

ENVIRON 280: Social Science Surveys for Environmental Management

Spring 2009 Course Syllabus

Tuesday-Thursday 10:05-11:20
A156 LSRC

Course Instructor:

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Teaching Assistant:

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Course Description:

This course presents social science research methods appropriate for collecting data useful in environmental management and policy analysis. Topics will include sampling, survey design, focus groups, pre-testing, survey implementation, and data coding, analysis and presentation. The course will emphasize the development and practice of skills for conducting environmental surveys with a socioeconomic focus.

Course Format:

The course will combine lectures and active discussion. The instructor will present basic material on each topic. There will be several lectures by survey practitioners. Student teams will play an *extremely important* role in the class. The teams will be formed around areas of interest (e.g. coastal management, environmental public opinion, environmental marketing, and recreation demand). Each team will conduct a group project and make several presentations during the semester. The teams will be required to hold *regular meetings* outside of class time.

Course Requirements:

Exam: Quizzes (10% of grade) and one exam (25% of grade) will be given.

Written Assignment: There will be a written individual project on data analysis and presentation (10% of grade).

Class Participation: Students are strongly encouraged to actively participate in classroom and online discussions, team meetings, and team presentations. A significant portion of your participation grade will be derived from other team members' evaluation of your performance (15% of grade).

Group Project: Team grades will be assigned on the basis of final oral and written reports (40% of grade).

Readings:

The main textbook for the course is Louis M. Rea and Richard A. Parker, *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd edition, 2005, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Additional readings are available through Blackboard and e-reserves. You are expected to do the assigned readings before coming to class. Other useful textbooks on reserve at Perkins Library: (1) Paul P. Biemer and Lars E. Lyberg, *Introduction to Survey Quality*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2003; (2) and Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Internet Surveys*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2000.

Group projects:

Each team will work on developing a survey during the semester using the following steps. (1) Early in the semester a topic will be selected, preferably with a particular business, agency or non-government organization client in mind. (2) The teams will develop research questions, draft appropriate survey questions, and present the draft questionnaire to the class. (3) The questionnaires will be further refined through a focus group recruited and run by the teams. The teams will report on the outcome of their focus group activities to the class. (4) The teams will pretest their survey with a small number of respondents and make final revisions in the questionnaire. (5) Finally, the teams will undertake a pilot study involving at least 60 respondents. The results of the pilot study will be presented in a written and oral final report. Projects will be evaluated by students and the instructor. The final report should be no longer than 15 single spaced pages, not counting the pages in the appendix. The report is due on April 17.

Course web page:

Course announcements and other information will be available on the Blackboard course page. *You should check the course Blackboard site several times per week.* In the event of severe weather, information about class cancellation will be posted on this site and on the instructor's phone message (613-8072).

Certification for Human Subjects Research:

In order to carry out the focus groups and surveys that are a part of the group projects, it is necessary for each member of the class to become certified to conduct human subjects' research by Duke's Office of Research Support. This requirement is met by completing an online training module for behavioral and social science investigators as described on the ORS website:

www.ors.duke.edu

Course Schedule and Readings¹

Jan. 8 Introduction

Nicholas Institute, "Survey: Why Pro-Environmental Views Don't Always Translate into Votes," Press release from Duke Environmental Summit, September 2005. <http://www.dukenews.duke.edu/2005/09/nicholaspoll.html>
(for more detail: see <http://www.env.duke.edu/institute/surveywhitepaper.pdf>)

¹Additional readings may be assigned during the semester.

- Jan. 13 History and foundations of survey methods
Rea and Parker, ch. 1
- Jan. 15 Overview of the sample survey process
Blumenthal, M.M.. 2005. "Toward an Open-Source Methodology: What We Can Learn from the Blogosphere?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 655-669.
Kramer, R. and E. Mercer. 1997. "Valuing a Global Environmental Good: U.S. Residents' Willingness to Pay to Protect Tropical Rain Forests," *Land Economics*, 73: 196-210.
- Jan. 20 Questionnaire type (mail, telephone, in-person, computer assisted): Which is best?
Rea and Parker, ch. 1
Gosling, S.D., S.Vazire, S. Srivastava, O.P. John. 2004. "Should We Trust Web-Based Studies? A Comparative Analysis of Six Preconceptions about Internet Questionnaires," *American Psychologist* 59: 93-104.
- Jan. 22 The ethics of survey research
Singer, Eleanor. 2008. "Ethical Issues in Surveys," ch. 5 in E. D. de Leeuw et al., eds. *International Handbook of Survey Methodology*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
Office of Research Support. "Protecting Human Subjects in Non-Medical Research," Duke University, <http://www.ors.duke.edu/irb/index.html>
- Jan. 27 Focusing your research and writing survey questions
Rea and Parker, ch. 2
Dillman, Don A. 2000. "Writing Questions," ch. 2 in *Mail and Internet Surveys*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Jan. 29 Student Teams Report #1: Questionnaire topic and purpose
- Feb. 3 Measurement, Indexes and Scales
Online quiz
Rea and Parker, ch. 3

- Feb. 5 Using focus groups to design and refine questionnaires
- Kitzinger, Jenny. 1995. "Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Groups," *British Medical Journal* 311:299–302.
- Rea and Parker, ch. 4
- Feb. 10 Survey pretests
- Presser, S., et al. 2004. "Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questions," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68: 109-130
- Feb. 12 Student Teams Report #2: Presentation and discussion of draft surveys
- Feb. 17 Survey case studies
- Feb. 19 Selecting a sample
- Rea and Parker, ch. 9.
- Squire, Peverill. 1988. "Why the 1936 *Literary Digest* Poll Failed," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 57:62-79.
- Feb. 24 Implementing surveys: recruitment, training and other issues.
- Weinberg, Eve. 1983. "Data Collection: Planning and Management," ch. 9 in P. H. Rossi et al., eds. *Handbook of Survey Research*, N.Y.: Academic Press, pp. 329-358.
- Feb. 26 Implementing surveys: follow-ups, maximizing response rates
- Dillman, Don A., Jolene D. Smyth and Leah M. Christian. 2009. "Survey Implementation," ch. 8, in Internet, *Mail Mixed Mode t Surveys*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Fox, Richard J. et al. 1988. "Mail Survey Response Rate: A Meta Analysis of Selected Techniques for Inducing Response," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52: 467-91.
- Mar. 3 Student Teams Report #3: Results from focus groups
- Mar. 5 Midterm exam
- Mar. 6-15 Spring Break
- Mar. 17 Data coding, entry and cleaning

- Mar. 19 Data analysis: descriptive and multivariate statistics
Rea and Parker, ch. 5, 11, 12
- Mar. 24 Qualitative data collection methods
Merriam, Sharon. 1998. "Being a Careful Observer," ch. 6 in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Bernard, H.R. 1988. "Unstructured and Semi-structured Interviewing," ch. 9 in *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, London: Sage Publications, pp. 148-179, 203-224.
- Mar. 26 Reporting survey results.
Rea and Parker, ch. 13
- Mar. 31 Conducting survey research in developing countries
Devereux, S. and J. Hoddinott. 1993. "Issues in Data Collection," ch. 2 in *Field Work in Developing Countries*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 25-40.
- April 2 No Class -- MP Symposium
- April 7 Presentation of team final reports
- April 9 Presentation of team final reports
- April 14 Presentation of team final reports