

**SURVEY RESEARCH**

790:307

TTH 3:55-5:15, Eagleton Carriage House

Professor David Redlawsk  
Office Hours: T 1:00-3:00  
or by appointment

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The intent of this class is to introduce students to the theory and practice of survey research through a combination of traditional in-class lectures, reading assignments, and the like, along with a hands-on practical experience actually doing survey research. Political Science has a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system available for our use. This system allows us to develop a questionnaire and put it into the "field" through telephone interviewing of randomly selected people. The plan is to work with non-profit organizations to collect data and develop reports on that data to help them with their program delivery. Hence there is a "civic engagement" aspect of the course - students will not only learn in the classroom, but will become engaged with community organizations in the process of learning how to do surveys.

This course is listed as a CESEP (Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships, <http://case.rutgers.edu/>) course. As such you will be working with a community organization as part of the course and reflecting on the experience through assignments that include maintaining an online journal of your experiences.

This service-learning course will engage students in both the theory and practice of survey research. Students will learn about survey sampling, design, administration, and analysis through a combination of traditional readings, lectures, and discussions along with a service learning group project. The project will involve designing and administering a survey for community organizations, including preparing and presenting a final report. Students will get hands-on experience using modern computer-aided telephone interviewing software and will learn how to analyze and present the data collected by the class. Grades will be based on class participation, the service learning project, and examinations.

**Course Web Site**

I have a web site at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~redlawsk> which contains information for this and other courses. Among other things, this syllabus will be posted there, as will any changes necessitated in the schedule due to unforeseen circumstances. We will also make use of Sakai for course work. As noted below, some readings may be accessible from the web page. In addition, I intend to include links to survey research resources elsewhere on the web, which will be optional reading, but which may provide resources in preparing for your assignments and studying for the midterm exam.

**Requirements**

1. You are expected to become familiar with this syllabus and the requirements listed within it.
2. You cannot successfully complete this class if you do not attend! Class participation is expected, so any student with more than 3 unexcused absences will receive a lower grade based on failure to participate in the class.

3. You will develop and fully carry out a civic engagement group project designed to collect data for local government and/or community organizations. You will work in teams, meeting with a community partner, determining the goals of the survey, designing and fielding the questionnaire, and preparing a report to present to your partner. This is collaborative work, and each student will be expected to contribute fully to the project. You will maintain an online journal in which you describe the work of the project and respond to questions I will give you designed to reflect on your experience. Each project team will develop a final summary of their work suitable for display at a CESEP event. The project work grade will be shared between members of the teams; your journal will be graded individually.
4. You will take a Midterm Exam on survey research theory.

### **Civic Engagement Project & Journal**

The core of this class is the civic engagement project and its associated journal. You will work in teams with a community partner to identify the partner's need for the kind of information that can be gathered using survey research. Each team will need to meet with the partnering organization several times in order to learn about the organization's mission and programs, and to determine what kind of information would be of use in furthering its mission. The team will then design a questionnaire to be used in data collection. The questionnaires for each team will be combined into a single omnibus survey instrument, which will then be administered by the class using our state-of-the-art computer aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. We will complete at least 400 respondents which will give us a decent margin of error and will allow us to draw conclusions about public opinion and these organizations. The survey may include some political questions as well. Once data collection is complete, each team will prepare an oral report to be presented to the class and to the community partner and a final written report for the partner. The project will take most of the semester and will be worked on both in and out of class. You are expected to put a significant effort into this project as part of your team and the grade I assign to your project will be shared by all team members, though I reserve the right to make individual grading adjustments if it is clear that any team member is not fully participating. This project should be fun while giving you the chance to immediately put into practice what you are learning during class and from your readings.

The second part of this project is your *individual* journal. The purpose of journaling is to provide you with the opportunity to record your experiences and to reflect upon them. You will maintain an online journal where you will write about your civic engagement project as follows:

1. You will write in response to prompts that I will provide from time to time. These prompts will ask you to think about the project, to reflect on what you are doing, and to tie the work to our readings and class discussions. Generally I will expect you to write at least two or three good paragraphs responding to a prompt.
2. You will keep track of the time you spend on the civic engagement project. In this sense, I want your journal to record everything you do on the project – meetings, developing the questionnaire, making the phone calls, and so on. For each entry you should describe what you did and how long you spent at it, and then you should reflect on how well (or not) things are going and why they are going that way.
3. Finally, I will provide you with a summary writing assignment for your journal designed to connect everything, including reflecting on your community partner and what you have learned.

The journal is to be ongoing – that is, you are to write in it over the semester as you do your work. As an online document, it will be date and time stamped, so I will know when you actually wrote the entry. The nice thing is I am not looking for polished writing as such – I am looking for thoughtful efforts to make sense of what you are learning and how it connects to your community partner. You will learn from being in class (I hope!) but you will also learn from your partner. Your journal should reflect this. You will receive an individual grade on your journal that will be independent of the group grade for your project.

### **Civic Engagement Project Written Team Assignments**

**ALL TEAM ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE POSTED TO YOUR ONLINE TEAM DISCUSSION AREA BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DATES LISTED**

**Team Assignment 1:** With your team, meet with your community partner to learn about their organization. You will need more than one meeting. Prepare a report (one per team) that does at least the following (questions are for illustration):

Identifies the organization and its structure. What does the organization do? What is it about? Is it all volunteer? Is there paid staff? How many people work with the organization?

Describes the mission. What is the mission statement? Who does the organization serve? What is its purpose?

Explains what the partner wants to learn from this project. What is its goal for the survey? What does it want to learn about itself or about the public?

Defines the target population. What is the universe from which we need to draw a random sample to call? What kind of screening will we need to get the right respondents?

Lists at least three key potential questions that might be asked. These do not have to be in final format, but instead should provide some direction for the definition of questions and response options to be done in Assignment 2.

**Team Assignment 2:** Prepare questions to be asked in our survey. Working with your community partner, your team will develop a series of questions and response options that will ultimately be used when we do the telephone survey. You will do this in two steps. First your team will prepare a draft set of questions with potential response options. You will review those questions and responses with your community partner, and get their ok. You will then turn them into a final form which I will collect and combine with the other team questions into an omnibus survey form. In the final form we will have time to ask about 8-12 questions of each respondent for each team (not including demographics.) You will also work with your partner to define the demographic information that they will need you to collect.

**Team Assignment 3:** Prepare and present a report for your community partner analyzing the responses to their questions and providing a summary of findings. We will talk about the format of this report in detail during the semester. The report will be presented in class, and staff from your community partner will be invited to join us for the presentation. The final written report will be delivered to the partner.

## Grading

Civic Engagement Project (team)	25%
Civic Engagement Journal	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Class Participation:	25%

## Required Books

Asher, Herbert. 2007. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen should Know*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 9780872893405.

Patten, Mildred L. 2011. *Questionnaire Research: A Practical Guide*. Pyrczak Publishing. ISBN: 1884585949.

Rea, Louis and Richard A. Parker. 2005. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 9780787975463

Books will be available at the Rutgers Book Store and New Jersey Books, but you can also readily get them from online sources. Other required readings will be made available either on paper or online.

## Schedule

Our class work is divided into “theory” and “practice”. For “theory:” work we will read and discuss the various components of survey research as noted in the schedule. For “practice” work you will do team work and meet with your community partner as you work to develop your civic engagement project. Since we meet only once a week for two hours and fifty minutes, many of our meeting days will include both theory and practice work in the same day.

	<i>“Theory”</i>	<i>“Practice”</i>
Jan 18	<b>Introduction to Course &amp; The Role of Survey Research in American Politics</b>  <b>READ:</b> Asher Ch 6 & 7;	
Jan 20		<b>Reflection #1 assigned; due Jan 28</b>  Initial Project Planning; Community partners join us.  You will determine your ranked preference for projects and email no later than Jan 22 and teams will be assigned via email before class on Jan 25.
Jan 25	<b>What is a survey? What is a poll? Are they different?</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 1; Asher, Ch 1 How to Analyze a Poll (Sakai); Rutgers-Eagleton Poll ( <a href="http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu">eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu</a> )	Teams Assigned.  <b>TEAM ASSIGNMENT:</b> Meet with Community Partner; complete <b>Assignment #1 due Feb 10</b>  <b>Human Subjects Training due Feb 1</b>

Jan 27	<b>Ethics and Human Subjects</b>  <b>READ:</b> Human Subjects Training Online Links to Ethics issues (Sakai)	<b>Reflection #1 DUE online</b>
Feb 1	<b>Questionnaire Design &amp; Questions</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 2; Patten, Ch 1 NES Panel/Cross-sectional studies (www.electionstudies.org)	<b>Human Subject Training Due Today</b>
Feb 3	<b>More on Developing Questions</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea and Parker Ch 3 Patten Chs 2, 3, 4, 5; Asher Ch 3	
Feb 8	<b>Types of Surveys &amp; Ways of using survey questions</b>  <b>READ:</b> Fink, Ch 5 (Sakai) Redlawsk, Tolbert, and Franko (Sakai) Knoll, Redlawsk, and Sanborn (Sakai)	
Feb 10		<b>Team Assignment #1 DUE online</b>  Groups meet in class to discuss goals/issues/questions to be covered in questionnaire  <b>TEAM ASSIGNMENT:</b> Prepare questions for your part of the survey; Complete <b>Assignment #2, Drafts due online Feb 22</b>
Feb 15	<b>Sampling &amp; Margin of Error</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 6, 8, 9; Patten, Ch 8 & 12; Asher Ch 4	
Feb 17		<b>Reflection #2 Assigned, Due Feb 24</b>  Groups meet in class to work on survey question drafts
Feb 22	<b>Issues in Non-Response and Response Bias</b>  <b>READ:</b> Groves, et al. (Sakai) Keeter, et al. (Sakai) AAPOR Cell Phone Task Report (Sakai)	<b>Team Assignment #2 DRAFT QUESTIONS DUE online</b>  <b>Final versions due March 3</b>

Feb 24	<b>What do answers to questions mean?</b>  <b>READ:</b> Asher, Ch 2 Zaller & Feldman (Sakai) Bishop, et al. (Sakai)	<b>Reflection #2 DUE online</b>
Mar 1	<b>Interviewer effects on data collection</b>  <b>READ:</b> Asher, Ch 5 Tucker (Sakai) Kane & Macaulay (Sakai)	
Mar 3	<b>Pre-testing; Focus Groups</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 4; Patten, Ch 6	<b>Team Assignment #2 FINAL QUESTIONS DUE online</b>
Mar 8	<b>Problems in Survey Research</b>  <b>READ:</b> Seltzer, Ch VIII (Sakai) Traugott & Katosh (Sakai)	<b>Each team must complete 5 pre-tests on paper of your questions. Results should be brought to class. We will review the full questionnaire in class, and make sure that it tests out ok, at least on paper.</b>
Mar 10	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
Mar 15-17	<i>NO CLASS SPRING BREAK</i>	
Mar 22	<b>Basics of Data Analysis I</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 7, 10, 11; Patten, Ch 10	<b>Reflection #3 Assigned, Due March 29</b>
Mar 24	<b>Basics of Data Analysis II</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 5; Patten Ch 11	
Mar 28 – Apr 10	<b>TRAINING FOR INTERVIEWING WILL BE SCHEDULED OUTSIDE OF CLASS</b>  During these two weeks you will be doing data collection. We will use scheduled class time as well as evening and weekend time to make the calls. Each student will spend about 20 hours or so on this part of the project during these two weeks with a goal of completing 25 surveys  <b>Reflection #3 DUE Online March 29</b>	
Apr 12	<b>Organizing data and preparing to report</b>  <b>READ:</b> Rea & Parker, Ch 13; Patten Ch 13	<b>Reflection #4 Assigned, Due Apr 19</b>  <b>Team Assignment #3: Oral and Written Reports DUE May 6 DURING EXAM PERIOD FROM 12:00-3:00</b>

Apr 14	<b>Basics of Data Analysis III</b>	Groups will practice data analysis in class using SPSS
Apr 19		<b>Reflection #4 DUE Online</b> Groups will work on reports in class
Apr 21		Groups will work on reports in class  <b>Assign FINAL Reflection, DUE online Apr 28</b>
Apr 26	<b>Analyzing Polls/Polling and Democracy</b>  <b>READ:</b> Asher Ch 8 & 9	
Apr 28	<b>Run Through: Analyzing OUR poll; What have we learned?</b>	<b>FINAL Reflection due ONLINE</b>
MAY 6 12:00-3:00	<i>ORAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS (Team Assignment #3)</i>  <b>FINAL Written report due ONLINE by Noon May 10</b>	