



Introduction to Survey Methods in Political Science

GVPT429I Spring 2023

Syllabus v2.0

Tu & Th 3:30 pm-4:45 pm Tydings 2102

Instructor: Sean Rao

seanrao@umd.edu

Office Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays

4:45--5:45 pm

Or by appointment

Tydings 1140D or Zoom

Learning Outcomes:

1. Design survey questionnaires to answer research questions
2. Interpret, analyze, and communicate survey results
3. Understand common problems in survey sampling
4. Apply ethical standards to survey research
5. Understand how survey research informs debates in the academic study of politics

"That ain't the way I heard it!"

–President Harry Truman, in response to the *Chicago Tribune* wrongly reporting his loss in the 1948 presidential election based on inaccurate polls.

How can systematically asking questions accurately describe political views and behaviors?"

What **is** a survey? How do political scientists know that respondents will answer a question as expected, especially on sensitive topics? How can survey responses be interpreted? Do survey results accurately describe the whole population in which the researchers are interested? How is survey research shaping debates in political science? What ethical responsibilities do political scientists have in survey research, especially to respondents?

We will study common approaches to these questions and apply them to current events and debates in political science. **We will thoroughly practice these approaches as we design, field, and analyze our own survey questions.** We begin with the study of questions, then sampling, then common problems, and finally of relevant debates in political science.

****READ THIS!****

UNIVERSITY COURSE RELATED POLICIES

Attendance, Academic Integrity, etc.

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Other than the university policies linked above, this course or GVPT may differ from other courses or departments you may be taking (see below). Please come ask me if you have questions about any policies.

Course Requirements & Policies

SEE DETAILED Information on ELMS>Assignments
1000 points (100%)

Research Paper 400 points total (40%):

Research Question and Proposal 100 points (10%)

Final Presentation 100 points (10%)

Final Paper 200 points (20%)

Quizzes 160 points total (16%)

40 points each (4%)

(2 pop quizzes, 1 midterm quiz, and 1 final quiz)

Small Presentations 80 points total (8%)

40 points each (4%)

Small Assignments 200 points total (20%)

Class Participation 160 points total (16%)

Absences: Please let me know in the first week if you know you will miss a discussion for religious observances, military service, or other obligations. Please let me know about other absences as soon as possible. You need documentation if you will miss more than two classes.

Accommodations: If you need accommodation of any sort—learning support and other challenges—please communicate these as soon as possible. Please give me any ADS forms you may have within the first week so that I can assist you properly.

Expectations: Cheating of any sort is unacceptable. Suspected cases of plagiarism or cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. See <https://studentconduct.umd.edu/refer>

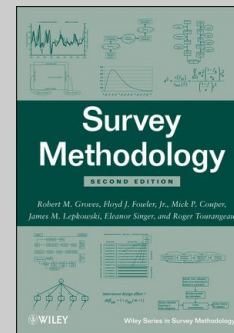
Check your UMD email daily and be sure to receive ELMS updates as changes to course assignments, class cancellation and other announcements will be done through both ELMS and email.

You are responsible for knowing all policies. All required reading must be done before the date which is it assigned to get full participation points.

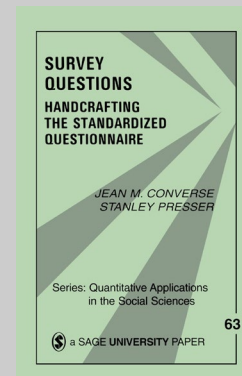
Due Dates: Pay careful attention to due dates and times. Work will be graded down by a whole letter

Readings & Resources

Course Material: Two Required Books



Groves et al. 2009 *Survey Methodology, Second Edition*. Wiley.



Converse, Jean M., and Stanley Presser. 1986. *Survey Questions*. Sage.

Other readings will be offered on ELMS (elms.umd.edu) under the files or course reserves sections. Please check **both** of these!

grade (or 10 percent) once it is 24 hours late and another letter grade (or 10 percent) for each additional day (24-hour period), not counting Saturday and Sunday, which it is late unless you have suffered an emergency. I may grant extensions **before the due date** with a reasonable excuse. If you think you may have trouble meeting a due date, please contact me as soon as possible. Readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned. Show me you read this by emailing me any article about election polls by our 2nd class for extra credit.

Grading Scale

The Letter Grade Is...	Above this Percentage of Points...	And under this Percentage of Points
A+	97	100 or more
A	93	97
A-	90	93
B+	87	90
B	83	87
B-	80	83
C+	77	80
C	73	77
C-	70	73
D+	67	70
D	63	67
D-	60	63
F	0	60

If you are concerned about your grade, please contact me or visit my office hours as soon as possible. If you do not do as well on earlier assignments, you still have a good chance of earning a good final grade for the course but only if you make changes and clarify anything which is confusing as soon as possible. You are always welcome to reach out to me, but it is harder to help you if you wait until the end of the class.



Check out tutoring.umd.edu to learn more about campus resources. Get help with writing at english.umd.edu/writing-programs/writing-center. Subject matter librarians are eager to assist you in person or online at lib.umd.edu/research/subject-specialist.

A general resource is go.umd.edu/assistance.

Weekly Course Layout

Our schedule may change depending on our pace and the timing of the fielding of our survey, but most weeks will follow a similar schedule of activities.

Participation in class will count for 200 points (20% of your final grade). To get full points, read all the readings up to that day. Put your full attention into all activities which we do during class.

Tuesday	<p>Class 3:30-4:45 pm <i>Tydings 2102</i></p> <p>On Tuesdays, we will discuss in depth several key concepts for the week.</p>
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Tuesday	<p>Office Hour 4:45-5:45 pm <i>Tydings 1140D</i></p>
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Thursday	<p>Class 3:30-4:45 pm <i>Tydings 2102</i></p> <p>Thursdays will often feature short student presentations analyzing a survey and in-class activities to help practice skills of survey design.</p>
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Thursday	<p>Office Hour 4:45-5:45 pm <i>Tydings 1140D</i></p>
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Everyone faces challenges at some point—and we have people who want to help you at counseling.umd.edu or tltc.umd.edu/instructors/teaching-topics/supporting-whole-student Almost all of this is free.

And of course.... you are welcome to see me.

Semester Course Schedule

Readings and schedule may change. Please watch for updates. The latest version is on ELMS.

<u>Week #</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>
1	January 25	Topic	No Class	Introduction, Background, Recent Events
		Readings		<p>1. Marks, Rachel, and Merarys Rios-Vargas. 2021, August 3. "Improvements to the 2020 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Question Designs, Data Processing, and Coding Procedures." US Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2021/08/improvements-to-2020-census-race-hispanic-origin-question-designs.html</p> <p>2. Silver, Nate, and Galen Druke. 2022, November 9. "Politics Podcast: The Red Wave Didn't Happen." FiveThirtyEight https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-the-red-wave-didnt-happen/</p> <p>(You only need to listen to the part between 11:49 and 14:01.)</p>
		Assignments		
2	January 31-February 2	Topic	Introduction to Survey Research	Topic Brainstorm
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 1	Powner, Leanne C. 2014. <i>Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide</i> . Washington, DC: CQ Press. p. 6-10
		Assignments		
3	February 7-9	Topic	Inference and Sources of Error	Inference and Sources of Error
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 2	Yakter, Alon, and Mark Tessler. 2022. "The Long-Term Electoral Implications of Conflict Escalation: Doubtful Doves and the Breakdown of Israel's Left-Right Dichotomy." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> .
		Assignments		
4	February 14-16	Topic	Introduction to Question Writing	Question Writing Techniques
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 7	Converse and Presser (entire book)
		Assignments		

5	February 21-23	Topic	Question Drafting and Data Analysis	Types of Questions, Experiments
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 10 (Sections 10.1-10.2, p. 329-344 and Section 8, p. 363-365)	Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." <i>Political Analysis</i> 15: 1-20.
		Assignments		
6	February 28-March 2	Topic	Question Evaluation	Question Brainstorm I
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 8	None
		Assignments		
7	March 7-9	Topic	Question Brainstorm II	Question Brainstorm III
		Readings	None	None
		Assignments		
8	March 14-16	Topic	Sampling I	Midterm Quiz
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 3	None
		Assignments		In-Class Quiz
9	March 21-23	Topic	Spring Break	
		Readings		
		Assignments		
10	March 28-30	Topic	Class Cancelled	Sampling II
		Readings		1. Groves et al., Chapter 4 (part) 2. Groves et al., Chapter Ch 10 (Section 10.5, p. 347-354, and Section 10.7, p. 359-363)
		Assignments		
11	April 4-6	Topic	Probability vs. Nonprobability Samples	IRB and Ethical Standards
		Readings	1. Rivers, Douglas. 2007. "Sampling for Web Surveys." https://static.texastribune.org/media/documents/Rivers_matching4.pdf 2. MacInnis, Bo, Jon A. Krosnick, Annabell S. Ho, and Mu-Jung Cho. 2018. "The Accuracy of Measurements with Probability and Nonprobability Survey Samples: Replication and Extension." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 82(4): 707-744.	1. Groves et al., Chapter 11 2. Converse and Presser, p. 63-5
		Assignments		Data Practice Assignment 1 due on ELMS by 11:59 pm (Or email an attachment to seanrao@umd.edu)

12	April 11-13	Topic	Nonresponse I	Nonresponse II
		Readings	Groves et al., Chapter 6 (Entire), Chapter 10 (Section 10.6, p. 354-359)	Robert M. Groves. 2006. "Nonresponse Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Household Surveys." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> , 70(5):646–675. Research Paper Question and Proposal Due 11:59 PM on ELMS (or emailed as an attachment to seanrao@umd.edu)
13	April 18-20	Topic	Sensitive Questions and Misreporting	Data Analysis
		Readings	1. Tourangeau, Roger, and Ting Yan. 2007. "Sensitive Questions in Surveys." <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> . 133(5):859-883. 2. Oliveros, Virginia. 2016, April. "Making it Personal: Clientelism, Favors, and the Personalization of Public Administration in Argentina." <i>Comparative Politics</i> 48 (3): 373-391.	TBD
14	April 25-27	Topic	Current Issues: Elections	Current Issues: Conflict
		Readings	Silver, Nate. 2018, May 30. "The Polls Are All Right." <i>FiveThirtyEight</i> . https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-polls-are-all-right/	Shaver, Andrew, and Yang-Yang Zhou. 2015, January 7. "How to Make Surveys in War Zones Better and Why This Is Important." <i>Washington Post</i> Data Practice Assignment 2 due on ELMS by 11:59 pm (Or email an attachment to seanrao@umd.edu)
15	May 2-4	Topic	Current Issues: Surveys in Nondemocracies	Final Quiz
		Readings	1. Gengler, Justin. 2017, October 27. "The Dangers of Unscientific Surveys in the Arab World." <i>Monkey Cage</i> . <i>Washington Post</i> . 2. Pollock, David. 2017, November 16. "Survey Research in the Middle East Needs to Be Transparent. Here's Why." <i>Monkey Cage</i> . <i>Washington Post</i> .	None In-Class Quiz

		Topic	Presentation and Final Paper Workshop	Presentations
16	May 9-11	Readings	<p>1. Smith, David T., and Rob Salmond. 2011. "Verbal Sticks and Rhetorical Stones: Improving Conference Presentations in Political Science." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>: 583-588. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096511000825</p> <p>2. Salmond, Rob, and David T. Smith. 2011. "Cheating Death-by-PowerPoint: Effective Use of Visual Aids at Professional Conferences." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>: 589-596. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096511000813</p>	None
		Assignments		Final Presentations in Class
		Topic	Final	
17	May 19	Assignments	<p>1. <u>Final Paper Due</u></p> <p>2. Knowledge Survey (graded for completion)</p> <p>Due on ELMS by 11:59 pm on Friday, May 19. (Or email an attachment to seanrao@umd.edu)</p>	