2012

Advanced Seminar – Interviewer-Respondent Interaction: Survey Research & Methodology Special Topics 898, Spring 2012

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Instructor
Dr. Bob Belli (223 Burnett Hall, 472-6269; SRAM program, 472-7784; bbelli2@unl.edu)
Office hours by arrangement.

Time & Location
Tu 3:30-6:15; Burnett 121

Course Summary
This course will explore the theory and observations that underlie the attempt of survey methodologists to understand the nature of interviewer-respondent interactions and their impact on data quality. This exploration will entail the examination of different interviewing methods and different methods to observe and analyze the verbal behavioral streams that occur between interviewers and respondents. In addition, analytic approaches that seek to understand the impact of verbal behaviors on data quality will be considered.

Required Texts


Class Format
Classes will be a combination of discussion and/or exercises. Exercises are expected to include sharing class project activities during the course of the semester.

Scheduling
The scheduling of weekly topics and readings will be flexible, and will be determined via discussion in class. The expectation is that readings will be selected among those in the reading list appended to this syllabus.

Grading
Grading is based on performance on discussion posts (60%) and a final term project (40%).

Discussion Posts
1. Throughout the semester, you are required to submit at least 2 discussion posts per week pertaining to the readings that are assigned for that week. While you can submit more than 2 posts per week, only 2 will be graded as fulfilling the requirement. Each week there may be certain requirements concerning the content of the posts; for example, if two reading are assigned, you may be required to provide at least one post to each reading. Discussion posts are to be submitted to
the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard on the Sunday before class by 4:00 pm to give your classmates time to review and respond to posts for the upcoming week’s class.

2. Throughout the semester, you are required to respond each week via the Blackboard discussion board to one of your classmates’ discussion posts. You can respond to more than one post, but only one response per week will be graded and counted toward fulfilling the requirement. Replies are to be submitted to the discussion board by 6:00 am Tuesday morning.

3. All posts and replies will be graded as acceptable or unacceptable. Your final grade for Discussion Posts will be determined by the number of acceptable posts and replies divided by the total number of graded opportunities for posts and replies. Posts and replies must be oriented to the content of the readings or information that is related to the content of the readings. As some examples for posts, you can ask questions on aspects of the readings that are not clear, identify lack of clarity and/or strengths/weaknesses of expressed points of view, pose your own methodological arguments relevant to the content of the readings, or advance a theory or method relevant to content. As for replies, you should take into consideration both the content of the readings and the nature of the post to which you are replying; be certain to be respectful (even if in disagreement) to the post to which you are replying. You should expect that the criterion for acceptability of posts and replies will become more stringent as the semester proceeds.

4. If you submit more than 2 posts in a given week, you will be graded on the number of acceptable posts submitted, up to 2, and within any special constraints of the assigned readings. If you submit more than one reply in a given week, you will be allowed credit up to one acceptable reply.

5. The purpose of the posts and replies is to promote healthy discussion that will also frame discussion in the upcoming class. Good cyber manners are essential. All posts and replies must be geared to content reading and be respectful of other points of view. Inappropriate posts and replies will be removed by the instructor and will result in a score of 0 for that week. Repeat offenses will result in a grade of 0 for the entire semester.

Final Term Project. The topic of your project will be determined in consultation with the instructor. Team projects, in which each there are several students working on the same topic will be accepted and may be encouraged. Project topics are required to include an observational and analytic component; the approach may be qualitative, quantitative, or both. Each project will require a written report which is expected to be in the form of a manuscript that would be submitted for publication; it may also be in the form of a research proposal for funding. In order to be able to consider your project as research, the project must be approved by the IRB. There are two ongoing research activities that already are approved by the IRB, and your course projects, if they fit into these already approved activities, will not need separate IRB approval. All students must be CITI trained as to be able to join as research assistants into these IRB approved research activities. Projects will be due by Monday, April 30 at 5 pm.
**Class Participation** is required. Excuses for absences will need to be confirmed with the instructor, and at the instructor’s discretion. Unexcused absences will result in 0 points for the discussion board posts of the relevant week.

**Blackboard**

The syllabus, readings (with the exception of required texts), and will all be available via blackboard. Grades will also be posted on blackboard. If you do not already know how to use blackboard, or if you have any technical difficulties, contact information services help center at 472-3970.

**Reading Topics**

**Standardization**


**Behavior Coding to test Interviewer Compliance with Standardization**


**Behavior Coding to examine the quality of questions**


**Rapport in Standardized Interviews**


Standardization and Its Discontents


Behavior Coding to Assess Interviewing Dynamics, Cognitive Processes, and Data Quality


Alternatives to Standardized Interviews


Calendar Interviewing and Data Quality


**Behavior Coding in Calendar Interviews**

