

**Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics**

**Epidemiology 9512Q**

**Questionnaire Design and Survey Implementation**

**Fall 2021**

**In-person Class:**

Tuesday 1:30-3:30, PHFM 3015

**Instructor:** Dr. Kathy Nixon [Speechley](#)

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**E-mail:** [kathy.speechley@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:kathy.speechley@lhsc.on.ca)

**Course Description**

This graduate course provides an overview of effective questionnaire development and survey implementation techniques emphasizing the development of practical skills to optimize both the quantity and quality of survey data. The course stresses a tailored design strategy to reduce total survey error. Methods covered include: writing effective survey questions, questionnaire design principles, and effective communication with potential participants.

**Course Information**

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, as well as any student who has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home graduate program.

**Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe principles of survey research methods
- Construct effective survey questionnaires
- Design evidence-based strategies to recruit survey study participants and collect high quality data from them

**Course Materials**

Additional materials will be provided on the course's OWL website.

There are assigned pre-recorded lectures and readings as preparation for each in-person class with the expectation that students will come to class prepared to engage in discussion of the materials assigned for review.

### **Primary Texts**

Internet, Phone, Mail & Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Dillman DA, Smyth, JD, Christian, LM. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Survey Methodology, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Groves RM, Fowler FJ, Couper MP, Lepkowski JM, Singer E, Tourangeau R. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009

### **Other Recommended Texts**

Handbook of Health Survey Methods. Johnson, TP (Ed.) New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015

Health Measurement Scales. A Practical Guide to their Development and Use. 5th edition. Streiner DL, Norman GR. Oxford University Press, 2015.

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=UbKijeRqndwC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Aday LA, Cornelius SB. Designing and Conducting Health Surveys. A Comprehensive Guide. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

McDowell I. Measuring Health. A Guide to Rating Scales and Questionnaires. Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 2006. (pdf available online free)

### **Methods of Evaluation**

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

| <b>Assessment</b>  | <b>Format</b>                                 | <b>Weighting</b>          | <b>Due Date</b>           |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Verbal participation in discussions and peer assessments | In-person classes                             | 25%                       | Throughout course         |
| 2 Assignments  | Written submissions to OWL                    | 20% each for total of 40% | Week 2<br>Week 4          |
| Culminating Task   | a) Written submission to OWL                  | 20%                       | 4 days after Week 6 class |
|  | b) Verbal Presentation during in-person class | 15%                       | In class in Week 6        |

## Course Timeline, Topics and Preparation for In-Person Classes

| Week | Date    | Topic   | Readings  |
|------|---------|---|---|
| 1    | Sept 14 | Introduction to Course and Foundations for Survey Methods                           |   |
| 2    | Sept 21 | Tailored Design Method<br>Choosing Data Collection Strategies                       | Dillman et al. Chapter 2<br>Groves et al. Chapter 5         |
| 3    | Sept 28 | Implementing Mail Surveys   | Dillman et al. Chapter 10                                   |
| 4    | Oct 5   | Survey Data Collection via Telephone, Internet, In-person Interviews and Mixed-mode | Dillman et al. Chapters 8, 9, 11<br>Groves et al. Chapter 9 |
| 5    | Oct 12  | Constructing Survey Questions<br>Questionnaire Design<br>Pre-tests, Pilot Studies   | Dillman et al. Chapters 4, 5<br>Groves et al. Chapter 7     |
| 6    | Oct 19  | Student Presentations   |   |

### Western Academic Policies and Statements

#### Absence from Course Commitments

All non-medical absences must be approved in advance. In the case of an unexpected absence on compassionate grounds, documentation may be requested. If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student to the instructor.

#### Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **Statement on Copyright and Audio/Video Recording**

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws.

### **Support Services**

As part of a successful student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>.

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

USC Student Support Services: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

SGPS Life & Community web page: [https://grad.uwo.ca/life\\_community/self/index.html](https://grad.uwo.ca/life_community/self/index.html)

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (Graduate Chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Health and Wellness-related information and services are available at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## **Accessible Education Western (AEW)**

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

More information and access to services is available on the AEW website:

[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

## **Department & Faculty Offices**

The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics is located on the third floor of the Western Centre for Public Health & Family Medicine (PHFM) on Western University's Main Campus.

## **Technology Requirements**

You are responsible for all required course materials and announcements posted to the course's OWL website. Please ensure after the first class that when you log in you are able to access the course site. A copy of the course outline will be available on both OWL and the departmental website.