Course Title: Intermediate Survey Research Methods

Course Number: HEBS 0663J - 030

Course Location: SPH Bldg, 2A (Computer Lab)

Course Date & Time: Wednesday, 6:10pm – 9:00pm

Course Instructor: Cristine Delnevo, PhD, MPH, Professor & Chair, Department of Health Education Behavioral Science delnevo@sph.rutgers.edu

HEBS Secretary: Markeeta Watts 732-235-9725

Office Hours: By Appointment Only


Course Readings/Resources: Other readings as assigned (to be made available on Moodle)

Course Description: This doctoral level course on survey research methods introduces students to a set of principles of survey design that are the basis of standard practices in the field. It is assumed that students have taken a basic research methods course in their respective discipline. It is expected that students will utilize knowledge from other courses and work experiences in this class. We will use the concept of total survey error as a framework to discuss sampling, modes of data collection, field operations (i.e., implementation), sources of bias, the impact of nonresponse, and the effect of question structure, wording and context on respondent response. Major methods and techniques in the use of surveys for research and evaluation purposes will be explored in this course. Theory is integrated into practice by conducting a survey research project on a selected topic of interest. The practical focus of this course is the development and application of a research instrument, as such there is a substantial "hands-on" component.

Selected Department Competencies Addressed: Each Department identifies competencies for each degree offered. Doctoral competencies addressed in this course include:

- Design reliable and valid measurement instruments;
- Design and conduct research investigations related to health behavior;
**Course Objectives:** At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1) Understand cognitive processes related to answering survey questions
2) Develop, evaluate, and ask survey questions
3) Design and format survey instruments
4) Employ pre-survey evaluation techniques (e.g., pilot tests, cognitive interviewing)
5) Understand the different survey modes (e.g., self-administered, interviews)
6) Decrease survey nonresponse and reduce error
7) Design an appropriate sampling approach

**School of Public Health Honor Code:** The School of Public Health Honor Code is found in the student bulletin (sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog/index.html). Each student bears a fundamental responsibility for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her graduate work. For example, all students are expected to observe the generally accepted principles of scholarly work, to submit their own rather than another’s work, to refrain from falsifying data, and to refrain from receiving and/or giving aid on examinations or other assigned work requiring independent effort. In submitting written material, the writer takes full responsibility for the work as a whole and implies that, except as properly noted by use of quotation marks, footnotes, etc., both the ideas and the works used are his or her own. In addition to maintaining personal academic integrity, each student is expected to contribute to the academic integrity of the school community by not facilitating inappropriate use of her/his own work by others and by reporting acts of academic dishonesty by others to an appropriate school authority. It should be clearly understood that plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to sanctions up to and including separation from the Rutgers School of Public Health.

**Policy Concerning Use of Recording Devices and Other Electronic Communications Systems:** When personally owned communication/recording devices are used by students to record lectures and/or classroom lessons, such use must be authorized by the faculty member or instructor who must give either oral or written permission prior to the start of the semester and identify restrictions, if any, on the use of mobile communications or recording devices.
Course Requirements and Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Review/Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Critique</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam:</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampling Assignment</td>
<td>(7.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Interviewing Rpt</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Survey Instrument</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
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Scale

- 94+ A
- 90-93 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 84-86 B
- 80-83 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 74-76 C

ARTICLE REVIEW: You will explore one methodological research article in greater depth. These articles may address topics such as: measurement of critical constructs, alternative methodologies, and research ethics. A list of articles will be provided later in the semester for you to choose from.

SURVEY PROJECT: Because the purpose of the class project is educational *this exercise does not meet the definition of "research" in 45 CFR 46.102 (d)* and thus an IRB review is not required. We will, however, follow the criteria for exemption. In following the guidelines for exemption, three constraints will be followed: data will be recorded in an anonymous manner, the content of the survey will not address sensitive or threatening topics and subjects can not be from a protected class (e.g., children). The entire semester will be spent on the development and revision of a survey instrument. This will include the use of cognitive interviewing or testing.

*Instructions will be forthcoming.*
Week 1. Introduction to Survey Research Methods (1/22/14)
Chapter 1- Dillman

Week 2. Total Design Method of Survey Research (1/29/14)
Chapter 2- Dillman

Week 3 Sampling: Coverage (2/5/14)
Chapter 3- Dillman

Week 4 Sampling: Design (2/12/14)

Week 5- Cognitive Processes in Answering Questions-(2/19/14)

Week 6 Formulating Survey Questions (2/26/14)
Chapter 4-5 Dillman

Week 7 Formatting Your Survey Instrument (3/5/14)
Chapter 6 Dillman

Week 8 Pretesting/Cognitive Interviewing (3/12/14)
Chapter 8 Groves (Moodle)
Chapter 1 “Introduction” in Willis, G. Cognitive Interviewing (Moodle)

Week 9 SPRING BREAK (3/19/14)

Week 10 Cognitive Interviewing (3/26/14)
TBD

Week 11 Data Collection Modes/Methods (4/2/14)
TBD

Week 12 Data Collection Modes/Methods & Implementation Procedures (4/9/14)
TBD

Week 13 Mixed Mode (4/16/14)
TBD

Week 14 Exam (4/23/14)

Week 15 Survey Project Presentations (4/30/14)

Week 16 Reading/Finals Week (5/7/14) No Class, Written Report Due
Survey Topic Areas:

**Food Allergies in School Aged Children** (target population: schools/parents)

Food allergies are a growing public health concern that affects an estimated 6% of children in the US. Avoidance of allergens is necessary, but challenging, and trace amounts can cause a reaction in an allergic individual so accidental exposure is a concern. Treatment for a severe allergic reaction is the prompt administration of epinephrine. In January 2012, a 7-year-old girl died from anaphylaxis after a food allergic reaction at school. These events have called into question the way that schools handle food allergies and the CDC recommends that schools should develop plans for preventing an allergic reaction as well as responding to a food allergy emergency.

**Soda Bans.** (target population: schools/parents)

With obesity on the rise and teenagers getting about 15 percent of their daily calories from beverages, health groups like the Institute of Medicine have pushed for the removal of all sweetened beverages from schools, and some states have put in place all-out bans on sweetened drinks.

**Indoor tanning** (target population: young adults)

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light continues to increase in the US. The indoor tanning business has been one of the country's fastest growing industries, and currently there are approximately 30 million tanners in the US. Over the last 20 years, the number of American adults who report using indoor tanning has increased dramatically. And particularly high levels of use are noted among younger adults, particularly young white women. Many cancer prevention experts believe there is a potential looming public health crisis, with tens of millions of individuals putting themselves at increased risk of developing skin cancer in the years ahead.

**Antibiotic Resistance** (target population: parents or providers)

Outpatient prescribing of antibiotics is widespread in the US, and prescription rates are highest for children. As a result of widespread antibiotic use, infections caused by antibiotic-resistant pathogens are becoming more common. A reduction in antibiotic use is believed critical to slowing the emergence of resistant organisms. Physicians cite parent demand as an important motivation for antibiotic prescription, and real or perceived parental expectations can influence antibiotic-prescribing behavior.