Overview of the Course

This course will cover major sources of survey measurement error from the perspective of the social sciences, particularly cognitive psychology. The first part of the course (weeks 1 – 9) will focus on reporting errors and how they arise: misunderstanding questions, forgetting relevant information, using imprecise estimation strategies, and question and response order effects. The second part of the course (weeks 10 – 12) will examine sources of measurement error outside the conventional interview situation: coding and classification error, interacting with computerized questionnaires including web surveys, and the use of verbal protocols in pretesting questionnaires.

Course Requirements

Grades for the course will be based on:

- Participation in class discussion demonstrating understanding of the required readings (10% of grade);
- A mid-term in-class exam (40% of grade);
- A final in-class exam (50% of grade).

Course materials

Required reading other than chapters from the Sudman et al. and Tourangeau et al. texts will be on the Ctools site. In addition, class notes will be available on the course site before
Schedule and Reading Assignments

September 4 (week 1): Cognitive views of error and implications for survey response

Either


Note: can be ordered direct from the publisher at: http://www.wiley.com

Or


Recommended reading

For background or a refresher in cognitive psychology, see chapters 1, 6, 7 and 12 (and others) in:


For background or a refresher in social cognition, see chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 9 and 11 in:


For more background on the material covered in class, see:


_________________________

1Henceforth referred to as “SB&S (1996).”
2Henceforth referred to as “TR&R (2000).”
September 11: No Class

September 18 (week 2): Understanding Questions: Basic Processes


Recommended Reading


September 25 (week 3): Understanding Questions: Interviewer-Respondent Interaction


Recommended Reading


October 2 (week 4): Memory, Forgetting and Measurement Error


Recommended Reading


**October 9 (week 5): Placing Events in Time**


Chapter 8 in SB&S (1996)

**Recommended Reading**


**October 16 (week 6): Judgment and Estimation Processes**


**Recommended Reading**


**October 23 (week 7): Midterm Exam**

**October 30 (week 8): Reporting Quantities**


**Recommended Reading**


November 6 (week 9): Context Effects in Attitude Measurement


Recommended Reading


November 13 (week 10): Mapping and Reporting in Surveys


Recommended Reading


November 20 (week 11): Classification and coding


Recommended Reading


November 27 (week 12): Interacting with Computer Assisted Data Collection Tools


---

Recommended Reading


December 4 (week 13): Verbal protocols in survey research


Crutcher, R. J. (1994). Telling what we know: The use of verbal report methodologies in


**Recommended Reading**


**December 11: Final Exam**