

17.276
Public Opinion Research and Training Lab (PORTL)

Spring 2019
Tuesday 11:00-1:00
Room E53-485

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Public opinion polls are both praised and maligned in the American political system. But regardless of one's view on the merit of polls, surveys have become a critical part of American politics. This course is designed to help students interested in polls learn the basic skills required to design, use, and interpret opinion surveys and survey experiments.

This course is both a reading course on survey analysis and a practicum on collecting and analyzing survey data (both observational and experimental). While this is not a course on quantitative methods, I expect you to be familiar with and comfortable with quantitative analysis. The formal curriculum for the course will cover five major areas. (1) Survey design and implementation, including survey sampling and questionnaire construction; (2) The nature of the survey response, including the psychology of political attitude expressions, issues of question wording and context, interviewer effects, and social desirability pressures; (3) The design of a public opinion survey; (4) The design of survey experiments; and (5) The analysis of our survey data.

Grading

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation: 40%
Class assignments: 20%
Final Paper: 40%

Please note that course participation is a critical part of your grade for this course. I expect that you will come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings.

Required Reading

The readings for the course will be available on Stellar. However, I suggest you buy the following books because we will make great use of them (and they will be helpful as you move forward):

Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2009. *Survey Methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley–Interscience.

James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds. 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

I will refer to these books as GFCLST and the Handbook of Experimental Political Science,

respectively, on the syllabus.

Course Outline

I: Introduction

1. Introduction to Survey Design and Course Overview (February 5)

Converse, Philip E. 1987. "Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process."

Public Opinion Quarterly 51/Supplement: 12-24.

GFCLST, Chapter 1

Groves, Robert. 2011. "Three Eras of Survey Research." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 861-871

Berinsky, Adam J., Tesalia Rizzo, Leah R. Rosenzweig, & Elisha Heaps. 2018. "Attribute Affinity: U.S. Natives' Attitudes Toward Immigrants." *Political Behavior*, 1-24.

2. Public Opinion Experiments: Laboratory Based (February 12)

Handbook of Experimental Political Science, Chapter 1-3, 5, 6

Palfrey, Thomas R. 2009. "Laboratory Experiments in Political Economy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 379-388.

Berinsky, Adam J., and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. "Making Sense of Issues through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis." *Journal of Politics* 68(3): 640-656.

3. Public Opinion Experiments: Survey Based (February 26)

Mutz, Diana C. 2011. *Population-Based Survey Experiments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.

Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104: 226-242.

Handbook of Experimental Political Science, Chapter 4

Berinsky, Adam J. 2007. "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict." *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 975-997.

II: Issues of Survey Research

4. The Survey Interview and the Nature of the Survey Response (March 5)

Note: Exercise 1 Due (Preliminary Question Topics)

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36:579-616 (J)

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski. 2000. *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Schaeffer, Nora C. and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65-88.

Dillman, Don A. Jolene D. Smith and Leah Christian. 2014. "Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method." 4th edition. John Wiley. Hoboken, NJ., Chapter 4.

Converse, Jean M. and Stanley Presser. 1986. *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications. Entire., Skim.

Paul C. Beatty and Gordon B. Willis. 2007. "Research Synthesis: The Practice of Cognitive Interviewing." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71(2): 287-311.

5. Question Wording, Ordering, and Social Desirability Effects (March 12)

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski. 2000. *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 7 and 8.

GFCLST Chapter 7

Tourangeau, Roger, and Ting Yan. 2007. "Sensitive Questions in Surveys." *Psychological Bulletin* 133 (5):859-83.

Rosenfeld, Bryn, Kosuke Imai, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2015. An Empirical Validation Study of Popular Survey Methodologies for Sensitive Questions. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 783-802.

Lelkes, Yphtach, Jon A. Krosnick, David M. Marx, Charles M. Judd, and Bernadette Park. 2012. "Complete Anonymity Compromises the Accuracy of Self-Reports." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48(6): 1291-1299.

III: Survey Design

6. Prepare Draft Survey (March 19)

Note: Exercise 2 Due (Preliminary Question Battery Due)

7. Prepare Final Survey (April 2)

Note: Exercise 3 Due (Question Critiques Due)

IV: The Collection of Survey and Experimental Data

8. Drawing and Adjusting a Sample for Surveys (April 9)

GFCLST Chapters 2, 4, 6

Dutwin, David, and Trent D. Buskirk. 2017. "Apples to Oranges or Gala versus Golden Delicious?: Comparing Data Quality of Nonprobability Internet Samples to Low Response Rate Probability Samples." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81(S1): 213-239.

Comments: George Terhanian, Daniel M. Merkle, Z. Tuba Suzer-Gurtekin & Sunghee Lee & James M. Lepkowski, Matt Jans, and Reply by David Dutwin and Trent D. Buskirk

Landry, Pierre F., and Mingming Shen. 2005. "Reaching Migrants in Survey Research: The Use of The Global Positioning System To Reduce Coverage Bias in China." *Political Analysis* 13(1): 1-22.

9. Inferential Issues (April 23)

Mummolo, Jonathan, & Erik Peterson. 2018. "Demand Effect in Survey Experiments: An Empirical Assessment." *American Political Science Review*, 1-13.

- Berinsky, A. J., Margolis, M. F., & Sances, M. W. 2014. "Separating the shirkers from the workers? Making sure respondents pay attention on self-administered surveys." *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3), 739-753.
- Kane, J. V., & Barabas, J. 2019. "No Harm in Checking: Using Factual Manipulation Checks to Assess Attentiveness in Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(1), 234-249.
- Richman, J. T., Chattha, G. A., & Earnest, D. C. 2014. "Do non-citizens vote in US elections?" *Electoral Studies*, 36: 149-157.
- Ansolabehere, S., Luks, S., & Schaffner, B. F. 2015. "The perils of cherry picking low frequency events in large sample surveys." *Electoral Studies*, 40: 409-410.
- Richman, J., Earnest, D. C., & Chattha, G. 2016. "Learning from Small Subsamples without Cherry Picking: The Case of Non-Citizen Registration and Voting."

IV: Experimental Design

10. Prepare Draft Experiments (April 30)

11. Prepare Final Experiment (May 7)

V: Analysis of Opinion Polls

12. Research Presentations (May 14)