

## **Dissertation Defense-Program in Survey Methodology**

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**Date:** Thursday, December 7

**Time:** 10:00am

**Location:** 368 ISR

**Title:** Participation Decisions and Measurement Error in Web Surveys

### **Abstract:**

Inference from surveys depends on minimizing errors of nonobservation and errors of observation. Causal mechanisms for the two types of survey errors need to be identified for specific modes of data collection; not only do they affect the same statistics of interest, but common causes pose error tradeoffs.

Web surveys lack a complete theoretical framework, such as those developed for interviewer-administered modes. Web surveys require additional response outcomes, as well as inclusion of different causal factors. A framework for web survey participation is proposed that incorporates multiple response outcomes: nonresponse, breakoff, item-nonresponse, and measurement error. Different and recurring cooperation decisions are made by the respondent before and during the survey, and factors affecting each decision are discussed and tested.

This dissertation has four main objectives: to establish that breakoff is causally different from nonresponse, to study the causes of breakoff, to propose and employ a method for evaluation of different survey designs in terms of measurement error, and to test the causes of the measurement error in a particular layout design alternative.