GOVT 2169/COMM 2179: Survey Data in the Information Age

<u>Meeting time</u>: Mondays & Wednesdays 2:55-4:10pm. Baker Laboratory 200

<u>Instructors</u>:

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Course description

Data about people's attitudes and behavior play a fundamental role in science, business, and political life. This engaged learning course will introduce students to survey data and its functions in modern society at the macro and community levels through interactions with local and national businesses and organizations that rely on survey data to meet their organizational goals. Students will learn the fundamentals of how data are collected and used in non-profit and for-profit contexts, how to avoid being misled by data, about traditional and recently developed methodologies, and what experts think about the future of surveys and data analytics. This is a 3-credit course and is open to all students; there are no prerequisites.[1] Guest speakers will include prominent experts from various sectors of society who will share their unique perspectives on survey analytics. We will hold receptions throughout the semester to allow students to engage professionally with the visiting speakers. Students completing this class will also receive priority when registering for GOVT/COMM 3189: Taking America's Pulse: Creating and Conducting a National Opinion Poll (next offered Fall 2020).

Why guest speakers?

As an engaged learning course supported by the Office of Engagement Initiatives, this course will have a strong emphasis on understanding how survey data are used in a range of professional settings, including within for-profit and non-profit community organizations. Related to this, it will have a strong emphasis on providing professional development opportunities for our students. To those ends, most weeks we will feature prominent guest speakers who will discuss how they or their organizations use survey data to accomplish strategic goals. We will also host receptions for each of the guest speakers immediately following their visit to the course, to allow additional opportunities for our students to interact with, and learn from, leading professionals in the fields of survey research and data analytics.

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[1] Government majors can count one 3-credit course toward the major (Section III on the Government Major Checklist).

Student learning objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1) Identify common applications of survey data across various sectors of U.S. society
2) Apply insights from public opinion data to advance strategic goals of non-profit and for-profit organizations
3) Articulate ways in which traditional survey research methods converge and diverge with attitudinal and behavioral data generated by new and emerging technologies

Class Schedule

Readings and assignments may change or be added throughout the semester.

WEEK 1

1.) Wed. 1/22: Welcome and Introduction to Survey Data

WEEK 2

2.) Mon. 1/27: **Sampling Theory and Engaged Communities**

Reading: Chapter 4 "Sampling" (p.93-115) of *How to Conduct Surveys* (available on Canvas)

Assignment: Surveys are everywhere! Find a survey & upload it or a picture of it to Canvas.

3.) Wed. 1/29: **Probability-Based Methods**

Reading: Enns et al. 2019. "What Percentage of Americans Have Ever Had a Family Member Incarcerated?: Evidence from the Family History of Incarceration Survey (FamHIS)." *Socius* Vol.5 https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119829332.

"Short" Assignment: Watch this 2.5 minute video: https://youtu.be/sonXfzE1hvo. Answer the following questions (bring your answers to class to turn in): a) What do you think is helpful about this analogy? b) What is a potential problem with the analogy? c) What would be a better analogy?

WEEK 3

4.) Mon. 2/3: **Non-Probability Methods**

Reading: Kennedy, Mercer, Keeter, Hatley, McGeeney, and Gimenez. 2016. "Evaluating Online Nonprobability Surveys" *Pew Research Center* (https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2016/05/02/evaluating-online-nonprobability-surveys/).

Leonhardt, David. 2019. "How Kamala Harris Can Make a Comeback." *New York Times*. (https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/15/opinion/kamala-harris.html).

Colvin, Geoff. 2020. "Understanding the 2020 election as brand marketing." *Fortune.* (https://fortune.com/2020/01/21/2020-election-brand-marketing-candidates-trump-democrats/).

Yokley, Eli. 2020 "How Voters Grade Trump, Three Years Into His Presidency." *Morning Consult.* (https://morningconsult.com/2020/01/21/how-voters-grade-trump-three-years-into-his-presidency/).

2020. "Emirates tops the 2019 YouGov BrandIndex Buzz Rankings in the UAE for the third time." AMEinfo (https://www.ameinfo.com/industry/media/emirates-tops-the-2019-yougov-brandindex-buzz-rankings-in-the-uae-for-the-third-time).

"Short" Assignment: What are your goals for the receptions with visiting speakers? List a) The three speakers with whom you hope to attend a reception, b) Why you chose these three, and c) Two very specific and observable goals for the first reception.

5.) Wed. 2/5: **Jenny Benz** (Principal Research Scientist & Deputy Director of The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research)

Reading: Bio page: https://www.norc.org/Experts/Pages/jennifer-benz.aspx

Americans' Views of Healthcare Costs, Coverage, and Policy. 2018. Westhealth institute & NORC Issue Brief. (https://www.norc.org/PDFs/WHI%20Healthcare%20Costs%20Coverage%20and%20Policy/WHI%20Healthcare%20Costs%20Coverage%20and%20Policy%20Issue%20Brief.pdf).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Jenny Benz. For question ideas, review her bio page (link above), NORC's website, and readings/topics from the previous classes. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: 4:15-5:00pm, Clark 701

WEEK 4

6.) Mon. 2/10: **David Rothschild** (Economist, Microsoft Research; Founder, PredictWise)

Reading: Bio page: https://researchdmr.com/

PredictWise overview: http://predictwise.com/about/

PredictWise Markets: http://markets.predictwise.com/markets/

Konitzer, Corbett-Davies, and Rothschild. 2016. "Hilary Clinton would win in Australia, New Zealand, England, Canada, France, Mexico, and Germany. But not Russia." *Washington Post* (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/07/hillary-clinton-would-win-in-australia-new-zealand-england-canada-france-mexico-and-germany-but-not-russia/).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions you can ask David Rothschild. For question ideas, review his bio page (link above), his website, and readings/topics from the previous classes. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: 4:15-5:00pm, Baker Portico

7.) Wed. 2/12: **The Business of Survey Research**

Reading: Survey Monkey. *The quick start guide on how to conduct market research.* (https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/market-research-surveys/).

Wreden, Nick. 2002. *Using Surveys to Get the Information Your Business Needs - Survey Says? Identify Your Objectives.* Harvard Business School. (https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/using-surveys-to-get-the-information-your-business-needs-survey-says-identify-your-objectives)

Murphy, Leonard. 2017. "Presenting The Top 150 Global Companies In Market Research! Kinda…" *GreenBook* (https://greenbookblog.org/2017/08/06/presenting-the-top-150-global-companies-in-market-research-kinda/).

"Short" Assignment: Write one interesting or surprising thing that you learned from either Jenny Benz's or David Rothschild's presentation. Bring to class and turn in.

WEEK 5

8.) Mon. 2/17: **The Psychology of Survey Response** (Baker Laboratory **219**)

Reading: Schwarz, Norbert. 1999. "Self-reports: How the questions shape the answers." *American Psychologist.* 54: 93-105.

"Short" Assignment: Locate a survey question from the real world, which could include from one of our earlier assignments. According to the reading by Schwarz, what is one way in which the format of the question might affect the answers? What is one psychological process from Schwarz might be involved? (Be specific) (turn in your response to Canvas before class).

9.) Wed. 2/19: **Question Wording Effects & Survey Experiments** (Baker Laboratory **219**)

Reading: Druckman, James and Arthur Lupia. 2012. "Experimenting with politics." *Science*, 335: 1177-1179.

Enns and Schuldt. 2020. "Trump May Be Even More Unpopular Than His Approval Rating Shows." *FiveThirtyEight.* (https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trump-may-be-even-more-unpopular-than-his-approval-rating-shows/)

Qualtrics Randomizer: https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/survey-module/survey-flow/standard-elements/randomizer/

"Short" Assignment: Find a survey question from the Roper Center. List the full question wording and response options. Propose a survey experiment (A/B testing) to see if alternate question

wording or response options would matter. Why are you interested in this test? What result do you hypothesize?

WEEK 6

Mon. 2/24: **No Class: February Break**

10.) Wed. 2/26: **Steven Snell** (Senior Survey and Research Methodologist, Qualtrics)

Reading: Bio Page: https://www.qualtrics.com/qualtrics-life/my-qualtrics-experience-steven-snell-principal-research-scientist-provo/

Snell, Steven. 2020. "How To Use Citizen Experiences To Build A Better World." SAP BRANDVOIVE. (https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2020/01/23/how-to-use-citizen-experiences-to-build-a-better-world/#7ad1187f74d5).

Ramirez, Natasha. "4 Tips for Getting the Most Out of Customer Survey Data." *Inc.* (https://www.inc.com/natasha-ramirez/customer-surveys-big-data-analytics.html).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions you can ask Steve Snell. For question ideas, review his bio page (link above), Qualtrics' website, and readings/topics from the previous classes. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: 4:15-5:00pm, Baker Portico

WEEK 7

11.) Mon. 3/2: **Kyley McGeeney** (Vice President, PSB Research)

Reading: Bio Page: https://www.insightsassociation.org/person/kyley-mcgeeney

Roller. 2018. "What's a methodologist? An interview with Kyley McGeeney." *Survey Practice.* (https://www.surveypractice.org/article/3397-what-s-a-methodologist-an-interview-with-kyley-mcgeeney)

PSB Overview: https://www.psbresearch.com/

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Kyley McGeeney. For question ideas, review her bio page (link above), PSB website, and the assigned reading. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: 4:15-5:00pm, Baker Portico

12.) Wed. 3/4: **Data Literacy**

Reading: Cairo, Alberto. 2019. "How Charts Work" (Ch.1, p.21-51) in *How Charts Lie.*

"Short" Assignment: Find a chart or figure. Paste or save the image into a word document. Write one thing the chart does well and one thing you would change. Upload to Canvas.

WEEK 8

13.) Mon. 3/9: **Partner-Based Survey Research**

Reading: Stoecker, Randy. 2003. "Community-Based Research: From Practice to Theory and Back Again." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* (on Canvas).

Assignment: 1ˢᵗ "Critical Engagement" Assignment Due

14.) Wed. 3/11: **Sarah Cho** (Director of Research, Survey Monkey)

Zoom Option:
https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/vJElceyurjsuGdUsKg_-JqWSfSTGmhdjPA

Reading: Bio Page: https://pores.upenn.edu/people/sarah-cho

(Podcast): Green Connections Radio. "Measuring 'inclusion'" (audio file) (https://www.iheart.com/podcast/252-green-connections-radio-27494569/episode/measuring-inclusion-sarah-cho-director-29916244/)

"Short" Assignment (1 of 2): Briefly a) identify/describe one of the research questions that Sarah Cho mentions in the podcast interview and b) how SurveyMonkey used survey methods to gather data to shed light on that question.

"Short" Assignment (2 of 2): Bring three questions that you can ask Sarah Cho. For question ideas, review her bio page (link above), Survey Monkey website, and the assigned podcast. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: 4:15-5:00pm (Cancelled due to travel restrictions)

WEEK 9

15.) Mon. 3/16: **How to Avoid Being Misled by Data**

Reading: Huff, Darrell. 1954. "How to Spot Statistical Jokers." *New York Times*. (Canvas).

Collins, Jason. 2017. "The `effect is too large' heuristic." *Jason Collins Blog* (https://jasoncollins.blog/2017/07/06/the-effect-is-too-large-heuristic/).

Kahan, Dan. 2013. "Is this how motivated innumeracy happens?..." *Cultural Cognition*. (http://www.culturalcognition.net/blog/2013/11/2/is-this-how-motivated-innumeracy-happens.html).

Gelman, Andrew. 2020. "No, I don't think that this study offers good evidence that installing air filters in classrooms has surprisingly large educational benefits." *Statistical Modeling, Causal Inference, and Social Science* (https://statmodeling.stat.columbia.edu/2020/01/09/no-i-dont-think-that-this-study-offers-good-evidence-that-installing-air-filters-in-classrooms-has-surprisingly-large-educational-benefits/).

16.) Wed. 3/18: **Midterm Review Session**

<u>"Short" Assignment</u>: Upload to Canvas at least one question you have related to the course content (The class review session is intended to be an opportunity to ask these questions).

WEEK 10

17.) Mon. 3/23: **Midterm Exam**

18.) Wed. 3/25: **No Class**

WEEK 11

Mon. 3/30: **No Class: Spring Break**

Wed. 4/1: **No Class: Spring Break**

WEEK 12

19.) Mon. 4/6: **Inferring Attitudes and Behaviors from Big Data**

<u>Reading</u>: Everybody Lies: How Google search reveals our darkest secrets. *The Guardian*. (https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jul/09/everybody-lies-how-google-reveals-darkest-secrets-seth-stephens-davidowitz)

Guess, Andy, Jonathan Nagler, and Joshua Tucker. 2019. "Who was most likely to share fake news in 2016? Seniors." *Washington Post*. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2019/01/09/who-shared-fake-news-during-the-2016-election-campaign-youll-be-surprised/?noredirect=on).

<u>"Short" Assignment</u>: Visit and familiarize yourself with Google Trends (https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US). Enter any search term that you like, and take a screenshot of the "interest over time" graph <u>since 2004</u>. Upload the screenshot to Canvas.

20.) Wed. 4/8: **Joe Twyman** (Co-founder and director, Deltapoll)

<u>Reading</u>: Bio Page: https://www.northbanktalent.com/clients/joe-twyman/

Twyman, Joe. 2019. "Get Brexit Done? It's More Complicated than That." *DeltaPoll*. (http://www.deltapoll.co.uk/getbrexitdone).

James, William and Kylie MacLellan. 2019. "A question of trust: British pollsters battle to call looming election." *Reuters*. (https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-polls/a-question-of-trust-british-pollsters-battle-to-call-looming-election-idUSKBN1WU0GN).

Owen, Glen. 2020. "Millennials back Meghan Markle and Prince Harry but baby boomers say they're in the wrong: New survey reveals generational divide over attitudes to the monarchy" *Daily Mail*.

(https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7876961/Millennials-Meghan-Markle-Prince-Harry-baby-boomers-say-theyre-wrong.html).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Joe Twyman. For question ideas, review his bio page (link above), The Deltapoll website, and the assigned reading. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: Cancelled due to travel restrictions

WEEK 13

21.) Mon. 4/13: **Nicole Lewis** (Journalist, The Marshall Project)

Reading: Bio Page: https://www.themarshallproject.org/staff/nicole-lewis

Lewis, Nicole. 2019. "They Got Their Voting Rights Back, But Will They Go to the Polls?" *The Marshall Project.* (https://www.themarshallproject.org/2019/08/13/they-got-their-voting-rights-back-but-will-they-go-to-the-polls).

Lewis, Nicole. 2016. "What happens when two separate and unequal school districts merge?" *The Hechinger Report.* (https://hechingerreport.org/what-happens-when-two-separate-and-unequal-school-districts-merge/).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Nicole Lewis. For question ideas, review her bio page (link above), The Marshall Project website, and the assigned reading. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: Cancelled due to travel restrictions

22.) Wed. 4/15: **Tamara Keith** (White House Correspondent, National Public Radio)

Reading: Bio Page: https://www.npr.org/people/122805042/tamara-keith

Listen to a recent *NPR Politics Podcast* (https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510310/npr-politics-podcast) co-hosted by Tamara Keith. (You can view the transcript ☰ to find an episode she co-hosted.)

Kiger, Patrick J. 2020. "How the White House Press Briefing Went From Daily to Done." *HowStuffWorks.* (https://people.howstuffworks.com/white-house-press-briefing.htm).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Tamara Keith. For question ideas, review her bio page (link above), The NPR website, and the assigned reading. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

WEEK 14

23.) Mon. 4/20: **Surveys and the Presidential Campaign**

Reading: Sides, John. 2016. "Five key lessons from Donald Trump's surprising victory." *Washington Post.* (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/09/five-key-lessons-from-donald-trumps-surprising-victory/).

North Star Outlook for the 2020 Elections (Dec. 2019): http://www.northstaropinion.com/outlook-for-the-2020-elections

Assignment: 2nd "Critical Engagement" Assignment Due

24.) Wed. 4/22: **Dan Judy** (Vice President, North Star Opinion Research)

Reading: Bio Page: http://www.northstaropinion.com/about/our-team

North Star Overview: http://www.northstaropinion.com/about/what-we-do

Edsall, Thomas B. 2019. "The Danger of Elizabeth Warren." *New York Times* (https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/20/opinion/elizabeth-warren-2020.html).

"Short" Assignment: Bring three questions that you can ask Dan Judy. For question ideas, review his bio page (link above), The North Star Opinion Research website, and the assigned reading. (Bring to class, but also upload the questions to Canvas before class.)

Reception: Cancelled due to travel restrictions

WEEK 15

25.) Mon. 4/27: **Survey Data & The Media**

Reading: Coggins, Elizabeth and James A. Stimson. 2019. "On the Dynamics of Ideological Identification: The Puzzle of Liberal Identification Decline. *Political Science Research and Methods* 7(4): 737-755. (Canvas)

"Short" Assignment: Consider Figure 3 and the accompanying text in the assigned reading. How do the data and patterns in this figure help us understand the decline of liberal identity in the U.S. over time? One paragraph double spaced should be sufficient (Upload to Canvas before class).

26.) Wed. 4/29: **Future of Survey Data and Analytics**

Reading: Miller, Peter V. 2017. "Is there a future for survey data?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81: 205-212. (https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfx008).

"Short" Assignment: In your opinion, is Miller mainly optimistic or pessimistic about the future of survey of surveys, and why? One paragraph double-spaced is sufficient. (Upload to Canvas before class)

WEEK 16

27.) Mon. 5/4: **Last Day of Class**

Reading: Enns and Schuldt. 2016. "Are There Really Hidden Trump Voters?" *New York Times*. (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/07/opinion/are-there-really-hidden-trump-voters.html).

Yang, Sally. 2017. "You support amnesty for undocumented immigrants, you just don't know it" *Baltimore Sun*. (https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-immigration-children-20170125-story.html).

Lemonick, Hilary. 2016. "Millennials, don't sit out this election." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (https://www.inquirer.com/philly/opinion/20161106_Commentary__Millennials__don_t_sit_out_this_election.html?mobi=true).

Conrad, Eisha. 2016. "Schools should have comprehensive sex ed." *Ithaca Journal*. (https://www.ithacajournal.com/story/opinion/2016/12/06/schools-comprehensive-sex-ed/95057650/).

Schechter, Max. 2014. "Conservatives and Liberals Want to Vote with Their Feet." *Cornell Daily Sun* (https://cornellsun.com/2014/05/09/conservatives-and-liberals-want-to-vote-with-their-feet/).

Evaluation

Your evaluation in this course will be assessed as follows:

Professional Engagement (Receptions & in class) (15%)
Assignments ("Short" and "Critical Engagement" Assignments; see details below) (30%)
Notecards (10%)
Midterm Exam (20%)
Final Exam (25%)

Professional Engagement. This portion of your grade will reflect your attendance and engagement at receptions with visiting speakers (attendance at 3 receptions is required) and your participation and professionalism in class. *Your written reflections for the 3 receptions are due one week after each reception (uploaded to Canvas).*

> **Note**: Due to unexpected changes during the semester, we are only requiring attendance and reflections on 2 receptions and we will offer an alternate assignment for those students who did not have the opportunity to attend 2 receptions.

Assignments. Throughout the course, we will assign a series of "short" assignments that are meant to encourage regular engagement with course material, as well as two longer "critical engagement" assignments (due by upload to Canvas by the start of class on 3/9 and 4/20) that allow for deeper engagement with survey data in the real world. See the tentative schedule above (details of the critical engagement assignments will be announced one week ahead of the listed due date). Note that assignments will *not* be weighted equally; they will be weighted to correspond with the effort required.

Notecards. Each class will start with students answering a question (or questions) on a notecard, which we provide. The questions will usually be based on the assigned reading. The notecards provide a fast and efficient way to assess if students are retaining the information needed for success in the class. The lowest notecard grade will be dropped.

Midterm Exam. On Monday March 23rd, we will hold a midterm exam during class. The exam will be primarily multiple-choice format with some (very) short answer questions, and is intended to assess the student learning outcomes. Additional details to follow.

Final Exam. We will have a final exam scheduled during the university's exam period. The final exam will have a similar format as the midterm exam.

Laptops/phones

Laptops and phones should be put away during class. Notes should be taken by hand. However, we recognize there are many reasons why students may benefit from the use of a laptop in class. If that's the case for you, please contact us to make arrangements in advance. The device must be in airplane mode for any exceptions granted.

Students with Disabilities

Please give us your Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic modifications. Meeting with either professor in office hours will help ensure confidentiality. If you need an immediate accommodation for equal access, please speak with one of us after class, send an email message, or contact SDS at sdscu@cornell.edu. If the need arises for additional accommodations during the semester, please contact SDS.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity (http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

Turnitin Policy

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.