POLISCI 394/DACSS 695
Political Polling & Survey Methods
Spring 2023

Instructor: Dr. Rosemary Pang
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Office Location: Bartlett 263 or Zoom

Course Time and Location:

Monday & Wednesday 14:30 - 15:45   Multimodal   Machmer W-13 or Zoom

All class sessions will be recorded and be made available to all students.

Office Hours:

Regular office hours will be held 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Tu&Th in Bartlett 263 or on Zoom. Please book in advance through Calendly. Make sure you choose the right course and summarize the question you have. If this time does not work, please send me an email for appointment.

Course Description:

Surveys are an increasingly important tool for government, private organizations, and communities. With increasing use of the internet, there are a burgeoning number of tools to query different populations, be they customers, employees, or citizens. This class will provide students with the unique experience of involvement in ongoing survey research. The course is designed for students from many different disciplines and each student who successfully completes the course will have the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct high quality survey research on their own or as part of a team.

Broadly speaking, this course is divided into three separate sections. The first section deals with developing appropriate research questions for social science and survey methods, a deep dive into the psychology of survey respondents and the process they go through to answer your questions. Following this, we will focus on the intricacies of developing and writing survey questions and scales, how to put them into a coherent questionnaire and ultimately how to program the survey into an online survey software package. We will also discuss how to appropriately sample from your population of interest. The third section focuses on data management and analysis of survey data. Throughout the course, we will be working in R-Studio to develop your statistical and programming skills. Students will explore actual survey data, such as the General Social Survey, and also develop their own set of survey questions and analyze the data they collect.

Learning Objectives:

Students will learn the key components of survey data collection and analysis (1) how to ask appropriate research questions that can be answered with surveys; (2) how to design and write questions to measure key concepts of interest; (3) how to determine the most appropriate mode of data collection; (4) how to use survey software packages to program and implement surveys; (5) how to prepare, analyze and interpret survey data; (6) how to communicate the results of a survey to researchers and the public.

Textbook:

Fowler Jr, Floyd J. *Survey research methods.* Sage publications, 2013.

Other book chapters and articles will be posted on Google Class.

POLISCI and DACSS Students:

We have a diverse group of students in this class: undergrad students enroll under POLISCI 394 and grad students enroll under DACSS 695. Please pay attention to assignment requirements based on the course you enroll. All students are required to complete assignments with no label. In addition, grad students are also required to complete assignments with the [**DACSS**] label.

Google Classroom:

All classroom materials will be posted in Google Classroom. Class recordings, slides, tutorials, and assignment descriptions will all be found here. Be sure you are logged into your UMass Google account.

Feedback and Lectures:

Students use Google spreadsheet to provide feedback and ask questions about course materials every week. The instructor will answer these questions in the following week.

Course Structure and Grading:
Final grades will be based on:

- **Participation (10%):**
  The only way to effectively learn survey research methods is by practicing them over and over so participation is critical in this course. You will not learn as much as you could if you do not come to class and actively participate in each session. Therefore, it is imperative that students actively participate in class discussion and activities. Participation should reflect careful consideration of the topic but does not need to reflect expertise. Rather, students should seek to ask and answer questions regularly and in equal proportion. As this course requires hands-on in-class work each week, it is expected that you show up to class and participate with your classmates.

- **Quizzes (10%):**
  Quizzes serve to ensure that basic course material is mastered. While many weeks will have a quiz, not all will. Each quiz may be taken only once, and are open book (i.e., lecture notes and readings may be used.)

- **Homework (40%):**
  Various homework assignments will be distributed throughout the course. These are intended to help you with critical parts of the survey research process and form the basis of your final project. For the most part, each assignment will deal with a specific part of your final project. As such, you will be completing parts of your final project throughout the semester.

- **Final Project (40%):**
  You will design your own survey research project, which includes everything from developing the idea, collecting the data, and analyzing the data. The final deliverable will be developed via assignments throughout the semester so you should not be scrambling at the end of the semester to finish. The research topic is entirely up-to-you.

  The final project can be done in groups (maximum two people for grad students and three for undergrad students. If a grad student want to collaborate with undergrads, the maximum is also two). Students should decide their group members and let the instructor know in the first few weeks.

  As part of your final grade, you will give a short presentation on your project to the class during the last week of the semester. Presenting research in general, and survey research specifically, is a skill that can be developed so this presentation is designed to give you experience presenting your own research and answering audience questions.

- **Grade Scale:**
  A: 94-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D: 60-69; FAIL: 59 and below

Software:

The course will be taught in the R programming language and the RStudio. R is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics; it has become the standard in statistics and among increasing numbers of social scientists and policy analysts. You can find more information about RStudio in the **Welcome Letter**. Don't worry if you are new to RStudio, we will learn this together in class.

University Policies:

- ACADEMIC HONESTY:

  Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

  Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. The procedures outlined below are intended to provide an efficient and orderly process by which action may be taken if it appears that academic dishonesty has occurred and by which students may appeal such actions.

  Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent.

  For more information about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see the Dean of Students' website: `https://www.umass.edu/honesty/`.

- STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:

  The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier free campus.

  If you are in need of accommodation for a documented disability, register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. It is your responsibility to initiate these services and to communicate with faculty ahead of time to manage accommodations in a timely manner. For more information, consult the Disability Services website.

Class Schedule and Readings

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. We may adjust the schedule due to time or interest.

Feb 6 & 8 Introduction and Survey Basics
   Syllabus
   Fowler. Chapter 2
   Zaller & Feldman. 1992
   [**DACSS**] Tailored Design Method. Chapter 1

Feb 13 & 15 Building Blocks of Social Science Research
   Johnson, Reynolds & Mycoff. Chapter 3 & 4

Feb 20 & 22 Research Ethics
   No Class on Feb 20: President's Day
   Fowler. Chapter 11
   [**DACSS**] Sage Handbook. Chapter 7
   [**DACSS**] IRB Guidance

Feb 27 & Mar 1 Survey Questions
   Fowler. Chapter 6
   Tailored Design Method. Chapter 4
   [**DACSS**] Sage Handbook. Chapter 16

Mar 6 & 8 Response Scales
   Geer. 1991
   Krosnick et. al. 2002
   [**DACSS**]Krosnick & Alwin. 1987

Mar 13 & 16 No Class: Spring Recess

Mar 20 & 22 Questionnaire Development and Evaluation
   Fowler. Chapter 7
   Krosnick & Presser. 2010

Mar 27 & 29 Individual Group Meeting

Apr 3 & 5 Sampling
   Fowler. Chapter 3
   Sage Handbook. Chapter 21
   [**DACSS**] Sage Handbook. Chapter 30

Apr 10 & 12 Survey Mode
    Fowler. Chapter 5
    Tailored Design. Chapter 11

Apr 17 & 19 Introduction to RStudio
    No class on Apr 17: Patriot's Day

Apr 24 & 26 Descriptive Statistics & Topline
    Dietz & Kalof. Chapter 3 & 4

May 1 & 3 Analyzing survey data: two groups
    Agresti & Finlay. Chapter7

May 8 & 10 Analyzing survey data: two variables
    Wheelan. Chapter 4
    Dietz & Kalof. Chapter 5

May 15 & 17 Presentation Week