Survey Management  
SURV 760/SurvMeth 660

Class Locations
University of Maryland, 1208 Lafrak Hall
University of Michigan, 300 Perry

Course Description
This course will focus on the management of the “life cycle” of a survey project from the initial funding proposals and planning, through design and data collection and terminating with the final data file construction, report writing and project close out. The course will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

Project management theory and best practices;

Practical applications, including the development of project management plans, schedules, budgets;

Understanding the world of survey funding including contracts, grants, and other sources that are common in both the public and private research sectors;

Acquiring and managing resources (funding, systems, personnel) required for various data collection methods (telephone, face to face, mail), cost monitoring techniques;

Time schedules associated with data collection activities;

Survey production and cost management;

Maintaining survey quality and effective communications with stakeholders;

Managing uncertainty and risk in survey projects including tradeoffs with respect to costs, errors, time and personnel resources.
The management of survey research or other population-based research projects has many aspects in common with project management in fields as diverse as software development or building construction. Much can be borrowed from the extensive theoretical development and the practical guidance and tools that has evolved over the past three decades for the general field of project management. However, as in any major field where activity is organized around projects, there are unique features of survey research projects that warrant a focused, specialized treatment of project management science and methods. This course is an adaptation to the survey research setting of the current best practices for information project management espoused by the Project Management Institute, Inc. (PMI) and employed by today’s survey management professionals. The syllabus draws heavily on general best practices and contemporary tools for project management and through cases studies, examples and exercises demonstrates how the concepts, practices and tools apply in the management of large scale survey or population-based research projects.

**Course Prerequisites**

The course will assume a basic knowledge of survey sampling, questionnaire design and pretesting, and a familiarity with the common modes and methods of data collection employed in surveys or similar forms of population-based research. If you are looking for a quick reference with respect to survey sampling, see the Sage Publication, *Survey Sampling* (#35) by Graham Kalton. A quick reference on questionnaire design issues is *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire* (#63) by J. Converse and S. Presser. Based on your needs and interest, the instructor can also suggest additional reading targeted to your specific needs or interest.

**Grading**

Grading for the course will be based on the following:

- Class participation (10%)
- Homework assignments (40%)
- Group project (10%)
- Final project (40%)

Although the in-class activities of this course are organized around lecture modules (see course outline below), class discussion and questions for the instructor are encouraged. There will be five homework exercises that will focus on the application of basic project management tools and solving practical problems that are relevant to the various stages in the life cycle of a survey project. Students in the class may work as groups to discuss the homework exercise and develop ideas/approaches to the problem or case study but each should submit their own individual work and be prepared to explain and discuss their submissions. The group project will be a problem solving exercise in which small (2-3 student) teams of class members will be provided with the elements of a survey project management problem, asked to develop and solution and to make an oral presentation to the full class explaining their approach to resolving the problem. The final project will require the student to develop a short proposal in response to a request for proposals (RFP). The final project “proposal response” will include sections for the project management plan, the proposed research design, staffing plan, schedule and the budget associated with the proposal.

All homework submission and reports are to be typed and written in a professional style and submitted electronically to the instructor in MS Word, Excel or other similar format. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval.
Class Websites

The website for accessing all class materials is housed in the University of Michigan C-tools course management system: https://ctools.umich.edu/portal (login and go to SurvMeth 660)

The lecture notes for each class, assigned readings and the homework assignments will be posted to the website no later than Friday preceding the class.

Course Texts and Readings

Compared to previous years, the Winter/Spring 2013 offering of SURV 760/SurvMeth 660 reflects a major reorganization of the course content and materials. The instructor is working closely with his colleagues in the University of Michigan Survey Research Center (SRC) to reorganize the presentation of course content and develop new case study and homework material that we hope will be highly relevant to future survey managers. A consequence of this “trial run” of the reorganized course is that final reading assignments, new case study materials and revised lecture notes may still be under development as the semester progresses. Final materials will be available to students in advance of when they will actually need them but we ask students’ patience as the final syllabus and readings list “evolves” over the course of the Winter/Spring 2013 term.

Required text: A required text for this course is *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*: Fourth Edition. It is not available in campus bookstores but can be easily obtained online. For example, Amazon offers it at a price of $38.57 (with free shipping for students) at http://www.amazon.com/Guide-Project-Management-Body-Knowledge/dp/1933890517. A fifth edition of this guide has been published by the Project Management Institute (PMI) but the fourth edition has a discounted price and serves just as well for our course purposes.

Required and Recommended Readings: All assigned readings for the course will be available to students as a single use copy on the Resources/Readings folder on the course C-tools website.

Introductions and Overview of the Course. Defining a project. Overview of survey management and project management. Brief review of theories of management, social psychology of organizations; the management of projects within organizations; data collection organization structures; management skills; team building and issues in the management/planning of human resources.

Readings:

- PMBOK (text), Chapter 1 and 2

Case Study: TBD

Homework: HW 1 distributed. Due January 28.

Week 2 (January 21): No class, Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday.

Students are asked to use this week to finish the Week 1 reading and HW 1.


Readings:

- PMBOK (text), Chapter 3,4
- TBD

Case Study: TBD

Homework: HW 1 due. HW 2 Distributed, Due February 11.

Week 4 (February 4): Project Human Resources, Capacity Planning, Scheduling.

Readings:

- PMBOK (text), Chapter 6,9
- TBD

Case Study: TBD
Week 5: (February 11): RFPs, Task Orders, RFAs and Grant Programs, “Grantsmanship”

Readings:


Case Study: NIS RFP (download or print to access in class).

Homework: HW 2 due. HW 3 Distributed, Due February 25.

Week 6: (February 18): Budgets, contracts, formalizing funding, OMB, IRB review

Readings:

PMBOK (text): Chapter 7.1-7.2

Case Study: TBD (download or print to access in class).

Week 7: (February 25): Managing survey design and development processes.

Readings:


Case Study: TBD (download or print to access in class).

Homework: HW 3 due. HW 4 available on C-tools site. Due March 11.

Week 8 (March 04): No Class. University of Michigan Winter Break.
Week 9 (March 11): Managing survey production and costs.

Readings:

**PMBOK** (text): Chapter 7.3


Case Study: HRS, Heidi Guyer (to be confirmed)

Homework: HW 4 due. HW 5 available on C-tools site. Due March 25.

Week 10 (March 18): No class. University of Maryland Spring Break.

Week 11 (March 25): Project Risk Management, Responsive Design

Readings:

**PMBOK** (text) Chapter 11


Case Study: TBD (download or print to access in class).

Homework: HW 5 due. Final project available on C-tools site. Due Friday, April 19 at 5pm.

Week 12 (April 1): Managing Project Quality, Scope and Communications

Readings:

**PMBOK** (text) Chapter 5,8,10


Homework: Question and answers concerning final project

**Week 13 (April 8) Statistical/analytical Tools for Survey Project Management**

**Readings:**


**Week 14 (April 15) Managing Post-Survey Activities and Project Wrap-up and Closure**

Data reductions (editing, coding, cleaning, entry) and processing. Budgets, time schedules, and resources. Report writing, documentation, disclosure avoidance.

**Readings:**


**Friday, April 20 : Final Project Due**

**Week 15 (April 22): Special Session- Managing Survey Projects of the Future**

- **Expert Panel Discussion**