

TERM PROJECT AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the academic term, you will develop a 2-page self-administered questionnaire (SAQ), designed for a specific target population of your choosing. The SAQ may focus on any topic, and you are encouraged to create a questionnaire that is relevant to your own research or interests.

The specific content and format of the SAQ is flexible and you may include as many items as you like within the 2-page limit. However, it *must* include the following:

- ▶ at least *two* items that measure one or more objective phenomena (e.g., autobiographical events, past behaviors, physical symptoms, factual knowledge)
- ▶ at least *two* items that measure one or more subjective phenomena (e.g., attitudes and values, emotional and mood states, likes and dislikes)
- ▶ at least *two* relevant demographic items (e.g., sex, educational level, race, ethnicity, political affiliation).

In addition, the SAQ must be a paper questionnaire (even if you ultimately plan to collect data in another mode, e.g., a face-to-face interview or Internet survey).

Your SAQ may include standardized scales or psychological inventories that are relevant to your research goals. However, such scales should account for no more than half of your SAQ's items. If you utilize existing items or scales, you will be held accountable for their quality. If a scale or inventory contains poorly worded items, consider using a different measure. If that is not possible, devise better versions of the items and develop a methodology for comparing them to the original questions (e.g., random assignment of alternate versions of the SAQ).

You will develop the SAQ in a series of steps, and we'll conduct group critiques of each class member's questionnaire at several of these steps as indicated on the following pages. In addition to presenting your own work, you will also be required to lead the group critique of another student's work at each step of the process. As explained in class, your course grade will be based not only on your own SAQ, but also on your performance in leading group critiques of other students' SAQs and your contributions to other group critiques.

Schedule for Assignments

*(Note: Deadline dates are subject to change throughout the quarter.
Check the course web site every week for updates)*

Assignment #1: SAQ Objectives (due Monday, October 5)

Prepare a set of detailed objectives for your self-administered questionnaire. The goal of this assignment is to create a road map that will guide you when you write and select SAQ items. This brief document (approximately 1 page) should:

- ▶ State the main goals or overall purpose of your SAQ.
- ▶ State the hypotheses you propose to test (if applicable)
- ▶ List the main variables that you will measure (each variable will correspond to one or more items in your questionnaire).
- ▶ For each variable (or for each item related to a variable), indicate whether you expect to measure it at the ratio, interval, ordinal (ranking), or nominal (categorical) level.
- ▶ Briefly describe the target population for your SAQ.
- ▶ Indicate which items/variables will be independent variables and which will be dependent variables when you analyze the data.
- ▶ Indicate whether any items will be combined into a scale.

Note. Examples of questionnaire objectives are posted on the course website on the “Assignments” page.

Assignment #2: Using the Roper Center Database (due Wednesday, October 7)

Use the iPoll database of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research to find at least three questions relevant to your SAQ topic that have been administered in national or regional surveys. More information about this exercise will be provided in a separate handout.

Assignment #3: Demographic Items and Questions about Objective Phenomena (to be completed by Friday, October 9, at 11:59 pm)

Based on your SAQ objectives, create the questions you will use for measuring objective phenomena and select the demographic questions you will use. At this stage, don’t format the items into a questionnaire. Simply list each item and its response options. (Hint: You might find some useful demographic questions in Chapter 9 of the Bradburn et al. book or through the iPoll database).

We will critique these items in class beginning on October 12. In preparation for that critique, provide a copy of your questions by midnight on Friday, October 9, to the class member who is designated to lead our discussion of your items. On October 12, bring your own items to class on one or more transparencies (for display on the overhead projector) or bring enough paper copies to distribute to the class members. In either case, submit a paper copy to Prof. Herek on October 12.

Assignment #4: Questions about Subjective Phenomena (to be completed by Friday, October 23, by 11:59 pm)

Based on your SAQ objectives, create the questions you will use for measuring subjective phenomena. As with the previous assignment, don't format the items at this stage. Simply list them along with each item's response options.

We will critique these items in class beginning on October 26. In preparation for that critique, provide a copy of your questions by midnight on Friday, October 23, to the class member who is designated to lead our discussion of your items. On October 26, bring your own items on one or more transparencies or bring enough paper copies to distribute to the class members. Submit a paper copy to Prof. Herek that day.

Assignment #5: Formatted SAQ, Version #1 (to be completed by Friday, November 6, at 11:59 pm)

Combine your items into a formatted 2-page questionnaire, complete with title, instructions, and navigational directions as appropriate. Although we will focus mainly on the layout and visual design of your SAQ at this stage, you should use the feedback you received during earlier class critiques to revise the content and wording of the questionnaire items. Pay attention to the order of items as well.

We will critique these items in class beginning on November 9. In preparation for that critique, provide a copy of your SAQ by midnight on Friday, November 6, to the class member who is designated to lead our discussion of your items. On November 9, bring your own SAQ on one or more transparencies. Submit a paper copy to Prof. Herek that day.

Assignment #6: Formatted SAQ, Version #2 (to be completed by Friday, November 27, at 11:59 pm)

Using the feedback you have received from class critiques, as well as the knowledge you have gained from the readings and new material we have been covering, prepare a revised, fully-formatted version of your self-administered questionnaire. We will critique these items in class beginning on November 30. In preparation for that critique, provide a copy of your SAQ by midnight on Friday, November 27, to the class member who is designated to lead our discussion of your items. On November 30, bring your own SAQ on transparencies or paper copies for the class, and submit a paper copy to Prof. Herek.

Final Assignment: Formatted SAQ, Final Version (due by 12 noon on Tuesday, December 8)

Based on class feedback, submit two copies of the final version of your self-administered questionnaire to Prof. Herek no later than noon on Tuesday, December 8. You may leave your questionnaires in Prof. Herek's mailbox in Young Hall.