



JOINT PROGRAM IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY

WRITING QUESTIONS FOR SURVEYS

March 02 – 13, 2026

Joint Program in Survey Methodology

Jennifer Dykema

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn the structure and wording of survey questions
- Gain practical guidance on diagnosing problems with survey questions and applying guidelines to improve questions
- Learn about and apply specific guidelines for writing questions about events and behaviors and attitudes and judgments
- Explore cognitive interviewing as a method for testing survey questions
- Investigate research that underlies key decisions in writing survey questions

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This course is ideal for individuals writing or reviewing survey questions, designing survey instruments, or analyzing survey data. It provides practical guidance for those newer to question design as well as experienced researchers looking to refine their skills.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Jennifer Dykema. 2020. "Advances in the Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 46:37-60. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919054544>. (or <http://www.annualreviews.org/eprint/NYXQK3SSPS9EWKEJG6RN/full/10.1146/annurev-soc121919-054544>).

Schaeffer NC. Presser S. 2003. "The science of asking questions", *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65–88. <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/eprint/rU4UOoizjrXROhijkRIS/full/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.110702.110112>

Dykema, Jennifer, Nora Cate Schaeffer, Dana Garbarski and Michael Hout. 2020. "The Role of Question Characteristics in Designing and Evaluating Survey Questions." Pp. 449-70 in *Advances in Questionnaire Design, Development, Evaluation, and Testing*, edited by P. Beatty, D. Collins, L. Kaye, J. Padilla, G. Willis and A. Wilmot. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.



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Dykema, Jennifer, Nora Cate Schaeffer, Dana Garbarski, Nadia Assad and Steven Blixt. 2022. "Towards a Reconsideration of the Use of Agree-Disagree Questions in Measuring Subjective Evaluations." *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* 18:2335-2344.

THE INSTRUCTOR

Jennifer Dykema, Professor of Sociology/Faculty Director University of Wisconsin Survey Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Jen's research focuses on survey research methodology, identifying sources of errors produced in the process of gathering standardized measurements and developing and implementing methods to reduce those errors. Her work examines three main areas of inquiry: interviewer-respondent interaction, questionnaire design, and methods to increase response rates. As Faculty Director, she oversees a program of methodological research that incorporates experiments and evaluations in ongoing projects. Jen's research has appeared in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, *Sociological Methods and Research*, *American Sociological Review*, and edited volumes including the *Handbook of Survey Research*. She co-edited "Interviewer Effects from a Total Survey Error Perspective" (2020). Jen earned her B.A. in psychology and sociology from the University of Michigan, and her M.S. and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

CLASS STRUCTURE

- Dates

Week 1: March 2 - March 6, 2026

Week 2: March 9 - March 13, 2026

- Course Format (Hybrid) – 12 Hours of Instruction

9 hours of pre-recorded lecture videos

3 hours of live online sessions (1.5 hours per week)

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Week 1 (Monday–Thursday):

- Participants will access approximately 4.5 hours of recorded content at their own pace, along with the course slides

- o Week 1 (Friday):

- Live 1.5-hour online session with the instructor on March 6, Noon-1:30 Central

➤ Week 2:

- Follows the same schedule as Week 1
- Live 1.5-hour online session with the instructor on March 13, Noon-1:30 Central

Fridays Online Meetings

Class meets on Fridays March 06 and 13 from Noon-1:30 Central