Short Course Description

This course introduces students to the stages of questionnaire development. The course reviews the scientific literature on questionnaire construction, the experimental literature on question effects, and the psychological literature on information processing. It also discusses pays special attention is paid to the relationship between mode of administration and questionnaire design. Students will get hands-on experience in developing their own questionnaire.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will...

- be able to develop their own questionnaire based on a research question.
- be able to apply the knowledge about the cognitive response process to write good survey questions.
- be able to select and apply tools to pretest their questionnaire.
- know different techniques to ask respondents about sensitive topics.
- be able to develop questions that ask about facts (i.e. behaviors and events) and non-fact (i.e. attitudes and opinions).
- be able to put individual survey questions in an appropriate sequence considering the idiosyncrasies of different modes of data collection.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites.

Class Structure and Course Concept

This is an online course, using a flipped classroom design. It covers the same material and content as an on-site course but runs differently. In this course, you are responsible for watching video-recorded lectures and reading the required literature for each unit prior to participating in mandatory weekly one-hour online meetings where students have the chance to discuss the materials from a unit with the instructor. Just
like in an on-site course, homework will be assigned and graded and there will be a final exam at the end of the course.

Although this is an online course where students have more freedom in when they engage with the course materials, students are expected to spend the same amount of time overall on all activities in the course – including preparatory activities (readings, studying), in-class-activities (watching videos, participating in online meetings), and follow-up activities (working on assignments and exams) – as in an on-site course. As a rule of thumb, you can expect to spend approximately 3h/week on in-class-activities and 9 hours per week on out-of-class activities (preparing for class, readings, assignments, projects, studying for quizzes and exams). Therefore, the workload in all courses will be approximately 12h/week. This is a 2-credit/4-ECTS course that runs for 8 weeks. Please note that the actual workload will depend on your personal knowledge.

### Mandatory Weekly Online Meetings

*** Thursday, noon EST/6:00 PM CET, starting January 14, 2021.***

Meetings will be held online through Zoom. Follow the link to the meeting sessions on the course website on mannheim.instructure.com. If video participation via Internet is not possible, arrangements can be made for students to dial in and join the meetings via telephone.

In preparation for the weekly online meetings, students are expected to watch the lecture videos and read the assigned literature before the start of the meeting. In addition, students are encouraged to post questions about the materials covered in the videos and readings of the week in the forum before the meetings (deadline for posting questions is Wednesday, 8:00 AM EST/2:00 PM CET the day before class).

Students have the opportunity to use the Conferences feature in Canvas to connect with peers outside the scheduled weekly online meetings (e.g., for study groups). Students are not required to use Canvas Conferences and can of course use other online meeting platforms such as Google Hangout or Skype.

### Grading

Grading will be based on:
- 5 online quizzes (25% total grade)
- Attendance and participation in discussion during the weekly online meetings (7% total grade)
- Posting questions to the weekly discussion forums (deadline: Wednesday 8:00 AM EST/2:00 PM CET) and demonstrating understanding of the required readings and video lectures (8% total grade)
- Project consisting of 3 homework assignments (60% total grade)

Dates of when assignments will be due are indicated in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangement with the instructor.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100 - 97</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>92 - 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 - 87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86 - 83</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The grading scale is a base scale recommended by the MDM. Variations for grading on a scale are at the discretion of the instructor.

The final grade will be communicated under the assignment "Final Grade" in the Canvas course. Please note that the letter grade written in parentheses in Canvas is the correct final grade. The point-grade displayed alongside the letter grade is irrelevant and can be ignored.

Dates of when assignments will be due are indicated in the syllabus. Extensions will be granted sparingly and are at the instructors’ discretion.

**Technical Equipment Needs**

The learning experience in this course will mainly rely on the online interaction between the students and the instructors during the weekly online meetings. Therefore, we encourage all students in this course to use a web camera and a headset. Decent quality headsets and web cams are available for less than $20 each. We ask students to refrain from using built-in web cams and speakers on their desktops or laptops. We know from our experience in previous online courses that this will reduce the quality of video and audio transmission and therefore will decrease the overall learning experience for all students in the course. In addition, we suggest that students use a wire connection (LAN), if available, when connecting to the online meetings. Wireless connections (WLAN) are usually less stable and might be dropped.

**Long Course Description**

The objective of this course is to introduce the scientific literature on the design, testing, and evaluation of survey questionnaires. The course will explore the theoretical and experimental literature related to question and questionnaire design as well as focusing on practical issues in the design, critique, and interpretation of survey questions that are often not taught in formal courses.

Discussion will focus on the measurement of both factual and non-factual material. Topics include general principles of writing questions to ensure respondent understanding; techniques for measuring the occurrence of past behaviors and events; the effects of question wording, response formats, and question sequence on responses; an introduction to the psychometric perspectives in multi-item scale design; combining individual questions into a meaningful questionnaire; guidelines for self-administered surveys versus interviewer-administered surveys; strategies for obtaining sensitive or personal information; and an introduction to techniques for testing survey questions.

The course will also provide hands on applications of the methods discussed in class. Students will be expected to draw on the material covered in the video lectures and readings in conducting a series of exercises in the development of a questionnaire.

**Readings**

**Primary Readings**
Primary readings are from the following books, which are required for students to buy and available at bookstores:


**Recommended Books**

Interested students might find the following additional recommended books helpful (but not required or necessary) in preparing for the course:


**Academic Conduct**

Clear definitions of the forms of academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at

https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf (University of Maryland)

and in the MBS Honor Code, signed at the beginning of the program.

Knowledge of these rules is the responsibility of the student and ignorance of them does not excuse misconduct. The student is expected to be familiar with these guidelines before submitting any written work or taking any exams in this course. Lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. Charges of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with very seriously and may result in oral or written reprimands, a lower or failing grade on the assignment, a lower or failing grade for the course, suspension, and/or, in some cases, expulsion from the university.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In order to receive services, students at the University of Maryland must contact the Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) office to register in person for services. Please call the office to set up an appointment to register with an ADS counselor. Contact the ADS office at 301.314.7682; https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/.

Students at the University of Mannheim should contact the Commissioner and Counsellor for Disabled Students and Students with Chronic Illnesses at http://www.uni-mannheim.de/studienbueros/english/counselling/disabled_persons_and_persons_with_chronic_illnesses/.

Course Evaluation

In an effort to improve the learning experience for students in our online courses, students will be invited to participate in an online course evaluation at the end of the course (in addition to the standard university evaluation survey). Participation is entirely voluntary and highly appreciated.
## Sessions

### Week 1: Instrument Development

Video lecture: available Thursday, January 7, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, January 14, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Online Quiz 1: due Friday, January 15, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


### Week 2: Writing Survey Questions

Video lecture: available Thursday, January 14, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, January 21, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Course Project Assignment 1: due Friday, January 22, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 3: Asking about Facts and Quasi-Facts**

Video lecture: available Thursday, January 21, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, January 28, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Online Quiz 2: due Friday, January 29, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 4: Questions about Subjective Things (Attitudes)**

Video lecture: available Thursday, January 28, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, February 4, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Online Quiz 3: due Friday, February 5, noon EST/6:00 PM CET
**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


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**Week 5: Response Categories and Response Scales**

Video lecture: available Thursday, February 4, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, February 11, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Online Quiz 4: due Friday, February 12, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 6: Sensitive Questions**

Video lecture: available Thursday, February 11, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, February 18, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Course Project Assignment 2: due Friday, February 19, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7: Questionnaire from Start to Finish; Layout and Mode Dependencies**

Video lecture: available Thursday, February 18, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, February 25, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Online Quiz 5: due Friday, February 26, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 8: Tools for Developing and Testing Questionnaires**

Video lecture: available Thursday, February 25, 1:00 EST/7:00 PM CET

Online meeting: Thursday, March 4, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

Course Project Assignment 3: due Thursday, March 11, noon EST/6:00 PM CET

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**
Questionnaire Design | Spring 2021 | Section 1


