

Syllabus: Surveys and Survey Experiments

Political Science AS.190.635 and AS.190.430
Johns Hopkins University
Spring 2026

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Class Time: Mondays 1:30pm-3:30pm
Classroom: Mergenthaler 366

What is this class about?

This course is a combined graduate-level / advanced undergraduate-level introduction to the uses of surveys in the social sciences, with examples primarily drawn from political science. We will examine when and why social scientists choose to use survey methods, discuss questionnaire design and sampling considerations, learn the basics of interpreting survey results, and cover the logic of survey experiments. Throughout, we will read and discuss substantive research that uses these methods, drawn roughly evenly from the subfields of American and comparative politics.

This course is a complement to (not a substitute for) statistical training. There is no statistical pre-requisite, and students may take the course as a stand-alone methods offering in order to improve their understanding of literature that uses survey methods. Students who wish to use survey methods in their own projects should also take separate courses on statistical methods, either before, after, or concurrently with this course.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically read and evaluate survey research in political science
- Understand the logic, uses, and limitations of survey experiments
- Place survey research in the broader context of political science methods

Reading materials

The assigned readings are listed below and will be made available through eReserves.

Assignments and grading

Participation (25%): participation in class discussions. This includes attendance, doing the readings before each class, asking questions about the readings, engaging with the instructor and other students, and connecting the readings to each other and to your area of substantive interest.

Discussion leadership (15%): Leading class discussion about one paper; this could be a paper assigned by the instructor or a paper of the student's own choice. Undergraduate students will be expected to do this exercise at least once during the term; graduate students will be expected to do it at least twice. The exact number of occurrences will depend on enrollment.

Reflection papers: (60%) The written component of this course consists of short (2-3 page double-space) reflection papers written throughout term, culminating in a longer (7-10 page double-spaced) paper at the end of term. The culminating paper can re-use material prepared for the prior short-form papers. Graduate students write all of the following six papers; undergraduate students choose any three. All papers are weighted the same (10% each for graduate students, 20% each for undergraduate students).

1. *Representativeness and questionnaire design:* A reflection paper critically evaluating Huddy et al (2015), from the perspective of representativeness and questionnaire design. Due by 10am on February 23rd.
2. *Open science:* A reflection paper identifying and critically evaluating a paper in your substantive area of interest, from the perspective of open science principles. More detailed instructions available in the course schedule, below. Due by midnight on March 9th.
3. *Survey experiment:* A reflection paper critically evaluating Carnes and Henderson (2025) from the perspective of experimental design. Due by 10am on March 23rd.
4. *Substantive contribution:* A reflection paper identifying and critically evaluating a paper in your area of interest, identifying the substantive contribution to the field and discussing the advantages and limitations of survey research in the context of this paper's research question. Due by midnight on April 6th.
5. *Mixed methods:* A reflection paper identifying and critically evaluating a paper in your substantive area of interest that uses survey data in connection with at least one other method, critically evaluating why two (or more) methods were used and what each method contributes to the research findings. Due by midnight on April 13th.
6. *Survey research in context:* A short (7-10 page double spaced) term paper that gives a brief literature review of survey research that is most pertinent to your area of substantive interest, identifies outstanding research questions, and discusses the advantages and limitations of survey research in this specific field. Due by midnight on April 27th.

Letter grades will be assigned based on the traditional scale (%):

100-97: A+

96-93: A

92-90: A-

89-87: B+

86-83: B

82-80: B-

79-77: C+

76-73: C

72-70: C-

69-67: D+

66-63: D

62-60: D-

59-0: F

Late submission policy

Late submissions have a penalty of one third of a letter grade (e.g. from B+ to B) per initiated 24hr period. No late submissions are accepted more than a week after the deadline, unless special arrangements have been made in advance (due to health conditions and other emergencies).

Office hours and communication

I hold office hours on Tuesdays, 2:30pm-4:30pm in Mergenthaler 359 or on zoom. Please use the sign-up sheet here: <https://calendly.com/kstrump/office-hours>. Other times are available by appointment; email me to set something up.

You can also reach out to me with a question over e-mail. Please note, I do not use e-mail as an instant messaging system. I aim to respond within 24 hours during the workweek, and messages sent over the weekend will need to wait until Monday.

Classroom expectations

You are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared. Cell phones must be on completely silent mode, put away, and not used at all during class. Laptop use is not allowed except for documented needs.

Course schedule:

January 26.

SNOW DAY

February 2.

The Basics: Reading and interpreting survey research

Pew Research Center, “Public Opinion Polling Basics” (all six lessons)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/course/public-opinion-polling-basics/>

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, and Anthony Fowler. 2021. “Correlation Requires Variation”. Ch. 4 in *Thinking Clearly with Data*. Princeton University Press.

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, and Anthony Fowler. 2021. “Samples, Uncertainty, and Statistical Inference” Ch. 6 in *Thinking Clearly with Data*. Princeton University Press.

Weisberg, Herbert F. 2018. “Total Survey Error”. Ch. 1 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. “Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76: 405–31.

February 9

Opinions. Classical and new perspectives on what we are measuring with surveys

Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited by David. E. Apter, 206–61. New York: The Free Press. Please read these sections: I. Some clarification of terms. III. Active use of ideological dimensions of judgment. Have a look at all tables and figures.

Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 (“Receive Accept Sample model”)

Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. “A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences.” *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 579. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111583>.

Graham, Matthew H. 2024. “Techniques for Measuring Political Beliefs.” Chapter prepared for inclusion in *The Oxford Handbook of the Cognitive Science of Belief*. Pre-print available online at: https://m-graham.com/papers/Graham_BeliefTechniques.pdf

February 16

Questions. How should we write, ask, and analyze survey questions?

Oberski, Daniel L. 2018. “Questionnaire Science” Ch. 6 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

“Leading Questions”. Video clip from the (very old) comedy series “Yes, Prime Minister”. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0ZZJXw4MTA> (Things to know before you watch: “National Service” in the UK refers to compulsory military service, Neville Chamberlain was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom when World War II broke out.)

IPSOS “Yes Prime Minister, Questionnaire Design Matters” February 2024. Available online at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/yes-prime-minister-questionnaire-design-matters>

Leeper, Thomas J., and Emily A. Thorson. 2019. “Should We Worry About Sponsorship-Induced Bias in Online Political Science Surveys?” *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2019.25>.

Adida, Claire L., Karen E. Ferree, Daniel N. Posner, and Amanda Lea Robinson. 2016. “Who’s Asking? Interviewer Coethnicity Effects in African Survey Data.” *Comparative Political Studies* 49 (12): 1630–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414016633487>.

Archer, Allison M N, and Scott Clifford. 2022. “Improving the Measurement of Hostile Sexism.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 86 (2): 223–46. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfac015>.

February 23

Samples. Who responds to surveys and how does it matter?

Reflection paper 1 due by 10am

Ansolabehere, Stephen and Brian Schaffner. 2018. "Taking the Study of Political Behavior Online" Ch. 4 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Berinsky, Adam J, Alejandro Frydman, Michele F Margolis, Michael W Sances, and Diana Camilla Valerio. "Measuring Attentiveness in Self-Administered Surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, March 28, 2024, nfae004. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfae004>.

Stagnaro, Michael Nicholas, James Druckman, Adam Berinsky, Antonio Alonso Arechar, Robb Willer, and David Rand. *Representativeness Versus Attentiveness: A Comparison Across Nine Online Survey Samples*. OSF, February 22, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/h9j2d>.

Cavari, Amnon, and Guy Freedman. 2022. "Survey Nonresponse and Mass Polarization: The Consequences of Declining Contact and Cooperation Rates." *American Political Science Review*, May 2, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000399>.

Paper for student-led discussion and reflection papers:

*Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000604>.

March 2

Survey experiments – the logic

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, and Anthony Fowler. 2021. "Causation: What Is It and What Is It Good For?" Ch. 3 in *Thinking Clearly with Data*. Princeton University Press.

Krupnikov, Yanna and Blake Findley. 2018. "Survey Experiments" Ch. 21 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Coppock, Alexander, Kimberly Gross, Ethan Porter, Emily Thorson, and Thomas J. Wood. 2023. "Conceptual Replication of Four Key Findings about Factual Corrections and Misinformation during the 2020 US Election: Evidence from Panel-Survey Experiments." *British Journal of Political Science* 53 (4): 1328–41. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123422000631>.

Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2015. "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 529–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12138>.

Paper for student-led discussion:

*Aarøe, Lene, and Michael Bang Petersen. 2014. "Crowding Out Culture: Scandinavians and Americans Agree on Social Welfare in the Face of Deservingness Cues." *The Journal of Politics* 76 (3): 684–97. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161400019X>.

March 9

NO CLASS.

Reflection paper 2 due by midnight (more detail below)

Simmons, J. P., L. D. Nelson, and U. Simonsohn. 2011. "False-Positive Psychology: Undisclosed Flexibility in Data Collection and Analysis Allows Presenting Anything as Significant." *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611417632>.

"Replication Crisis - The Decision Lab." Accessed December 5, 2025.
<https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/psychology/replication-crisis>.

Monogan, James E. 2015. "Research Preregistration in Political Science: The Case, Counterarguments, and a Response to Critiques." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48 (3): 425–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096515000189>.

Franco, Annie, Neil Malhotra, and Gabor Simonovits. 2014. "Publication Bias in the Social Sciences: Unlocking the File Drawer." *Science* 345 (6203): 1502–5.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1255484>.

Assignment:

- Locate a quantitative survey study with an experimental element, published in or after 2018, which is in (or as close as you can get to) your area of substantive interest. Try not to change the paper based on the responses to the questions below; choose a paper based on your substantive interest and then stick with it.
- Was this study pre-registered? If yes, locate the pre-registration. Does the published study faithfully follow the pre-registration?

- Is the survey questionnaire, including the full contents of the experimental treatment, available online? Locate it, and evaluate its internal and external validity.
- Are the replication materials available online? If yes, access them. Are they clearly labelled and easy to locate? [If you have quantitative training: try to run the code. Did it reproduce the findings?]
- Now, critically evaluate the study methodology from a transparency and replicability perspective. Are there potential concerns? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this study, given what you now know about replication and publication bias? Why do you think the authors made the choices they did regarding pre-registration and replication materials?

SPRING BREAK

March 23

Survey experiments – validity and design considerations

Reflection paper 3 due by 10am

Huber, Greg, and Matthew H. Graham. 2025. “Designing Survey Experiments.” In *Handbook of Experimental Methodology*, vol. 1. no. 1. North-Holland.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.hbem.2025.09.006>.

Mullinix, Kevin J, Thomas J Leeper, and James N Druckman. 2015. “The Generalizability of Survey Experiments.” *The Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2 (2): 109–38.

Kane, John V. “More than Meets the ITT: A Guide for Anticipating and Investigating Nonsignificant Results in Survey Experiments.” *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2025): 110–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2024.1>

Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2015. “Validating Vignette and Conjoint Survey Experiments against Real-World Behavior.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112 (8): 2395–400.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1416587112>.

Paper for student-led discussion and reflection papers:

*Carnes, Nicholas, and Geoffrey L. Henderson. 2025. “Not Getting the Message on Climate? Attention as a Key Barrier to Mass-Marketing Experimentally-Validated Messages.”

British Journal of Political Science 55 (January): e106.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S000712342510063X>.

March 30

Longitudinal surveys

Hillygus, D. Sunshine, and Steven A. Snell 2018. “Longitudinal Surveys” Ch. 2 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Sides, John, Lynn Vavreck and Michael Tesler. “Hiding in Plain Sight”. *Identity Crisis*. 2018. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5.

Gidron, Noam, Yotam Margalit, Lior Sheffer, and Itamar Yakir. 2025. “Why Masses Support Democratic Backsliding.” Forthcoming in *American Journal of Political Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12958>.

Consiglio, Valentina, and Thomas Kurer. 2025. “Seeking Opportunity in the Knowledge Economy: Moving Places, Moving Politics?” *British Journal of Political Science* 55 (January): e141. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123425100677>.

*Paper for student-led discussion: STUDENT CHOICE, TBD

April 6

Cross-national surveys

Reflection paper 4 due by midnight

Karp, Jeffrey A. and Jack Vowles 2018. “Cross-National Surveys and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems” Ch. 18 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Almond, Gabriel A, and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press. Read pp. 43-61 and Ch.15 (pp.473-505)

Inglehart, Ronald. 1988. “The Renaissance of Political Culture.” *The American Political Science Review* 82 (4): 1203–30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961756>.

Margalit, Yotam, Shir Raviv, and Omer Solodoch. 2025. "The Cultural Origins of Populism." *The Journal of Politics* 87 (2): 393–410. <https://doi.org/10.1086/732985>.

*Paper for student-led discussion: STUDENT CHOICE, TBD

April 13

Combining surveys with qualitative data

Reflection paper 5 due by midnight

Gimbel, Kinsey, and Jocelyn Newsome. 2018. "Using Qualitative Methods in a Quantitative Survey Research Agenda" Ch. 21 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Thachil, Tariq. 2018. "Improving Surveys Through Ethnography: Insights from India's Urban Periphery." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 53 (3): 281–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-018-9272-3>.

Larson, Jennifer M., and Janet I. Lewis. 2020. "Measuring Networks in the Field." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8 (1): 123–35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2019.5>.

Thorson, Emily. 2024. *The Invented State: Policy Misperceptions in the American Public*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512326.001.0001>. Read Chapters 1 and 2.

*Paper for student-led discussion: STUDENT CHOICE, TBD

April 20

Hard to reach populations

Adhikari, Prakash, and Lisa A. Bryant. 2018. "Sampling Hard-to-Locate Populations" Ch. 8 in *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods*, edited by Lonna Rae Atkinson and R. Michael Alvarez.

Lupu, Noam, and Leonid Peisakhin. "The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 4 (2017): 836–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12327>.

Thachil, Tariq. 2017. "Do Rural Migrants Divide Ethnically in the City? Evidence from an Ethnographic Experiment in India." *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (4): 908–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12315>.

Page, Benjamin I., Larry M. Bartels, and Jason Seawright. "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 01 (2013): 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271200360X>.

*Paper for student-led discussion: STUDENT CHOICE, TBD

April 27

Adapting to and incorporating social, political, and institutional context

Reflection paper 6 due by midnight

Larson, Jennifer M., and Janet I. Lewis. 2017. "Ethnic Networks." *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (2): 350–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12282>.

Kasara, Kimuli. 2013. "Separate and Suspicious: Local Social and Political Context and Ethnic Tolerance in Kenya." *The Journal of Politics* 75 (4): 921–36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613000777>.

Kasara, Kimuli, and Pavithra Suryanarayan. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality across the World." *American Journal of Political Science* 59, no. 3 (2015): 613–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12134>.

Kim, Eunji, and Shawn Patterson Jr. 2024. "The American Viewer: Political Consequences of Entertainment Media." *American Political Science Review*, August 2, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424000728>.

*Paper for student-led discussion: STUDENT CHOICE, TBD