Survey Research Methodology (PPHA 4160)

Winter Quarter 2020, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago

Instructor

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Office Hours

Thursday 1-3:30

The Keller Center Forum

Time and Location

3:30-6:00 PM

The Keller Center

Course Overview

The goal of this course is to learn about the methods used to collect publicly available survey data that can be used for policy research so that students can appropriately use these data to answer policy relevant questions. Students will learn about the methods used to collect survey data, how to develop researchable policy questions that can be answered with the survey data, and about the limitations of the survey data for answering policy research questions. In order to analyze policy questions using available survey data, students will also learn about actual survey instruments, survey sample designs, survey data processing, and survey data systems that the major public policy relevant surveys use. The course will also examine specific measurement and analysis issues that are of interest to policy research such as measuring public program enrollment, race and ethnicity classification and important methods for assessing the quality of statistics used for policy research. By the end of the course each student will understand the methods used to collect survey data, have developed a researchable policy question, carried out the appropriate analysis to answer the question, produced high quality analytical tables, and written up descriptions of the methods used to produce the numbers in the tables in a style that is consistent with professional policy research.

Course Prerequisites

Graduate level research methods course, basic graduate level statistics course, or permission of instructor.

Required Text

Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler Jr., Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, Roger Tourangeau. Survey Methodology, 2nd edition: John Wiley and Sons.

https://www.amazon.com/Survey-Methodology-Robert-M-Groves/dp/0470465468

You can rent a copy of the book from Amazon $15 for a year.

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM). 2001. "Measuring and Reporting Sources of Error in Surveys." Washington DC: Statistical Policy Office, Office of the Management and Budget.

http://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/files/2014/04/spwp31.pdf

Data Resources

General Social Survey https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/

American Community Survey https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

National Health Interview Survey https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/index.htm

Or https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis/

Current Population Survey https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html

Or https://cps.ipums.org/cps/

Selected Example Data Briefs

National Center for Health Statistics

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db349.htm

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db351.htm

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db336.htm

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db311.htm

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

https://www.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/page/2018-03/HINTS-2017-Consumer-Data-Brief-3.21.18.pdf

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services

https://www.cms.gov/mmrr/Downloads/MMRR2013_003_03_b04.pdf

Census Bureau

https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-268.html

https://www.census.gov/content/census/en/library/publications/2017/acs/acs-37.html

Course Schedule

Week	Subject	Reading
January 9, 2020	Understanding Surveys and Survey Error	Groves et. al, Chapters 1 and 2 FCSM
January 16, 2020	Sample Design: Sampling and Coverage Error	Groves et. al, Chapters 3 and 4 FCSM Chapters 1 and 3
January 23, 2020	Sample Design: Non-response Error	Groves et. al, Chapter 6 FCSM Chapter 4 and 5
January 30, 2020	Data Collection: Modes and Questionnaire Design	Groves, et al. Chapters 5 and 9
February 6, 2020	Data Collection: Measurement Error	Groves, et al., Chapters 7 and 8
February 13, 2020	Data Collection: Measurement Error	FCSM Chapter 6
February 20, 2020	Post-processing: Editing, Imputation and Weighting	Groves, et. al. Chapter 9 FCSM, Chapters 6 and 7
February 27, 2020	Using Survey Estimates to Make Policy	Supplemental reading
March 5, 2020	The Future of Surveys: Alternatives	Supplemental reading
March 12, 2020	Reading day: Final infographics sharing	

Requirements

The course has three requirements.

A Data Brief: Each enrolled student will be required to analyze data from 1 of the 4 data sets (GSS, NHIS, ACS, CPS) and write a data brief on a topic of your choice. The last hour of each class will be spent developing the components of the data brief. There will be 6 interim products for this that will count to the overall grade. You can choose how you would like to analyze the data. Some of the data systems have tabulators to help you do your estimation. You can also use statistical software if you choose to do so.

	Due date
1. Choice of focus, data set, and policy issue 1 page	1/16
2. Methodological appendix 2 pages	1/23

3. Table shells 1/30
   Minimum of 4 tables/graphs
4. Populated Tables 2/13
   Preliminary estimates and standard errors

5. Preliminary draft of data brief 3/5
   Full draft of data brief
6. Final infographic 3/12
   Choose a finding and "make a graphic"

The final draft of the data brief can be turned in if you choose to improve your grade from the preliminary draft. It will be due the same day as the Final Exam.

Take Home Exams

Mid Term	Available on Canvas 2/2 Due 2/10 by 5PM
Final	Available on Canvas 3/13 Due 3/19 at 5PM

Unfortunately because the quarter is very short, work turned in past the deadline will receive one letter grade lower than it would earn.

Grading

A/F letter grade will be determined by total effort as follows:

A	95-100%	(4.0) Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
A-	90-94%	
B+	87-89%	(3.0) Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
B	83-86%	
B-	80-82%	
C+	77-79%	(2.0) Represents achievement that meets the minimum course requirements
C	73-76%	
C-	70-72%	
D+	67-69%	(1.0) Achievement below minimum course expectations but sufficient to be awarded credit
D	63-66%	
D-	60-62%	
F	below 60%	Represents failure (no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Additional readings

Will be assigned and available on Canvas.