Threatening Questions about Behavior." *Asking Questions...* Chap. 3.

Maria Krysan. 1998. "Privacy and the Expression of White Racial Attitudes: A Comparison Across Three Contexts." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62, 4506.

Adam J. Berinsky. 1999. "The Two Faces of Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 43, 41209.

Assignment: Data collection

Week 9: Mapping (February 28, March 2)

Roger Tourangeau, Lance J. Rips and Kenneth A. Rasinski. "Selecting a Response: Mapping Judgments to Survey Answers." *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Chap. 8.

Brigitte Deutsch, Hans-J Hippler, Norbert Schwarz and Fritz Strack. 1985. "Response Scales: Effects of Category Range on Reported Behavior and Comparative Judgments." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49, 3388.

Roger Tourangeau. "Experimental Design Considerations for Testing and Evaluating Questionnaires." *Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questionnaires*.

Assignment: code, enter, and analyze data

Week 10: Group Reports (March 7, 9)

More on Requirements

Mid-term examination

A take-home examination will be distributed via e-mail. It will consist of a few questions covering material in the first half of class. Return your answers by e-mail.

In-class critique of published survey

Part of your discussion grade will be based on an in-class presentation and critique of a published survey. You will find a recently published poll, either from a news source or a scholarly article. Present the survey instrument, and offer your evaluation of its performance. Your presentation should last no more than 20 minutes. Consider the following points:

- What is the scientific hypothesis? Is a survey the proper method to apply?
- Is the operationalization of variables adequate?
- What is the mode of data collection? Does it impact data quality?
- Are the response alternatives adequate?
- In general, how would the survey benefit from the application of principles from this class?

Final project

The final project consists of an oral and written report on an original survey of your own design. To conduct the survey you will meet with a small group of fellow students with similar research interests. You will design an instrument consisting of a small number of survey questions for each researcher. Depending on the size of groups and the number of questions, you may be asked to combine instruments with another group for purpose of data collection. In the latter half of the class you will collect data, either through paper and pencil "person on the street" interviews, telephone interviews, or online interviews. You must code and enter the data by the final week of class. The final week of class will be devoted to in-class presentations by research teams. The final report is due via e-mail.

An important part of this project is the completion of weekly assignments. These assignments are intended to keep you on schedule for the timely completion of your project. Individual assignments will not be graded, but points will be deducted for late submissions. It is in your interest to devote adequate time to these assignments so that the final project is the best it can be.