

The Harris School at the University of Chicago
Survey Research Methodology and Analysis PP41600
Winter Quarter 2023 (revised 12/18/22) –DRAFT

Meeting Days: Tuesdays

Meeting Time: 3:30-6:20 PM

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 4-6pm other than Tuesdays is often a good time

Teaching Assistants: TBD

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.
5. Note: this class is not a hands-on practicum for conducting surveys. Nor is it a course in statistical or econometric analysis.

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

We will be meeting in-person for three hours weekly. In-person class time will be spent in a combination of lecture, whole-class discussion, small-group activities, and work time.

Assignments:

- One application of the survey error framework (3pp)	10 pts *1 = 10
- One reflection on a reading from the survey methods literature (2pp)	10 pts *1 = 10
- Six survey exercises (on survey design and estimates)	10 pts *6= 60
- In-class activities and assignments	2 pts *8 = 16
- Class participation	4 pts *1 = 4
	Total 100

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

IV. 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 research reports and journal articles, data file documentation, articles from the mainstream press, and other gray literature.

V. Grading Standards and Criteria

a. Grading scale:

Course grade	Points earned out of 100 total
A	95 or higher
A-	90-94.9
B+	85-89.9
B	80-84.9
B-	75-80
Other grades as appropriate	74.9 or lower

To earn a passing grade, students taking the course pass/fail must: complete and earn passing grades on all out-of-class assignments; and miss no more than two in-class assignments.

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).

VI. Course Outline

Week #	Class Date	Class topics	Assignments
1	Jan 3	No Class: Watch posted video on syllabus	Readings
2	Jan 10	Research questions, Applying survey error lens to analyses In-class activity	(Jan 13) Survey Exercise: Review a methodology report and answer exploration questions
3	Jan 17	Survey error framework; Sample frame building In-class activity	(Jan 20) Survey Exercise: Frame building activity
4	Jan 24	Sample selection; Data collection – estimating costs In-class activity	(Jan 27) Survey Exercise: Sample selection
5	Jan 31	Data collection – assessing bias; Questionnaire design In-class activity	(Feb 3) Survey Exercise: Assessing costs and bias in data collection
6	Feb 7	Coding; Data file construction and documentation; In-class activity	(Feb 10) Survey Exercise: Questionnaire design
7	Feb 14	Analysis and interpretation; Ethics and disclosure In-class activity	(Feb 17) Application of survey error framework
8	Feb 21	Total survey error; Non-survey data In-class activity	(Feb 24) Reflection on a reading from the survey methods literature
9	Feb 28	Applying the survey error framework to non-survey data; Employment opportunities in survey research	(March 6) Survey Exercise: Survey design