



The Harris School at the University of Chicago

Survey Research Methodology and Analysis

PP41600

Winter Quarter 2022 (revised 1/24/22)

Meeting Days: Tuesdays

Meeting Time: Tu 5-7:50 PM CT

Meeting Place: Keller Center

Instructor: A Rupa Datta, Distinguished Senior Fellow, NORC at the University of Chicago
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Office Hours: By Appointment on Zoom, but 4-6 CT is often a good time

Teaching Assistant: Maruf Mia maruf@uchicago.edu

I. Course Description

This course focuses on helping students become more sophisticated consumers of survey data and analyses. Whether you will be a policy analyst analyzing survey data, a policy maker assessing analyses that use survey data, or a researcher designing studies that will inform your questions of interest, you can benefit from a theoretical and practical understanding of survey methodology.

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. We will explore the survey methodology literature, review survey descriptions and survey results as presented in a variety of settings (popular press, policy analyses, etc.), and develop techniques for understanding how well research questions can be answered using survey techniques.

II. Course Prerequisites/Certificates

No prerequisites. The course is part of the Survey Methods Certificate.



III. Course Goals and Objectives

1. Become knowledgeable about the survey process and the implications of that process for survey quality.
2. Learn to ask research questions that can be answered with available survey data.
3. Understand the strengths and limitations of using survey data to answer policy research questions, especially in the context of alternate data sources.
4. Be able to critique survey findings as a survey consumer.

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

If consistent with university protocols, we will be meeting in-person for three hours weekly. During remote weeks, we will meet for 1 hour synchronously, and have videos or activities that you will complete asynchronously. In-person class time will be spent in a combination of lecture, whole-class discussion, small-group activities, and work time.

V. Course Readings

All required readings will be available on-line on the Canvas site or linked through it (depending on necessary permissions). We will be reading a variety of government statistical reports, discussions of surveys in the mainstream press or released by research organizations, and occasional articles from academic journals. I will try to make readings current whenever possible.

VI. Assignments:

- Three applications of the survey error framework to press/policy reports	12 pts *3 = 36
- One reflection on a reading from the survey methods literature	12 pts *1 = 12
- Two survey exercises (on survey design and estimates)	12 pts *2 = 24
- In-class activities and assignments	3 pts *8 = 24
- Class participation	4 pts = 4
	Total 100

Submitting assignments: Please submit assignments on-line using the course Canvas site.

Assignments listed in table below are due by Friday midnight Central Time during that week.

Late assignments lose one point per 12 hour delay. All assignment instructions will be available at least one week prior to the submission date.



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Week #	In-class / Assignments	Class Topics
1	Remote (1/11)	Syllabus; Introduction to surveys and survey error; Introductory questionnaire
2	Remote (1/18)	Research questions, Applying survey error lens to analyses
	Assignment (1/21)	Application of survey error framework #1
3	In-person class (1/25)	Survey error framework; Sample frame building
	Assignment (1/28)	Survey exercise #1
4	In-person class (2/1)	Sample selection; Modes of data collection
5	In-person class (2/8)	Data collection costs; Response rates
	Assignment (2/11)	Reflection on survey methods reading
6	In-person class (2/15)	Questionnaire design
	Assignment (2/18)	Application of survey error framework #2
7	In-person class (2/22)	Coding; Data file construction and documentation
	Assignment (2/25)	Survey exercise #2
8	In-class (3/1)	Analysis and interpretation; Total Survey Error
9	In-class (3/8)	Applying the survey error framework to non-survey data
	Assignment (3/11)	Application of survey error framework #3

VII. Grading Standards and Criteria

a. Grading scale:

Course grade	Points earned
A	95 or higher
A-	90-94.9
B+	85-89.9



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B	80-84.9
B-	75-80
Other grades as appropriate	74.9 or lower

- b. To earn a passing grade, students taking the course pass/fail must: complete and submit all out-of-class assignments; miss no more than two in-class assignments; and earn passing grades on the three applications of the survey error framework and two survey exercises.
- c. Re-grade request procedures. I will re-grade up to two assignments per student, and students may request to resubmit up to two assignments. Resubmissions can earn back up to 50% of originally lost points (e.g., an original 6 out of 10 can earn maximum 8 of 10 on resubmission).
- d. Please direct questions about materials and assignments that have already been distributed or posted to our TAs. Technical assistance type questions also go to the TA. Other questions can go to Rupa directly.

VIII. Policies

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:

They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.

They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.

Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.

Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.

IX. Resources available to students

The University has long offered a comprehensive set of student support services (described [here](#)), including [student health services](#). And in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions, the University has provided links for students via its “Learning Remotely” [website](#); specific resources are listed [here](#).

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, remote counseling services are available. Student Counseling Service (SCS) urges you to attend to your mental wellbeing and to reach out to them for support during these challenging times. All SCS services are



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covered by the Student Life Fee, and there is no additional cost for students to access their services. See <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/student-counseling-service-spring-quarter-faq/>. Students seeking new services/resources can call 773.702.9800 during business hours (Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.) and ask to speak with a clinician. **Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling the SCS at 773.702.3625.**

Similarly, the Harris School itself provides both academic and non-academic support services for students. These resources are described (and links provided) via the Canvas site *Harris Student Handbook*, which all Harris instructors can access.

Academic Integrity

All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic Integrity and honesty. Among other things, this means that students shall not represent another’s work as their own, use un-allowed materials during exams, or otherwise gain unfair academic advantage.

- The University’s policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty are described [here](#). It is worth explicitly stating the University’s approach here: “It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another’s statements or ideas as one’s own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University’s disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously.”
- The Harris School’s policies are available in the *Harris Student Handbook* Canvas site.
 - The *Academic Honesty and Plagiarism* section expresses the main principles.
 - Harris’s specific procedures for handling suspected violations of these policies are available in the section *Harris Procedures for Allegations of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty* and are also re-produced as an Appendix to this document.
 - All students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University.
 - In the event of academic dishonesty, the student will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment in question and cannot earn higher than a B- in the course, regardless of their performance on other assignments and exams. At the instructors’ discretion, the student may receive a failing grade for the course regardless of their performance on elements of the course.

Disability Accommodations

The University’s policies regarding students with disabilities are available [here](#). Students who have disability accommodations awarded by the University Student Disability Services Office should inform the Harris Dean of Students office by the end of the first week of class. The Harris Dean of Students Office will work with the student and instructor to coordinate the students’ accommodations implementation.



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Harris students are not required to submit their accommodations letter to the instructor. Students from other divisions in the University must submit their accommodations letter to either the instructor or the Harris Dean of Students Office.

Students who do not yet have formal accommodations in place but who feel they need accommodations on a temporary or ongoing basis should contact the Harris Dean of Students Office or Student Disability Services.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Harris School welcomes, values, and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we believe that rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions. The University and the Harris School have developed distinct but overlapping principles and guidelines to insure that we remain a place where difficult issues are discussed with kindness and respect for all.

- The University’s policies are available [here](#). Specifically, the University identifies the freedom of expression as being “vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge, as is the right of all members of the community to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited and open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchanges and participate fully in the life of the University.”
- The Harris School’s commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available [here](#): “Consistent with the University of Chicago’s commitment to open discourse and free expression, Harris encourages members of the leadership, faculty, student body, and administrative staff to respect and engage with others of differing backgrounds or perspectives, even when the ideas or insights shared may be viewed as unpopular or controversial.” We foster thought-provoking discourse by encouraging community members not only to speak freely about all issues but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others.

X. COVID-related syllabus supplement. Teaching and learning in person, dual-modality, and/or remote environments

This course is planned as an in-person experience, and students are expected to attend class at the Keller Center, with some exceptions as discussed below. Our practices and expectations include the following:

- We will use seating charts to facilitate any needed contact tracing. During each week of class, I will pass around a sign-in sheet during each class meeting. On the sign-in sheet, please write your name next to your seat number.
- Students must wear masks properly—covering both nose and mouth—at all times while in the classroom. Students who fail to comply will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students and [UCAIR](#), the University’s incident reporting system for COVID-19 safety matters.
- We ask that students not eat or drink during class.



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- Please display your name tent every class so that I can more easily call on you by name.
- Because instructors, too, must comply with University teaching protocols, I will wear a face mask while in the classroom.

That said, of course, public health and/or personal health circumstances vary across individual members of the University community and may change abruptly with limited notice. Students, TA's, and instructors may need to participate remotely for a short time or, in some limited instances, for the entire quarter. To guide expectations and plans, please note the following:

- **If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or are required to isolate, do not come to class!**
 - As soon as possible, contact me or the TA by email if you cannot attend class for this reason. You should not send me medical information / doctors' notes or the results of any COVID-19 test.
 - Students are expected to abide by the University's [COVID-19 health requirements](#) AND its specific [Protocol for Addressing Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Exposures](#). Note that the Protocol, which addresses self-monitoring, testing, and isolating requirements, represents evolving guidance and is subject to change.
 - Any member of the University community who tests positive for COVID-19 should inform the University contact tracing team at C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu.
 - Students missing class for short spells during the term are encouraged to watch class on Zoom either live or via recordings of class sessions, and otherwise participate in class as fully as possible, health permitting.
- **A limited number of students may have permission to participate remotely for the entire quarter.**
 - The Harris Dean of Students Office makes these determinations and informs instructors of enrolled students with permission.
 - Enrolled students with remote status are encouraged to participate in class via live streaming, watch Zoom recordings of class sessions, and otherwise participate in class as fully as possible, health permitting. We may use dual-modal instructional technology to facilitate class participation of students with remote status.
- **If I find that I cannot teach in person at some point during the term, I will communicate this as soon as possible to all the relevant stakeholders, including students!**
 - Health permitting, I will teach remotely via Zoom on such occasions.
 - Students can attend class in the Keller Center but would participate via Zoom on such days. Students can also attend remotely from home (or any other location that is devoid of distractions).
 - I will be in touch with the TA, HSIT, and ASA to make sure things work smoothly.