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PSCI 512-01
Spring Semester, 2025
Office Hours: T./Th. 1:30-
3:00/by appointment

Survey Methods

This course explores how to use surveys to make inferences in the social sciences. A broad view is taken by starting with discussion about the relationship between theory and empirical research design. This includes some coverage of the place of experimental and non-experimental research in the social sciences. Then, after a brief discussion of the history of survey research, the focus turns to the key elements of surveys: sampling, measurement, and inference. The course also covers ongoing debates about probability and non-probability samples and how to evaluate the credibility of contemporary survey research. The class meets on Tuesday and Thursday from 11:05AM-12:20PM in 329 Harkness (Fenno Room).

More specifically, the course begins by situating surveys in the larger research process, touching on validity, ethics, and the evolution of surveys. It then focuses on sampling including canonical topics such as probability and non-probability sampling as well as non-response and reaching hard to survey populations. The course next turns to how respondents answer questions and how to write optimal questionnaires. The final classes cover analyses and reporting, and various domain specific topics (e.g., survey experiments, election polling).

Assignments

There are three assignments.

1. *Secondary Analyses*. Two of the most influential social science survey data sources are the [American National Election Studies](#) and the [General Social Survey](#). Students will be assigned one of these data sources. The assignment will be to analyze trends over-time on selected variables, and to look at subgroup differences. The assignments will be: 1) a pre-analysis plan, 2) initial general trends, 3) subgroup trends, and 4) a relatively brief paper. We will discuss due dates and other details in class.
2. *Class Leadership*. Each student will be assigned a set of classes for which they will serve as a point person. That is, they will be tasked with starting initial discussion and raising questions on a subset of readings (to be determined in advance of class). There is nothing in writing due for these classes. However, each student must choose 2 of the classes for which they are a point person and write a 2-page double spaced paper that summarizes one or two of the readings and offers critiques and/or future directions. Weeks will be assigned at the start of the semester, and each student will be assigned to five classes.
3. *Research Paper*. Each student will write a paper that develops a plan for a survey. The topic can be focused on survey methodology, or it can be using a survey in a novel way on any substantive topic. There are four written parts: 1) the initial idea (one page) (February 4), 2) a brief literature review (3-4 pages) (February 25), 3) a design document that explains the sample, survey, analysis plan and logistics (April 1), and 4) a final paper that presents a complete project with a survey that would be ready to field (May 10). Parts of many classes will involve selected students

presenting and discussing their projects. It is fine, if not encouraged, to connect this assignment to your other ongoing work.

Grading

The course grade will be determined based on each assignment equaling one-third of the final grade.

Dates

There are several dates where class will not be held. These include February 6, February 18, March 20, April 10. The last class (unless we decide to meet during finals week) is April 24.

Course Policies

Attendance is absolutely mandatory. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss, in detail, *all of the assigned readings* (regardless of if they are leading class that day). Students may be asked to present specific assigned readings without prior notice. When so doing, be prepared to discuss main themes, contributions, problems, and unanswered questions.

Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions will only be made for religious holidays, illness (verified by a note from a health care provider), serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and participation in group activities sponsored by the university. *Note:* this means a late assignment, without a legitimate excuse, will not be read or accepted (a score of 0 will be assigned). Do not request turning in an assignment late without a legitimate excuse.

All assignments can be submitted via e-mail *but* please send an attached word or PDF document. Do not send a link.

Readings

Most of the readings can be found on-line at the links provided. Others come from books that are available from the instructor. Most notably are various chapters from Groves, Robert M., et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*. Second Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Do not use the First Edition (it changed substantially.)

Some of the readings may be changed as the course progresses. Changes will be announced in class and/or via e-mail.

Course Outline

January 21 Introductions

January 23 Theory and Research Design

Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2007. "[Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach](#)." *Perspectives on Politics* 5: 741-753.

Holland, Paul W. 1986. "[Statistics and Causal Inference](#)." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81: 945-960. (Skim subsequent commentaries.)

Rosenbaum, Paul. R. 2010. *Design of Observational Studies*. New York: Springer. Chapter 1 (pages 3-19).

Ogburn, William F. 1940. "[Social Trends](#)." *American Journal of Sociology* 45: 756-769.

Gerring John. 2012. "[Mere Description](#)." *British Journal of Political Science* 42:721-746.

January 28 Validity

Shadish, William, R, Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inferences*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapters 1-3.

Druckman, James N. 2022. *Experimental Thinking: A Primer on Social Science Experiments*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 61-70.

Egami, Naoki, and Erin Hartman. 2023. "[Elements of External Validity: Framework, Design, and Analysis](#)." *American Political Science Review* 117: 1070-1088.

January 30 Ethics

Milgram, Stanley. 1963. "[Behavioral Study of Obedience](#)." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67: 371-378. (skim)

Zimbardo, Phillip. "[A Pirandellian Prison](#)," *New York Times Magazine* April 8, 1973. (skim)

Groves et al. "Principles and Practices Related to Ethical Research." Chapter 11.

Miller, Peter V. 2010. "[The Road to Transparency in Survey Research](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74: 602-606.

Nosek, Brian A., et al. 2015. "[Promoting an Open Research Culture](#)." *Science* 348: 1422-1425.

Connors, Elizabeth C., Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. 2019. "[How Transparency Affects Survey Responses.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 83: 185-209.

Skim:

[American Association for Public Opinion Research \(AAPOR\) Code of Ethics](#)

[AAPOR Transparency Initiative Disclosure Elements](#)

[Go through the IRB Office's Social-Behavioral-Educational Template](#)

February 4 History of Surveys

Herbest, Susan. 1993. *Numbered Voice: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3 (pages 43-68).

Groves, Robert M. 2011. "[Three Eras of Survey Research.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 861-871.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2017. "[Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys.](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 309-329.

Dillman, Don A. 2022. "[Fifty Years of Survey Innovation.](#)" *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology* 154: 9-38.

[See Roper iPoll.](#)

February 6 No Class

February 11 Probability Sampling

Groves et al. "Target Populations, Sampling Frames, and Coverage Error." Chapter 3.

Biemer, Paul P. 2010. "Overview of Design Issues: Total Survey Error." In Peter V. Marsden, and James D. Wright. *Handbook of Survey Research*. Bingley: Emerald.

Groves, Robert M., and Lars Lyberg. 2010. "[Total Survey Error: Past, Present, and Future.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74: 849-879.

Bautista, René. 2022. "[Drawing Inferences from Public Opinion Surveys: Insights for Intelligence Reports.](#)" In National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Measurement and Analysis of Public Opinion: An Analytic Framework*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Chapter 3a (pages 51-97).

February 13 Unit and Item Nonresponse

Groves et al. "Nonresponse in Sample Surveys." Chapter 6.

Groves, Robert M., and Emilia Peytcheva. 2008. "[The Impact of Nonresponse Rates on Nonresponse Bias: A Meta-Analysis.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72: 167-189.

Tourangeau, Roger 2017. "[Paradoxes of Nonresponse.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81: 803-814.

Cavari, Amnon, and Guy Freedman. 2023. "[Survey Nonresponse and Mass Polarization: The Consequences of Declining Contact and Cooperation Rates.](#)" *American Political Science Review* 117: 332–39.

Čehovin, Gregor, Michael Bosnjak, and Manfreda, K. Lozar 2023. "[Item Nonresponse in Web Versus Other Survey Modes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.](#)" *Social Science Computer Review* 41: 926-945.

February 18 No Class

February 20 Non-probability Sampling

Brick, J. Michael. 2011. "[The Future of Survey Sampling.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 872–888.

Cornesse, Carina, Annelies G Blom, David Dutwin, Jon A Krosnick, Edith D De Leeuw, Stéphane Legleye, Josh Pasek, Darren Pennay, Benjamin Phillips, Joseph W Sakshaug, Bella Struminskaya, and Alexander Wenz. 2020. "[A Review of Conceptual Approaches and Empirical Evidence on Probability and Nonprobability Sample Survey Research.](#)" *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 8: 4-36.

Mercer, Andrew, and Arnold Lau. 2023. "[Comparing Two Types of Online Survey Samples.](#)" Pew Research Center.

Enns, Peter, and Jacob Rothschild. 2021. "[Revisiting the ‘Gold Standard’ of Polling: New Methods Outperformed Traditional Ones in 2020.](#)" *Medium*, March, 18.

Santillana Mauricio, et al. 2024. "[Tracking COVID-19 Infections Using Survey Data on Rapid At-Home Tests.](#)" *JAMA Network Open* 7: e2435442.

Jerit, Jennifer, and Jason Barabas. 2023. "[Are Nonprobability Surveys Fit for Purpose?](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 87: 816-840.

February 25 Mode

Stern, Michael J., Ipek Bilgen, and Don A. Dillman. 2014. "[The State of Survey Methodology: Challenges, Dilemmas, and New Frontiers in the Era of the Tailored Design.](#)" *Field Methods* 26: 284-301.

Bowyer, Benjamin T., and Jon C. Rogowski. 2017. "[Mode Matters: Evaluating Response Comparability in a Mixed-Mode Survey.](#)" *Political Science Research and Methods* 5: 295-313.

Gooch, Andrew, and Lynn Vavreck. 2019. "[How Face-to-Face Interviews and Cognitive Skill Affect Item Non-Response: A Randomized Experiment Assigning Mode of Interview.](#)" *Political Science Research and Methods* 7: 143-162.

Daikeler, Jessica, Michael Bošnjak, and Katja Lozar Manfreda. 2020. "[Web Versus Other Survey Modes: An Updated and Extended Meta-Analysis Comparing Response Rates.](#)" *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 8: 513-539.

Endres, Kyle, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Matthew DeBell, and Shanto Iyengar. 2023. "[A Randomized Experiment Evaluating Survey Mode Effects for Video Interviewing.](#)" *Political Science Research and Methods* 11: 144-159.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine, Nicholas Valentino, Lynn Vavreck, Matt Barretto, and Geoff Layman. 2017. "[Board Report Assessing the Implications of a Mode Change.](#)" ANES. (skim)

February 27 Response Quality

Kennedy, Courtney, Nicholas Hatley, Arnold Lau, Andrew Mercer, Scott Keeter, Joshua Ferno, and Dorene Asare-Marfo. 2021. "[Strategies for Detecting Insincere Respondents in Online Polling.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85: 1050-1075.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine, and Tina LaChapell. 2022. "[Diagnosing Survey Response Quality.](#)" In Thomas J. Rudolph, ed., *Handbook of Politics and Public Opinion*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd..

Ward, M.K., and Adam W. Meade. 2023. "[Dealing with Careless Responding in Survey Data: Prevention, Identification, and Recommended Best Practices.](#)" *Annual Review of Psychology* 74: 577-596.

Berinsky, Adam J., Alejandro Frydman, Michele F. Margolis, Michael W. Sances, and Diana Camilla Valerio. 2024. "[Measuring Attentiveness in Self-Administered Surveys](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 88: 214-241.

March 4 Opt-in on-line samples

Kennedy, Courtney, Dana Popky, and Scott Keeter. 2023. "[How Public Polling Has Changed in the 21st Century.](#)" Pew Research Center.

Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "[Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk.](#)" *Political Analysis* 20: 351-368.

Stagnaro, Michael Nicholas, James N. Druckman, Adam J. Berinsky, Antonio Alonso Arechar, Robb Willer, and David G. Rand. 2024. "[Representativeness versus Response Quality: Assessing Nine Opt-in Online Survey Samples](#)." Unpublished paper.

Douglas Benjamin D., Patrick J. Ewell, and Markus Brauer. 2023. "[Data Quality in Online Human-Subjects Research: Comparisons Between MTurk, Prolific, CloudResearch, Qualtrics, and SONA](#)." *PLoS ONE* 18: e0279720.

March 6 Hard to Survey Populations

Cantor, Scott B., Theresa L. Byrd, Janet Y. Groff, Yesenia Reyes, Guillermo Tortolero-Luna, and Patricia Dolan Mullen. 2005. "[The Language Translation Process in Survey Research: A Cost Analysis](#)." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 27: 364-370.

Tourangeau, Roger. 2014. "[Defining Hard-to-Survey Populations](#)." In Roger Tourangeau, Brad Edwards, Timothy P. Johnson, Kirk M. Wolter, and Nancy Bates, eds., *Hard-to-Survey Populations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCann, James A., and Michael Jones-Correa. 2016. "[Key Design Features of the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study](#)." *RSF: Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 2: 230-235.

Barreto, Matt A., Lorrie Frasure-Yokley, Edward D. Vargas, and Janelle Wong. 2018. "[Best Practices in Collecting Online Data with Asian, Black, Latino, and White Respondents: Evidence from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey](#)." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6:171-180.

Viswanath, K. Vish, Rachel Faulkenberry McCloud, Edmund W.J. Lee, and Mesfin A. Bekalu. 2022. "[Measuring What Matters: Data Absenteeism, Science Communication, and the Perpetuation of Inequities](#)." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 700: 208-219.

Khoury, Rana B. 2020. "[Hard-to-Survey Populations and Respondent-Driven Sampling: Expanding the Political Science Toolbox](#)." *Perspectives on Politics* 18: 509-526.

March 11: Spring Break

March 13: Spring Break

March 18 Psychology of Survey Response

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.

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski. 2000. *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 6, 7 (pages 1-22, 165-229).

Roberts, Caroline, Emily Gilbert, Nick Allum, and Léila Eisner. 2019. "[Satisficing in Surveys: A Systematic Review of the Literature](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 83: 598-626.

March 20 No Class

March 25 Writing Questions

Groves et al. "Questions and Answers in Surveys." Chapter 7.

Groves et al. "Evaluating Survey Questions." Chapter 8.

Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Jennifer Dykema. 2011. "[Questions for Surveys: Current Trends and Future Directions](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 909-961.

Margolis, Michele F. 2022. "[Born Again but Not Evangelical? How the \(Double-Barreled\) Questions You Ask Affect the Answers You Get](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 86: 621-642.

March 27 Sensitive Questions

Blair, Graeme, Alexander Coppock, and Margaret Moor. 2020. "[When to Worry about Sensitivity Bias: A Social Reference Theory and Evidence from 30 Years of List Experiments](#)." *American Political Science Review* 114: 1297-1315.

Ingmar Ehler, Felix Wolter, and Justus Junkermann. 2021. "[Sensitive Questions in Surveys: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Experimental Survey Studies on the Performance of the Item Count Technique](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85: 6-27.

Yan, Ting. 2021. "[Consequences of Asking Sensitive Questions in Surveys](#)." *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application* 8: 109-127.

April 1 Rankings, Ratings, and Paired Comparisons

Krosnick, Jon A., and Duane F. Alwin. 1988. "[A Test of the Form-Resistant Correlation Hypothesis: Ratings, Rankings, and the Measurement of Values](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52: 526-538.

Hopkins, Daniel J., and Hans Noel. 2022. "[Trump and the Shifting Meaning of 'Conservative': Using Activists' Pairwise Comparisons to Measure Politicians' Perceived Ideologies](#)." *American Political Science Review* 116: 1133-1140.

Plutzer, Eric, and Michael B. Berkman. 2024. "[Scaled Paired Comparisons as an Alternative to Ratings and Rankings for Measuring Values](#)." *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*: smae035.

April 3 Survey experiments: Basics and Validity

Sniderman, Paul M. 2011. "The Logic and Design of the Survey Experiment: An Autobiography of a Methodological Innovation." In James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds., *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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

Druckman, James N., and Thomas J. Leeper. 2012. "[Learning More from Political Communication Experiments: Pretreatment and Its Effects.](#)" *American Journal of Political Science* 56: 875-896

Dafoe, Allan, Baobao Zhang, and Devin Caughey. 2018. "[Information Equivalence in Survey Experiments.](#)" *Political Analysis* 26: 399-416.

Mummolo, Jonathan, and Erik Peterson. 2019. "[Demand Effects in Survey Experiments: An Empirical Assessment.](#)" *American Political Science Review* 113: 517-529.

See: <http://tessexperiments.org/> (Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences)

April 8 Survey Experiments: Designs

Bansak, Kirk, Jens Hainmueller, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2021. "Conjoint Survey Experiments." In James N. Druckman and Donald P. Green, eds., *Advances in Experimental Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clifford, Scott, Geoffrey Sheagley, and Spencer Piston. 2021. "[Increasing Precision without Altering Treatment Effects: Repeated Measures Designs in Survey Experiments.](#)" *American Political Science Review* 115: 1048-1065.

Kane, John V. 2024. "[More than Meets the ITT: A Guide for Anticipating and Investigating Nonsignificant Results in Survey Experiments.](#)" *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. 1-16.

Brutger, Ryan, Joshua D. Kertzer, Jonathan Renshon, Dustin Tingley, and Chagai M. Weiss. 2023. "[Abstraction and Detail in Experimental Design.](#)" *American Journal of Political Science* 67: 979-995.

Rauf, Tamkinat, Jeremy Freese, Jan Voelkel, and James N. Druckman. 2024. "An Audit of Survey Experiments." Unpublished paper.

April 10 No Class

April 15 Election Polls

Hillygus, D. Sunshine. 2011. "[The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States.](#)" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 962-981.

Campbell, W. Joseph. 2020. *Lost in a Gallup: Polling Failure in U.S. Presidential Elections*. Oakland CA: University of California Press. Chapter 1 (pages 1-20).

Jennings, Will., and Christopher Wlezien. 2018. "[Election Polling Errors Across Time and Space](#)," *Nature Human Behaviour* 2: 276–283.

Gelman, Andrew. 2021. "[Failure and Success in Political Polling and Election Forecasting](#)." *Statistics and Public Policy* 8: 67-72..

[American Association for Public Opinion Research Task Force on 2020 Pre-Election Polling, Executive Summary.](#)"

[AP VoteCast](#), 2024.

April 17 Analysis of Survey Data

Groves et al. "Postcollection Processing of Survey Data." Chapter 10.

Kennedy, Courtney, et al. 2018. "[An Evaluation of the 2016 Election Polls in the United States](#)." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82: 1-33.

April 22 Reporting of Survey Data

Sharma, Akash, et al. 2021. "[A Consensus-Based Checklist for Reporting of Survey Studies \(CROSS\)](#)." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 36: 3179-3187.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, Arthur Lupia, Ashley Amaya, Henry E. Brady, René Bautista, Joshua D. Clinton, Jill A. Dever, David Dutwin, Daniel L. Goroff, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Courtney Kennedy, Gary Langer, John S. Lapinski, Michael Link, Tasha Philpot, Ken Prewitt, Doug Rivers, Lynn Vavreck, David C. Wilson, and Marcia K. McNutt 2023. "[Protecting the Integrity of Survey Research](#)." *PNAS Nexus* 2: pgad049.

April 24 Open Discussion

May 6-11: Exam Week (Possible make-up classes).