INTL 4780: Applied Survey Research

Fall 2022
T/Th: 11:10-12:25, Journalism 501

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Course Description:

Surveys are a commonly used tool for understanding how citizens think about politics. This course provides students with a practical introduction to designing survey questions, fielding online surveys, and analyzing survey data.

The first three weeks of class cover basic elements of survey research design and introduce students to the overarching research question in this class ("How do partisan poll watchers affect democratic public opinion?"). This section of the class also provides a general introduction to some theoretical concepts that underly social scientific analysis of survey data (e.g., sampling).

Weeks four through twelve focus on technical issues in survey question design and analysis. During this portion of the semester, students will design, pretest, and field a survey to test a hypothesis directly related to the class research question.

The final weeks focus on analysis and writing. Students will analyze existing and original survey data and write up the results in two short research reports. Students will prepare and submit at least one draft report for feedback prior to the final version. Finally, all groups will present their final findings to the class at the end of the semester.

Course Objectives:
This course will provide students with an introduction to writing and analyzing survey data fielded in comparative contexts and in the US. Students who successfully complete this class will gain:

1. Experience writing reports interpreting survey data for a general audience
2. Experience designing, programming, and fielding survey questions
3. Experience analyzing different types of survey data from a variety of contexts

Course Requirements:

Assignments: Students will complete two reports by the end of the semester: an individual report describing democratic public opinion in a country of interest, and a group research report examining an original hypothesis using original public opinion data. Assignments introduce

students to the skills needed to complete these final projects, and in several cases are components of the final projects, themselves.

Suggested due dates for all assignments are listed in *orange* in the schedule below. Most of these deadlines are flexible; however, I recommend students do their best to adhere to these deadlines, as doing so will make it much easier to stay on track for final project completion. All assignments (excluding final report drafts) must be turned in by Thursday, December 1st at 11:59pm to receive credit. There will be no grade deductions for late assignments.

While most deadlines in this class are flexible, there are two class components that are time sensitive, due to the nature of the research we will conduct.

1. IRB certification must be completed prior to conducting cognitive interviews, on **September 29th.** You may not conduct human subjects research if you have not completed your certification!
2. Question programming and questionnaire review must be completed as scheduled. You must certify that you have completed your programming **by the end of class on October 27th.** You must also take the survey at least three times, making careful note of errors, **prior to class on November 1st.**

Attendance: Attendance is not graded in this class, and there are no excused or unexcused absences. However, because this class involves substantial discussion and in-class activities, participation accounts for an important portion of your grade. If you are not present in class, you will not be able to participate in these activities.

Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones: Laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices will be used to complete data analysis and survey programming. Please, bring your technology to class!

Grades:

Course Grades:
Individual Assignments (all components): 50%
Group Assignments (all components): 20%
Participation: 30%

Grade Scale:
>=93%:   A
90-92.9%:   A-
87-89.9%:   B+
83-86.9%:   B
80-82.9%:   B-
77-79.9%:   C+
73-76.9%:   C
70-72.9%:   C-

60-69.9%:   D
<60%:   F

Academic Honesty Policy:
The academic honesty policy of the university is supplemented (not replaced) by an Honor Code which was adopted by the Student Government Association and approved by the University Council May 1, 1997, and provides: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." All students agree to abide by this code by signing the UGA Admissions Application.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:
- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*

Class Schedule

Week 1	August 18	Welcome! Recommended reading: * Skim Groves et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology.* Chapter 1, pp. 1-7; 30-34
Week 2	August 23	The dependent variable: what is democratic public opinion? Reading: 1. Dahl, Robert A. 1970. *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition.* Yale university press. Chapter 1. Skim <u>one</u> of the following: 1. Campbell, John, and Nolan Quinn. 2021. "What's Happening to Democracy in Africa?" *CFR Africa Program,* May 26. 2. Ford, Lindsey W. and Ryan Hass. 2021. "Democracy in Asia." *Brookings Institute.* January 22. 3. Petrova, Tsveta. 2021. "Democracy Support without Democracy: The Cases of Poland and Turkey." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* January 5. 4. Zechmeister, Elizabeth J. and Noam Lupu. 2022. "Support for democracy is waning across the Americas." *The Conversation,* March 8. Discussion questions: • What *is* democratic public opinion? • What are trends in democratic public opinion in different world regions? • How can surveys help us to measure democratic public opinion?
	August 25	The independent variable: what are poll watchers? Reading: 1. Ace Project. *Access Electoral Integrity.* "Political Party Monitors." 2. Sheagley, Geoffrey and Mollie J. Cohen. 2021. "Watchers at the Polls: The Effect of Partisan Poll Watchers on Perceptions of Electoral Fairness." MIT Election Lab Blog, August 3. Discussion questions: • Why do we have poll watchers? • How do you think that poll watchers affect election results?

		• Do you think that poll watchers affect voters' democratic public opinion? Why or why not? In-class activity: *In order to understand* how *a phenomenon affects democratic public opinion, we first have to understand what that phenomenon is and how it operates. For two countries that hold elections, you will identify whether partisan poll watchers are allowed. You will then reflect on the process of finding this information.*
Week 3	August 30	Science, surveys, and samples Reading: 1. Trochim and Donnelly. Chapter 4: Surveys. https://conjointly.com/kb/survey-research/ 2. Cohen, Mollie J. 2021. "Citizen Approval of Monetary- vs Goods-For-Votes Exchanges." *Journal of Experimental Political Science.* 3. Mehrotra, Ria. 2022. "Spotlight on Attitudes Toward Political Discussions in Nicaragua." *LAPOP Spotlights.* Skim: 4. LaVaque-Manty and LaVaque-Manty. *Writing in Political Science.* Excerpt from Chapter 3, "Strategies for Literature Reviews and Research Papers" (pp. 38-50). Discussion questions: • How do we implement best scientific practices when we use surveys to study politics? • What are some observable implications of our arguments about poll watchers and democratic public opinion?
	September 1	Ethics in survey research ***IRB Assignment due in eLC drop box by start of class period*** Reading: 1. American Association of Public Opinion Researchers (AAPOR)'s Code of Professional Ethics. Revised April, 2021. Available on eLC. Discussion questions: • What are the guiding principles of the IRB? • How do those principles overlap with best practices in survey research?

		• What are likely areas of ethical concern in conducting survey research? • How do you think general concerns translate to the specific issues we are covering in this class?
Week 4	September 6	Open-ended questions Reading: 1. Geer, John. 1988. "What do open-ended questions measure?." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(3): 365-367 2. Sheagley, Geoffrey, and Adriano Udani. 2021. "Multiple meanings? The link between partisanship and definitions of voter fraud." *Electoral Studies* 69: 102244. Discussion questions: • What are the pros and cons of asking open-ended questions? • When should we use open-ended questions? In-class activity: *Code open-ended responses to a question about poll watchers.*
	September 8	Closed questions ***Poll watcher coding and reflection due to Google Sheets and eLC drop box by the start of class*** Reading: 1. Miller, Patrick R. 2020. Tipsheet – Improving Response Scales. *Duke Initiative on Survey Methodology*. Discussion questions: • What are the pros and cons of asking closed questions? • When should we use closed questions? • How can we turn open-ended questions into closed questions?
Week 5	September 13	Analyzing Closed Survey Questions (I) Reading: 1. Review online instructions for using LAPOP's data playground. https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/DataPlaygroundHowTo.pdf 2. Read the "core questionnaire" for the 2018/9 AmericasBarometer study, available on eLC. Identify at least three questions that measure democratic public opinion.

		In-class activity: *Analyze a question looking at democratic public opinion in a world region of your choosing. Additional instruction and assistance will be provided in class, and complete guidelines are available in the assignment instructions ("Descriptive Analysis Assignment").*
	September 15	No class (APSA annual meeting) • Catch up on any pending assignments. • Work on your Descriptive Analysis assignment, which is due on 9/22.
Week 6	September 20	How to write a bad survey question ***Open-ended question due to eLC drop box by the start of class*** Reading: 1. Sullivan, Gail M., and Anthony R. Artino Jr. 2017. "How to create a bad survey instrument." *Journal of graduate medical education* 9(4): 411-415. Discussion questions: 2. What is so bad about leading and loaded questions? 3. When might it make sense to ask a double-barreled question? 4. Where should different questions be asked in surveys?
	September 22	Asking about sensitive topics Reading: 1. Miller, Patrick R. 2020. <u>Tipsheet – Sensitive Questions</u>. *Duke Initiative on Survey Methodology.* Skim: 2. Tourangeau, Roger, and Ting Yan. 2007. "Sensitive questions in surveys." *Psychological bulletin* 133(5): 859. 3. Bischoping, Katherine, and Howard Schuman. 1992. "Pens and polls in Nicaragua: An analysis of the 1990 preelection surveys." *American Journal of Political Science*: 331-350. Discussion questions: • How do researchers know if an item is sensitive? • What are the best ways to ask about sensitive subjects in surveys? • What are some conditions that might make it easier or harder to ask sensitive survey questions?

Week 7	September 27	Using experiments to study democratic public opinion *Descriptive Analysis Assignment due in eLC drop box by start of class period* Reading: 1. Bush, Sarah Sunn, and Lauren Prather. 2017. "The promise and limits of election observers in building election credibility." *The Journal of Politics* 79(3): 921-935. Discussion questions: • What research design did the authors use? What was the treatment/ control? • How do foreign election observers shape voters' confidence in elections? • Do you think that these results are likely to travel to partisan observers? Why or why not?
	September 29	Cognitive interviewing *Midterm evaluations in class* Reading: 1. Willis, Gordon B. 2015. *Analysis of the cognitive interview in questionnaire design*. Oxford University Press. Selections from Chapters 1 and 3 (pp. 1-14; 35-46) In-class activity: *With your group, start brainstorming survey questions that will allow you to test your hypothesis. As you work on your questions, you might realize that your hypothesis is not testable using survey data. In that case, update your hypothesis! Your group should aim to have 5-7 questions for both your independent and dependent variables by the end of class.*
Week 8	October 4	Fieldwork Day: cognitive interviews [no class meeting] Fieldwork activity: *Conduct at least three cognitive interviews using your group's proposed survey questions. Write up your results to share with your group in class on Thursday. Additional instruction will be provided in class on 9/29. Notes from fieldwork should be included in the "Question design memo" assignment.* *Write up the results of your cognitive interviews in your group's Google Doc prior to class on October 6. Your group will use results of these interviews to workshop questions on Thursday.*

	October 6	Workshop In-class activity: *Review the results of your cognitive interviews with your group. Rank order your questions in order of preference; you will present your top three choices to the class on October 11th.*

Week 9	October 11	Propose three questions to the class
		
		With your group, create a brief (5-7 minute) presentation that includes:
		  1. An overview of your argument,
		  2. Your hypothesis, and
		  3. Your top three proposed survey questions for your dependent and independent variables
		
		Your classmates will provide feedback during class. Further instruction will be provided prior to class.

	October 13	Analyzing data from survey experiments
		
		Any pending presentations from Tuesday will be the first order of business on this class day
		
		Reading:
		  1. Review the questionnaire posted to eLC
		  2. Skim this overview of t-tests: https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/t-test/

Week 10	October 18	Programming online surveys in Qualtrics Reading: 1. Skim Qualtrics' introduction to survey programming: https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/survey-module/survey-module-overview/
	October 20	Analyzing correlations in survey data Reading: 1. Skim this overview of linear regression: http://www.stat.yale.edu/Courses/1997-98/101/linreg.htm
Week 11	October 25	Workshop Reading:

		1. LaVaque-Manty and LaVaque-Manty. *Writing in Political Science.* Excerpt from Chapter 3, "Strategies for Data-Driven Research Proposals and IMRD Papers" (pp. 73-104). • *In class, you will work to finalize your survey questions and programming, and work on your argument* • *If your group has made changes following in-class feedback, consider conducting additional cognitive interviews and/ or presenting your updated questions to the class*
	October 27	Workshop *Certify that your programming is complete on Qualtrics by end of class* • *In class, you will work to finalize your survey questions and programming, and work on your argument* • *If your group has made changes following in-class feedback, consider conducting additional cognitive interviews and/ or presenting your updated questions to the class*
Week 12	November 1	Workshop *Complete the survey at least three times, reviewing closely for errors, prior to class. You must submit these to the professor in writing prior to class on 11/3* • *In class, you will work to finalize your survey questions and programming, and work on your argument* • *If your group has made changes following in-class feedback, consider conducting additional cognitive interviews and/ or presenting your updated questions to the class*
	November 3	Elections and public opinion *Argument Memo due in eLC drop box by start of class period* Reading: 1. Carreras, Miguel, and Yasemin İrepoğlu. 2013. "Trust in elections, vote buying, and turnout in Latin America." *Electoral Studies* 32(4): 609-619. Skim: 2. On election forecasts 3. Write in votes in different U.S. States **SURVEY TO THE FIELD!**

Week 13	November 8	**ELECTION DAY. VOTE IF YOU ARE ABLE.** Elections and public opinion II Reading: 1. The news 2. Berlinski, Nicolas, Margaret Doyle, Andrew M. Guess, Gabrielle Levy, Benjamin Lyons, Jacob M. Montgomery, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2021. "The effects of unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud on confidence in elections." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*: 1-16.
	November 10	
Week 14	November 15	Workshop *Class aims will depend on whether data collection is complete. There will be class time reserved for completing individual reports. If data collection is complete, you will also begin to:* - *Analyze the results of your original questions with your group.* - *Write up those results in your group's final report.*
	November 17	Workshop *Individual report draft due to eLC drop box by the end of the class period* - *Analyze the results of your original questions with your group.* - *Start to write up those results in your group's final report.*
Week 15	November 22	Workshop *Group report draft due to eLC drop box by the end of the class period* - *Analyze the results of your original questions with your group.* - *Write up those results in your group's final report.*
	November 24	**Thanksgiving Break**
Week 16	November 29	Final presentations *Question design memo due to eLC drop box prior to class on the day you present*

	December 1	Final presentations *Question design memo due to eLC drop box prior to class on the day you present*

All revised final reports are due via drop box on eLC by Tuesday, December 13th at 5pm.