Applied Survey Research for Political Scientists
MA Seminar, Summer 2023

Day, time: Fridays, 10:00 – 11:30
Location: S100, IBW building
(see below for some deviations!)

Instructor: Lea Kaftan
Witten/Herdecke University
University of Cologne
lea.kaftan@uni-wh.de
Office hours: Open request, offline or online

Syllabus as of: March 24, 2023

Course overview

Participants will be introduced to common research questions in the fields of polling and public opinion. They will learn the theoretical and technical basics for designing their own survey. To apply their newly acquired knowledge, participants will conduct their own short surveys together in groups and via a professional survey company. The results of the survey will be presented and discussed in term papers until the end of the summer term. After the course, participants will be able to implement their own surveys that address important questions regarding the public opinion of citizens in established liberal democracies. This knowledge is especially valuable for the social sciences, market research or polling firms.

Prerequisites

Participants should be able to read and discuss scientific articles in English. Perfection is neither expected nor required. Participants should also be familiar with basic statistical concepts such as Ordinary Least Square regressions and significance. Some preliminary knowledge of R will make it considerably easier to follow the course, but introductory material will be provided for self-study before the course starts. Furthermore, the willingness to participate in the sessions and to prepare the required readings are expected.

Assessment

Participants of the course will have to *present their research ideas* and *write a final term paper*. The term paper shall address a novel research question and an appropriate hypothesis embedded in a theoretical framework, outline a survey project to test the hypothesis and present and critically discuss the results from their own data collected during the course via a professional online sample provider. The presentation shall give participants the opportunity to get feedback from their peers as well as to get insights into other research projects by other participants. Group work on the presentation and term papers is encouraged. Depending on the number of participants, surveys will have to be conducted in groups due to financial resource limits. Surveys will be financed by the Chair for European and Multilevel Politics let by Prof. Sven-Oliver Proksch. Students will *not* be burdened financially during the course nor for their term paper.

The presentation of the research project is mandatory, but will not be graded. The final grade is solely based on the term paper and will take the cohesiveness of the research project, the survey

design and the presentation and discussion of the findings into account for grading. Further details, including submission dates, will be communicated during the course.

Course organization

Participants are expected to participate in the sessions and to *stick to the deadlines listed below* since otherwise, we will not be able to go into the field and collect our own data by the end of the course. Participants who cannot participate in all offline sessions due to health issues or work or family related responsibilities will still have the possibility to participate. In this case, please get in contact as soon as possible. Active participation is highly encouraged.

Additional course material

R Software
- Installation: https://rstudio-education.github.io/hopr/starting.html
- Reiche & Bogdanski, 2021: Analysing Quantitative Data with R, https://drfloreiche.github.io/association.html
- See also: https://cccp.uni-koeln.de/de/teaching/information-for-students/r-software-for-students-in-the-ma-political-science
- There are many tutorials online for single packages or types of analyses. Answers to specific questions are normally responded to on: stackoverflow.com.

Material on Surveys
- Atkeson, Lonna Rae, & Michael Alvarez. 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- David L. Vannette & Jon A. Krosnick. 2018. *The Palgrave Handbook of Survey Research*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wolf, Christoph, Dominique Joye, Tom W. Smith & Yang-chih Fu. 2016. *The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- LimeSurvey manual: https://manual.limesurvey.org/LimeSurvey_Manual

Any further information provided by the CCCP: https://cccp.uni-koeln.de/de/teaching/information-for-students

Deadlines
tba

If you have difficulties meeting the deadlines because of caring responsibilities for children or elders, due to illness or other important and unexpected events such as the death of a close person, please get in contact with me and we will find a solution.

Course schedule

Notes: Participants are expected to read and *prepare the required readings* before each session and *make notes* if they have questions. *Recommended readings* do not have to be prepared, but add further aspects to the required readings and will often-times be discussed during class.

7 April – Easter holiday, no session

Introduction

14 April, 10-11:30: Introduction
>   Recommended readings:
> - Vannette, David L. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2018. "Introduction". In David L. Vannette and Jon A. Krosnick (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Survey Research*. pp.xxi-xxiv.

Part I: Polling and public opinion research

Part I introduces the participants to common research questions regarding polling and public opinion. Participants shall not only *prepare the required readings*, but also *present a research proposal for their term paper on 12 May, 10 am*. The research proposal can be based on readings from this section, but can also go beyond the areas discussed.

21 April, 10-11:30: Why polls (sometimes) fail to predict elections
>   Required readings:
> - Pack, Mark. 2022. *Polling Unpacked*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd. Chapter 2: How Political Polls Work. (on Ilias)
> - Kennedy, Courtney et al. (2018). "An Evaluation of the 2016 Election Polls in the United States". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82(1): 1-33.
>   Recommended readings:
> - Stegmaier, Mary. 2022. "Forecasting German Elections". *PS: Political Science & Politics* 55(1): 64-68.

28 April, 10-11:30: Public Opinion Research I: Have Europeans grown tired of democracy?
>   Required readings:
> - Foa, Roberto Stefan, and Yascha Mounk. 2016. "The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Discontent." *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): 4-17.
> - Wuttke, Alexander, Konstantin Gavras, and Harald Schoen. 2022. "Have Europeans Grown Tired of Democracy? New Evidence from Eighteen Consolidated Democracies, 1981–2018." *British Journal of Political Science* 52(1): 416-28.

05 May, 10-11:30: Public Opinion Research II: What effect have campaigns on voters?
>   Required readings:
> - Goodwin, Matthew, Simon Hix, and Mark Pickup. 2018. "For and Against Brexit: A Survey Experiment of the Impact of Campaign Effects on Public Attitudes toward EU Membership". *British Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 481-495.

Part II: Introduction to survey design

In Part II, participants will learn the basics of survey design for political scientists and work together in groups on their own survey project. This is why participants must *prepare the required readings* and *have a final research question by 12 May, 10 am*. Furthermore, *applications for ethical consent must be submitted by 22 May,* and a *pre-analysis plan must be ready by May 26* to be able to go into the field in Part III of the course. Further information will be provided during the course. Participants also need to *have basic R skills by 9 June, 10 am*. For an introduction to R and tutorials, see the Additional course material section above. If help is needed, please get into contact as soon as possible.

12 May, 10-11:30: Presentations of your research ideas (obligatory!)

19 May, 10-11:30: Ethics and data protection
> Required readings:
> - Joe, Kathy, Finn Raben & Adam Phillips. 2016. "The Ethical Issues of Survey and Market Research" in Wolf, Christoph, Dominique Joye, Tom W. Smith & Yang-chih Fu (Eds.): *The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology*. no pages provided.
> - Have theory part of the pre-analysis plan prepared! - We start writing the questionnaire!

26 May, 10-11:30: Response biases
> Required readings:
> - Yuen, Samson, Gary Tamg. Francis L. F. Lee & Edmund W. Cheng. 2022. "Surveying Spontaneous Mass Protests: Mixed-mode Sampling and Field Methods". *Sociological Methodology* 52(2): 75-102.
> - Stefkovics, Ádám. 2022. "Are Scale Direction Effects the Same in Different Survey Modes? Comparison of a Face-to-Face, a Telephone, and an Online Survey Experiment". *Field Methods* 34(3): 206-222.

02 June: Pentecost, no session

09 June, 10-11:30: Survey experiments in R
> Required readings & preparations:
> - Berlinski et al., 2021. "The Effects of Unsubstantiated Claims of Voter Fraud on Confidence in Elections". *Journal of Experimental Political Science*: 1-16.
> - Learn basic R skills for data analysis (see above for tutorials etc.)

Part III: Hands on

In Part III, participants will finish their own questionnaire, program the survey themselves and go into the field. During Part III, the workload might be exceptionally, depending on the complexity of the research question you aim to address and the survey you want to conduct. Participants are expected to work on their project *during and outside course hours*. If help is needed, please see the material listed above and get in contact as soon as possible.

16 June, 10-11:30: Programming and pre-testing
    Required preparations:
    • Watch the following LimeSurvey tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yx6kSK6Ar4
    • Know your research question and hypothesis
    • Have your pre-analysis plan set up

16 June, 14-15:30, room: S103: Guest speaker: tba
    Required preparations: Think about potential questions you would like to ask the guest speaker.

23 June, 10-11:30: Going into the field
    Required preparations:
    • Have the final survey programmed in LimeSurvey
    • For final questions, you can find the LimeSurvey manual here:
      https://manual.limesurvey.org/LimeSurvey_Manual

30 June, no session

7 July, 16-17:30, room: S103: Analysing the data
    Required preparations: Download the data

Closure

14 July, 10-11:03: Final questions and feedback