


2012

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

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**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](mailto: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**

Fowler, F. J., & Mangione, T. W. (1990). *Standardized survey interviewing*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Houtkoop-Steenstra, H. (2000). *Interaction and the Standardized Survey Interview*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**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 readings 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

Fowler, F. J., & Mangione, T. W. (1990). *Standardized survey interviewing*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

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

Brenner, M. (1982). Response effects of "role-restricted" characteristics of the interviewer. In W. Dijkstra & J. VanderZouwen (Eds.), *Response behavior in the survey interview* (pp. 131-165). London: Academic Press.

Cannell, C. F., Marquis, K. H., & Laurent, A. (1977). A summary of studies of interviewing methodology. *Vital and Health Statistics*, 69 (2).

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

Oksenberg, L., Cannell, C., & Kalton, G. (1991). New strategies for pretesting survey questions. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 7, 349-365.

Fowler, F. J. (1992). How unclear terms affect survey data. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 56, 218-231.

#### Rapport in Standardized Interviews

Dijkstra, W. (1987). Interviewing style and respondent behavior: An experimental study of the survey interview. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 16, 309-334.

Goudy, W. J., & Potter, H. R. (1975). Interview rapport: Demise of a concept. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 39, 529-543.

Henson, R., Cannell, C. F., & Lawson, S. (1976). Effects of interviewer style on the quality of reporting in a survey interview. *Journal of Psychology*, 93, 221-227.

Weiss, C. H. (1968). Validity of welfare mothers' interview responses. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32, 622-633.

Williams, J. A. (1968). Interview role performance: A further note on bias in the information interview. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32, 287-294.

### Standardization and Its Discontents

- Beatty, P. (1995). Understanding the standardized/non-standardized controversy. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 11, 147-160.
- Houtkoop-Steenstra, H. (2000). *Interaction and the Standardized Survey Interview*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maynard, D. W., & Schaeffer, N. C. (2002). Standardization and its discontents. In D. W. Maynard, Houtkoop-Steenstra, H., Schaeffer, N. C., & van der Zouwen, J. *Standardization and Tacit Knowledge* (pp. 3-45). New York: Wiley.
- Suchman, L. & Jordan, B. (1990). Interactional troubles in face-to-face interviews. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 85, 232-241.

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

- Fowler, F. J., & Cannell, C. F. (1996). Using behavioral coding to identify cognitive problems with survey questions. In N. Schwarz and S. Sudman (Eds.), *Answering questions: Methodology for determining cognitive and communicative processes in survey research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Belli, R. F., Lepkowski, J. M., & Kabeto, M. U. (2001). The respective roles of cognitive processing difficulty and conversational rapport on the accuracy of retrospective reports of doctor's office visits (pp. 197-203). In *Seventh Conference on Health Survey Research Methods*, ed. Marcie L. Cynamon and Richard A. Kulka (DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 01-1013). Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Belli, R. F., & Lepkowski, J. M. (1996). Behavior of survey actors and the accuracy of response. *Health Survey Research Methods: Conference Proceedings* (pp. 69-74). DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 96-1013.

### Alternatives to Standardized Interviews

- Schober, M. F., & Conrad, F. G. (1997). Does conversational interviewing reduce survey measurement error? *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 576-602.
- Belli, R. F. (1998). The structure of autobiographical memory and the event history calendar: Potential improvements in the quality of retrospective reports in surveys. *Memory*, 6, 383-406.

### Calendar Interviewing and Data Quality

- Belli, R. F., & Callegaro, M. (2009). The emergence of calendar interviewing: A theoretical and empirical rationale. In R. F. Belli, F. P. Stafford, & D. F. Alwin (Eds.), *Calendar and time diary methods in life course research* (pp. 31-52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Belli, R.F., Shay, W. L., & Stafford, F. P. (2001). Event history calendars and question list surveys: A direct comparison of interviewing methods. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 65, 45-74.

- Belli, R. F., Smith, L., Andreski, P., & Agrawal, S. (2007). Methodological comparisons between CATI event history calendar and conventional questionnaire instruments. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71, 603-622.
- Belli, R. F., Agrawal, S., & Bilgen, I. (in press). Health status and disability comparisons between CATI calendar and conventional questionnaire instruments. *Quality and Quantity*.

Behavior Coding in Calendar Interviews

- Belli, R. F., Lee, E. H., Stafford, F. P., & Chou, C-H. (2004). Calendar and question-list survey methods: Association between interviewer behaviors and data quality. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 20, 185-218.
- Bilgen, I., & Belli, R. F. (2010). Comparison of verbal behaviors between calendar and standardized conventional questionnaires. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 26, 481-505.
- Belli, R. F., Bilgen, I., & Albaghal, T. (2011). Memory, Communication, and Data Quality in Calendar Interviews. Manuscript submitted for publication