UF IFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

## General Course Information

**Course Number:** AEB 6817
**Course Title:** Survey Research Methods for Economists
**Term:** Fall 2025
**Meeting Times:** MWF 9:35-10:25
**Meeting Location:** MCCB 1108

## Instructor Information and Contact

**Name:** Bachir Kassas
**Email Address:** b.kassas@ufl.edu
**Office Hours:** MW 10:30-12:00
**Office Location:** 1099 McCarty Hall, B-Wing

**Note: You are welcome to meet me in my office or over Zoom during my office hours. The office hours Zoom link is *https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3522947621*. If you have a time conflict with the office hours, you are welcome to schedule an appointment by email.**

## Course Description

This course will provide rigorous training in survey and experimental research methods. Students will learn the fundamental skills necessary to successfully use surveys and experiments to address research questions of interest. Specifically, the main focus will be on the design, development, execution, and analysis of surveys and experiments. The course will emphasize the wide applicability of surveys and experiments, while highlighting the advantages and drawbacks of each method. It will also include a primer on the basic data analysis methods used in this type of research.

## Learning Objectives

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

1. Learn about the regulations and compliance policies related to research using human subjects
2. Develop an in-depth understanding of surveys and experiments and the application of these methods to economics and marketing research
3. Master the basic elements of a survey and/or experiment including questionnaire design, sampling, and data collection
4. Apply their knowledge to design and implement a survey and/or experiment to address a specific research question of interest
5. Critique the quality of a given survey and/or experiment and offer useful feedback
6. Analyze survey and/or experimental data and present the results

## Textbooks

**Note: The official textbook for this class is listed below, along with additional textbooks that contain several concepts covered in the course. You can supplement your knowledge of the material covered in the lectures by reading some of the chapters from those books, as suggested in the course schedule, in addition to the lecture notes. Some of the topics covered in the course may not appear in the textbooks and vice versa. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the lecture material for success in this course. Supplementary material will be posted on Canvas for the interested reader; this material is OPTIONAL. Only the material covered in the main lectures is required for the assignments and exams. You will not be asked about anything not covered in the lectures.**

### Main Textbook

Blair, J., Czaja, R. F., and Blair, E. A. *Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures*, $3^{rd}$ Edition, Sage, 2014.

### Supplementary Textbooks

Fowler, F. J. *Survey Research Methods.* $5^{th}$ Edition, Sage, 2014.

Singleton, R. A. JR. and Straits, B. C. *Approaches to Social Research*, $6^{th}$ Edition, Oxford University Press, 2017

Friedman, D. and Sunders, S. *Experimental Methods: A Primer for Economists*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

## Course Structure and Correspondence

UF Canvas is the official class website. **This is where you will receive all class announcements, so you should check Canvas regularly.** I will also be sending some announcements through email so you should check your email regularly. Missing an announcement posted on Canvas or sent by email is NOT a valid excuse for not following through with course-related activities.

**Lectures** will be held in MCCB1108. I will be uploading **lecture notes** on Canvas to help students review the lecture material. **Additional readings** related to each module will also be uploaded for the interested reader (*these are optional*). **Office hours** will be held in-person and online via Zoom to give students the flexibility to attend in the format they feel more comfortable with. For students interested in meeting via Zoom, the office hours Zoom link is *https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3522947621*. In order to give students privacy during office hours, I have set up a waiting room in Zoom that you will be automatically directed to if you log in while another student is meeting with me. You will be allowed into the Zoom office hour meeting as soon as your turn is up. Students will be admitted to the office hour meeting in the order in which they login to Zoom. If you have a time conflict with the office hours, you are welcome to meet by appointment. You are welcome to send me relatively short questions by email if you prefer. I usually reply to emails within an hour or so, but in case I am busy and could not reply this quickly, I will certainly reply back in less than 24 hours (on weekdays!).

**Note: You should add the title AEB6817 to all emails correspondence with me. EMAILS NOT TITLED AEB6817 MIGHT NOT BE ANSWERED PROMPTLY!**

## Grading Policies

**Final Score:**

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following weights:

| | |
|---|---|
| Assignments | 20% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Questionnaire Development Project | 15% |
| Data Analysis Project | 15% |
| Project Peer Evaluation | 5% |
| IRB Certification | 1% (Bonus Credit) |

The letter grade will be determined using the following grading scale

| Points | Letter Grade |
|---|---|
| 92%-100% | A |
| 89%-91.9% | A- |
| 86%-88.9% | B+ |
| 82%-85.9% | B |
| 79%-81.9% | B- |
| 76%-78.9% | C+ |
| 72%-75.9% | C |
| 69%-71.9% | C- |
| 66%-68.9% | D+ |
| 62%-65.9% | D |
| 59%-61.9% | D- |
| Below 59% | E |

**Note: All grades calculated based on the above criteria are final and non-negotiable.**

**Assignments:**

There will be a total of 4 homework assignments, which will collectively count towards 20% of the final course grade (5% weight on each). The assignments will be announced in-class and on Canvas and you will be given around 1 week to work on each assignment. The assignment due dates are also included in the course schedule on pages 9-10. The assignments will consist of short answer questions and will be similar in difficulty to the questions you see on the exams. The purpose of the assignments is to help you evaluate your understanding of the course material and to prepare you for the exams.

***The penalty for late submissions is an automatic 20% deduction from the assignment grade and an additional 10% deduction for each day (24 hours) the assignment is late.***

**Exams:**
There will be a midterm exam worth 20% and a final exam worth 25% of the final course grade. Each exam will cover roughly half of the course material (the final exam is NOT cumulative). The exams will consist of short answer and problem-based questions. They will test the student's understanding of the material and ability to apply their knowledge and critical thinking skills in different scenarios. The exams will be administered in-class following the dates and times posted in the course schedule. Detailed instructions for each exam will be announced in-class and on Canvas.

**Questionnaire Development Project:**
This will be a group project, where the class will be split to groups of 2-4 students (depending on class size). You will coordinate with your group members to design a survey questionnaire or experiment. You will be given the discretion to decide on a topic of mutual interest, but you must clearly state your research question and objectives. You will design your survey or experiment to accurately address the research question. You will be graded based on the quality of your questionnaire (or experimental design) and its effectiveness in appropriately addressing the research goals and objectives. You will present your work as a group at the end of the semester. This project will be worth 15% of the final course grade. More instructions will be given out later.

**Data Analysis Project:**
This project will be completed in groups **(same group you formed for the questionnaire development project)**. You will be given a dataset from a questionnaire or experiment along with a description of the variables included in the dataset. Your job is to analyze the data (in any way you choose) to address a certain research question of interest. You can decide to use all or a subset of the variables in the dataset, but you have to formulate an interesting question and use the dataset to address it. You will present your work as a team at the end of the semester. This project will be worth 15% of the final course grade. More instructions will be given out later.

**Project Peer Evaluation:**

To encourage productive group collaborations on the projects, and deter free-riding, each group member will be asked to evaluate the other members in their group. You will evaluate each member in your group on a scale from 0 (poor) to 5 (excellent) based on their contribution to the projects, timeliness in completing their tasks, and interaction with other group members. The average peer evaluation for each student will be calculated and will count towards 5% of the total course grade.

**IRB Certification:**

Given the importance of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for all research involving human subjects, as is the case in research using survey and experimental methods, you are highly encouraged to learn about UF IRB, register for an IRB account, and complete necessary IRB training. Information about the role of IRB, and structure of UF IRB, will be covered in the first module of this course. I will award a 1% bonus credit to students who successfully register for a UF IRB account and complete the basic IRB training module (IRB803) before the last day of classes. Students will need to turn in their training certifications for proof before receiving the bonus credit.

## Course Outline

1. Survey Practice
    a. Research Methods
    b. Primary Vs. Secondary Data
    c. Introduction to Surveys
    d. Surveys Vs. Other Methods
    g. Ethical Considerations (Policies and Regulations)
2. Survey Error
    a. The Perfect Survey
    b. What is Survey Error
    c. Types of Survey Error
    d. Mean Squared Error
3. Planning the Survey
    a. The Stages of a Survey
    b. Survey Design and Preliminary Planning
    c. Questionnaire Design and Pretesting
    d. Final Survey Design and Planning
    e. Sample Selection and Data Collection

f. Data Coding, Analysis, and Final Report

4. Data Collection
    a. Selecting a Data Collection Method
    b. Mail Surveys
    c. Internet Surveys
    d. Telephone Surveys
    e. Face-to-Face Surveys
    f. Intercept Surveys
    g. Combinations of Methods
    h. Emerging Technologies
5. Sample Representation and Quality
    a. Sample Representation and Error
    b. Sampling Error and Sample Bias
    c. Probability Samples
    d. Non-Probability Samples
    e. Guidelines for Good Sampling
    f. General Advice
6. Questionnaire Development I
    a. A Model of the Response Process
    b. Factors in Questionnaire Development
    c. Writing Questions
    d. The Structure of Survey Questions
    e. Response Categories
    f. Rating Scales
    g. Avoiding or Identifying Weaknesses in Survey Questions
7. Questionnaire Development II
    a. Introducing the Survey
    b. What Questions Should the Questionnaire Begin With?
    c. Grouping Questions Into Sections
    d. Question Length and Respondent Burden
    e. Formatting Instruments for Multimode Data Collection
8. Introduction to Experiments
    a. What is Experimental Economics
    b. Main Uses of Experiments
    c. Internal and External Validity
    d. Laboratory Vs. Field Experiments

e. Terminology Used and Components of an Experiment

f. Do's and Don'ts in Experiments

g. Commonly Used Institutions in Experiments

9. Primer on Data Analysis
    a. Weighing Observations
    b. One-Sample and Two-Sample Tests
    c. Testing Discrete Vs. Continuous Variables
    d. Parametric Vs. Non-Parametric Tests
    e. Regressions
10. Sample Size
    a. Type I and Type II Error
    b. What is Power
    c. Power Analysis Approach to Sample Size

## Policies and Resources

This course adheres to all UF Academic Policies: https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies

# Tentative Class Schedule

| Date | Day | Class | Suggested Reading |
|---|---|---|---|
| August 22 | F | Syllabus/Course Overview | |
| August 25 | M | Survey Practice | Ch 1 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| August 27 | W | Survey Practice | Ch 1 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| August 29 | F | Survey Error | Ch 2 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 1 | M | Holiday | Labor Day |
| September 3 | W | Survey Error | Ch 2 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 5 | F | Planning a Survey | Ch 3 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 8 | M | Planning a Survey | Ch 3 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 10 | W | Planning a Survey | Ch 3 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 12 | F | Planning a Survey<br>**HW 1 (Due 11:59PM)** | Ch 3 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 15 | M | Data Collection Methods | Ch 4 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 17 | W | Data Collection Methods | Ch 4 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 19 | F | Data Collection Methods | Ch 4 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 22 | M | Data Collection Methods | Ch 4 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 24 | W | Sampling | Ch 5 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 26 | F | Sampling | Ch 5 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| September 29 | M | Sampling<br>**HW 2 (Due 11:59PM)** | Ch 5 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 1 | W | Sampling | Ch 5 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 3 | F | **Midterm Exam** | |
| October 6 | M | Questionnaire Development I | Ch 8 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 8 | W | Questionnaire Development I | Ch 8 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 10 | F | Questionnaire Development II | Ch 9 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 13 | M | Questionnaire Development II | Ch 9 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |

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| Date | Day | Class | Suggested Reading |
|---|---|---|---|
| October 15 | W | Questionnaire Development II | Ch 9 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| October 17 | F | Holiday | Homecoming |
| October 20 | M | Introduction to Experiments | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| October 22 | W | Introduction to Experiments<br>**HW 3 (Due 11:59PM)** | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| October 24 | F | Introduction to Experiments | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| October 27 | M | Introduction to Experiments | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| October 29 | W | Introduction to Experiments | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| October 31 | F | Introduction to Experiments | Ch 1,2,3,4,5,6 Friedman and Sunders |
| November 3 | M | Primer on Data Analysis | Ch 7,8 Friedman and Sunders<br>Ch 16 Singleton and Straits |
| November 5 | W | Primer on Data Analysis | Ch 7,8 Friedman and Sunders<br>Ch 16 Singleton and Straits |
| November 7 | F | Primer on Data Analysis | Ch 7,8 Friedman and Sunders<br>Ch 16 Singleton and Straits |
| November 10 | M | Primer on Data Analysis | Ch 7,8 Friedman and Sunders<br>Ch 16 Singleton and Straits |
| November 12 | W | Sample Size | Ch 7 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| November 14 | F | Sample Size | Ch 7 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| November 17 | M | Sample Size<br>**HW 4 (Due 11:59PM)** | Ch 7 Blair, Czaja, & Blair |
| November 19 | W | Presentations | |
| November 21 | F | Presentations | |
| November 24 | M | Holiday | Thanksgiving |
| November 26 | W | Holiday | Thanksgiving |
| November 28 | F | Holiday | Thanksgiving |
| December 1 | M | Presentations | |
| December 3 | W | Presentations | |
| December 10 | T | **Final Exam (10:00AM-12:00PM)** | MCCB1108 |