Survey Research
Pol Sci 392
Fall 2019

Professor:

Thomas Holbrook
Office Hours: T, R 11:30AM to 1:00PM
Office: 660 Bolton Hall
Email: holbroot@uwm.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Robert Machado
Office: 652 Bolton Hall
Office Hours: W Noon to 3:00 pm
email: rmachado@uwm.edu

Course Website Address: https://uwm.edu/canvas/home/

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. 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
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. Our goal is to send the survey out by no later than November 1.

**Textbook**

The following textbook is required for the course:


In addition, several supplemental readings are available on Canvas.

**Supplemental Reading Sources**


**SPSS**

We will use SPSS, a popular data analysis program, for managing and analyzing survey data. SPSS is available in campus computer labs and can be purchased and downloaded for student use for about $35 at this [site](#). Students are not required to purchase SPSS, but it will be more convenient for you if you have your own copy.
Grades

Several different activities will determine student grades for the semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Report</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will note that there are no exams in this course. The reason for this is simple: you will have multiple other opportunities to demonstrate your grasp of the course material through the other components of the course, and I think exams are sometimes too high stakes.

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 and with the development of the survey project.

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. Quizzes will be announced at least one week before they are given.

Assignments

Several assignments are 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 Canvas.

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 in 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](http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf))

---

**Preliminary Semester Schedule**

1. **The Survey Enterprise**
   - Glynn et al., Chapter 3
   - Weisberg, Chapter 2
   - AAPOR Report, pages 1-14
   - AAPOR Best Practices

2. **The Research Enterprise**
   - Nardi, Chapters 1-3
   - Weisberg, Chapter 14
   - *Qualtrics Training*
   - *Define Survey Objectives*

3. **Questionnaire Construction and Question Wording**
   - Nardi Chapter 4
   - AAPOR Question Wording Guidelines
   - *Begin work on Survey Items*

4. **Data Collection and Survey Administration**
   - Weisberg, pages 53-63
   - Couper and Bosnjak
   - AAPOR Report pages 14-19
   - *Prepare the survey in Qualtrics*
5. Sampling

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

   *Secure sample for course survey

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