SC 516: Survey Methodology
Spring 2013
Thursday 9:30-12:00 pm
245 O’Neill Library

Professor: Sara Moorman
Office: 404 McGuinn Hall
Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 am and Thursdays 3:00-4:00 pm
E-mail: moormans@bc.edu

About the Course
This applied course is designed for undergraduate students with a prior background in statistics at the level of SC200 (Statistics) and for graduate students with a prior background in statistics at the level of SC702 (Introduction to Statistics and Data Analysis). The course will lead students through the design, collection, and analysis of their own surveys. Major topics will include research ethics, sampling, item selection, modes of response, interviewer effects, nonresponse, and data management and analysis. Qualtrics and SPSS will be used to design internet surveys and analyze the resulting data, respectively.

Academic Honesty
Your work must be your words and ideas. When writing papers, use quotation marks around someone else’s exact words and identify whose words they are. If you come across a good idea, by all means use it in your writing, but be sure to acknowledge whose idea it is. Failure to comply will result in (a) automatic failure of the assignment, and (b) a report to the Dean and the Committee on Academic Integrity. For further information, please review the College’s policies on academic integrity here: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html

Required Books
The bookstore has ordered:


These books are also available on 2-hour reserve at O’Neill.

Course Reserves Online
Access additional readings as .pdf files through the library website or through the link on the course Blackboard page.
Schedule

January 17: The Survey in Social Science Research
1) Fink Chapter 1

January 24: Asking about Events and Behaviors I
1) Fink Chapter 2

January 31: Asking about Events and Behaviors II
2) Fink Chapter 3
February 7: Asking about Opinions I

February 14: Asking About Opinions II

February 21: Sampling I
1) Fink chapter 4
2) First half of Beam

February 28: Sampling II
1) Fink chapter 5
2) Second half of Beam

***March 7: Spring Vacation, no class***
March 14: Participants’ Cognitive Processing

March 21: Designing Web Surveys in Qualtrics

***March 28: Holy Thursday, no class***

April 4: Ethics

April 11: Nonparticipation and Missing Data

April 18: Data Management and Analysis
1) Fink chapter 6
April 25: Reporting Survey Results
  1) Fink chapter 7

May 2: Class Presentations

-no reading-

Assessment

Grading scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>none at Boston College</td>
<td>93 – 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 100%</td>
<td>90 – 92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
<td>70 – 72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76%</td>
<td>60 – 62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
<td>60 – 62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66%</td>
<td>60 – 62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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Task | Due date | Percentage of grade |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item selection</td>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample selection</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beam rebuttal</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey design</td>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics training</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentation</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>15</td>
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More detailed information about each of these assignments will be forthcoming in class, but to give you an overview of what we’ll be doing...

Participation: You’ll learn a lot from one another as we discuss the course readings and hold workshops on your survey projects. At various points throughout the semester you will lead class discussion and peer review other students’ work. Because these activities are part of being a good “course citizen,” it is not possible to get an A in the course without doing your part.

Beam Rebuttal: George Beam has strong opinions about how social science research generally, and survey research specifically, should be done. Some of you will agree with him and some of
you will not; however, all of you will write a short paper that rebuts his thesis. It’s good to learn to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, even those with which you agree!

**Ethics training:** Boston College is concerned that its researchers respect and protect the rights and welfare of human participants in research. As a researcher and student of research methods and ethics, you should be formally trained and certified. To that end, you’ll complete the online CITI course on Human Subjects Research.

**Your web survey:** In this class, it’s important not only to learn theory, but also to get hands-on practice designing, fielding, and analyzing your own web survey. You’ll do this in a series of stages as we cover relevant topics in class. The stages include: writing the questions for your survey, identifying a strategy for selecting your sample participants, designing how your survey looks and works, collecting data and analyze them, and reporting your findings to others both orally and in written form.

**Assignment Submission**

All assignments are due in hard copy in class, or if you must, by e-mail by 11:59 pm Eastern time on the due date. Papers submitted after 11:59 pm on the due date are late and will lose a letter grade a day. That is, a paper submitted on time is worth, at best, an A. A paper submitted between midnight and 11:59 pm of the day following the due date is worth, at best, a B. If you wish to avoid the late penalty, you must make arrangements with me in advance, or you must provide proof of extenuating circumstances (e.g., doctor’s note, funeral program). If you e-mail me a paper, I will respond confirming that I received it, can open the attached file, and am grading it. If you haven’t received confirmation, then I do not have your paper.