Survey Research  
Pol Sci 392  
Fall 2017

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If you want to check out some of my own uses of political statistics, go to www.politics-by-the-numbers.blogspot.com

IMPORTANT: Please remember that I will be sending everything to your UWM email account. If you don’t regularly use that account, make sure you check it or forward it to an account you do use regularly.

This course is designed to provide students with a broad, hands-on introduction to the art and science of survey research. Public opinion surveys are an important source of data for many academic disciplines—political science, sociology, mass communications, public health, criminology, and marketing to name a few—and is increasingly a pre-occupation for the mass media and society at large. Survey research jobs are also expected to grow at a faster than average rate over the next several years. Students in this course will learn not only how to evaluate and analyze public opinion surveys but also how to design and administer surveys and how to present survey findings.

There are really three overlapping parts to this course. The first part of the course focuses on important methodological issues related to survey research. The class will read about and discuss a number of potential sources of survey error during this part of the course, as well as methods for designing surveys. The last part of the course focuses on how to analyze the results of public opinion surveys. During this part of the course, students will use a basic data analysis program (SPSS) and will also learn some elementary statistical techniques that are helpful for analyzing survey results. For the other part of the course, students will help develop and administer a public...
opinion survey that focuses on a set of issues to be determined through class discussions. This part of the course will be ongoing throughout the semester and will overlap with the first and last parts.

Although all three components are important, the success of the course depends most heavily on the survey project. For this reason, most of the assignments, and a good deal of our class discussions, will focus on developing a high quality survey instrument.

**Textbook**

The following textbook is required for the course:


In addition, several supplemental readings are available on D2L.

**Supplemental Reading Sources**


**Grades**

Several different activities will determine student grades for the semester:

- Attendance: 10%
- Survey Work: 10%
- Assignments: 35%
- Quizzes: 25%
- Survey Report: 20%

You will note that there are no exams in this course. The reason for this is simple: you will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate your grasp of the course material through the other components of the course.
Attendance

Attendance is important for several reasons. First, it is an opportunity to help your grade, just by showing up. Getting a solid A for 10% of your grade will come in very handy at the end of the semester. Second, you will do much better on the other aspects of the course if you attend class on a regular basis. And, finally, this is a small class and it will be beneficial to have as many students here as possible to help with class discussion.

Quizzes

There will be five short quizzes during the semester. These quizzes will cover material from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The quiz format will vary throughout the semester but will include some combination of definitions and short-answer questions.

Assignments

Several assignments will be required throughout the semester. These assignments will include varied content: questions from the readings, hands-on applications, finding and using outside resources, etc. Assignments will be announced in class and made available through D2L.

Survey Work

Students will be responsible for developing ideas for survey topics, writing survey questions, and managing the class survey project that will form the basis of the final papers and some of the assignments later in the semester.

Survey Report

The final paper will take the form of a report on some part of the class survey project. Details will follow, as the survey project takes shape.

Make-up Policy:

Late work is not accepted and any student who misses an assignment or exam will not be able to make it up, with exceptions granted in only the most severe and unavoidable circumstances (death in the family, severe illness, incarceration, etc.), with documentation and prior notice required.

Special Needs:

Students with physical or other special circumstances that require accommodation should contact the professor as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your circumstance.
Other University Policies

Please go to the following link to find information regarding other university policies, such as: religious observances, active duty call ups, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, complaint procedures, academic misconduct, grade appeals, and firearms (http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf)

Preliminary Semester Schedule

1. The Survey Enterprise
   
   Nardi, Chapter 1
   Weisberg, Chapters 1, 2
   AAPOR Report pages 1-14

2. The Research Enterprise

   Nardi, Chapters 2, 3
   Weisberg, Chapter 14
   Qualtrics Training

3. Questionnaire Construction and Question Wording

   Nardi Chapter 4
   Weisberg, Chapters 5, 6

4. Data Collection and Survey Administration

   Weisberg, Chapter 3 and pages 53-63
   Couper and Bosnjak
   AAPOR Report pages 14-19

5. Sampling

   Nardi, Chapter 5
   Piazza, 163-168
   Weisberg, Chapter 10
   AAPOR Report pages 33-51

6. Using SPSS

   TBA

7. Univariate Statistics

   Nardi Chapter 6
8. Bivariate Data Analysis

Nardi, Chapter 7, 8

9. Multiple Variable Analysis

Nardi, Chapter 9

10. Presenting Research findings

Nardi, Chapter 10