

1/23/12

Spring 2012

SURVEY RESEARCH

790:307 (3 credits) AND

790:400 (1 credit)

TTH 3:55-5:15, Eagleton Carriage House

Professor David Redlawsk
Office Hours: T 1:00-3:00
or by appointment

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The intent of this class is to introduce you to the theory and practice of survey research through a combination of traditional in-class lectures, reading assignments, and the like, along with a hands-on practical experience actually doing survey research. Political Science has a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system available for our use. This system allows us to develop a questionnaire and put it into the "field" through telephone interviewing of randomly selected people. It is also possible to use the system to field internet-based surveys. We will work with New Brunswick Tomorrow as our community partner to develop and field a survey for them, the 18th in a series by Rutgers since 1976! Hence there is a "civic engagement" aspect of the course - you will not only learn in the classroom, but will become engaged with a community organization in the process of learning how to do surveys.

This course a CESEP (Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships, <http://case.rutgers.edu/>) course. As such you will be working with a community organization as part of the course and reflecting on the experience through assignments that include maintaining an online journal of your experiences. You MUST register for both this course AND 790:400 which will provide you one additional credit for the civic engagement aspect of the course.

This course will engage you in both the theory and practice of survey research. You will learn about survey sampling, design, administration, and analysis through a combination of traditional readings, lectures, and discussions along with a service learning team project. The project will involve designing and administering a survey for a community organization, including preparing and presenting a final oral and written report. You will get hands-on experience using modern computer-aided telephone interviewing software and will learn how to analyze and present the data you collect. Grades will be based on class participation, the service learning project and related journaling, and examinations.

Course Web Site

I have a web site at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~redlawsk> which contains information for this and other courses. Among other things, this syllabus will be posted there, as will any changes necessitated in the schedule due to unforeseen circumstances. We will also make extensive use of Sakai, where some readings, project materials, and other resources will be available.

Requirements

1. You are expected to become familiar with this syllabus and the requirements listed within it.
2. You cannot successfully complete this class if you do not attend! Class participation is expected, so any student with more than 3 unexcused absences will receive a lower grade based on failure to participate in the class. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University

absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

3. You will develop and fully carry out a civic engagement group project designed to collect data for a local community organization. You will work in teams, meeting with staff of New Brunswick Tomorrow, to determine the goals of the survey, design and field the questionnaire, and prepare a report to present to NBT. This is collaborative work, and each student will be expected to contribute fully to the project. You will maintain an online journal in which you describe the work of the project and respond to questions I will give you designed to reflect on your experience. Each project team may be asked to develop a final summary of their work suitable for display at a CESEP event. You will present an oral report to our community partner as well as a final written report. The project work grade will be shared between members of the team; your journal will be graded individually.
4. You will take a Midterm Exam on survey research theory.
5. You will participate in a CESEP Service-Learning Recitation session 4 times during the semester. These recitation sessions are mandatory, and will be used to help you develop an understanding of the role of civic engagement and service learning. You must register for 790:400 to get credit for the recitation.

Civic Engagement Project

The core of this class is the civic engagement project and its associated journal and recitation section. You will work in teams with New Brunswick Tomorrow to identify their need for the kind of information that can be gathered using survey research. Each team will be assigned one or two sections of the survey to manage, each section representing a specific topic of interest. Each team will meet with staff of NBT to learn about the organization's mission and programs, and to determine what kind of information would be of use in furthering its mission. The team will build on the existing questionnaire (last fielded in 2008) to be used in data collection. The sections developed by each team will be combined into a single survey instrument, which will then be administered by the class using a state-of-the-art computer aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. We will complete at least 400 interviews ourselves and will add additional respondents with an outside call center to reach a total N of 800.

Once data collection is complete, each team will prepare an oral report to be presented to the class and NBT staff and a final written report for the partner. The project will take most of the semester and will be worked on both in and out of class. You are expected to put a significant effort into this project as part of your team and the grade I assign to your project will be shared by all team members, though I reserve the right to make individual grading adjustments if it is clear that any team member is not fully participating. This project should be fun while giving you the chance to immediately put into practice what you are learning during class and from your readings.

Civic Engagement Journal

The second part of this project is your *individual* journal. The purpose of journaling is to provide you with the opportunity to record your experiences and to reflect upon them. You will maintain an online journal where you will write about your civic engagement project as follows:

1. You will write in response to prompts provided by the leader of your CESEP recitation section. You will get a specific set of requirements for your journaling that will include a

- regular reflective entry in which you consider what you are learning about the project, the community partner, and yourself in this service-learning opportunity. You will follow the guidelines from your recitation leader on this part of the journaling.
2. You will write in response to prompts that I will provide from time to time. These prompts will ask you to think about survey research and to connect what you are doing to our readings and class discussions. Generally I will expect you to write at least two or three good paragraphs responding to a prompt.
 3. You will keep track of the time you spend on the civic engagement project. In this sense, I want your journal to record everything you do on the project – meetings, developing the questionnaire, making the phone calls, and so on. For each entry you should describe what you did and how long you spent at it, and then you should reflect on how well (or not) things are going and why they are going that way.
 4. Finally, your recitation leader will provide you with a summary writing assignment for your journal designed to connect everything, including reflecting on your community partner and what you have learned.

The journal is to be ongoing – that is, you are to write in it over the semester as you do your work. As an online document, it will be date and time stamped, so I will know when you actually wrote the entry. The nice thing is I am not looking for polished writing as such – I am looking for thoughtful efforts to make sense of what you are learning and how it connects to your community partner. You will learn from being in class (I hope!) but you will also learn from your partner. Your journal should reflect this. You will receive an individual grade on your journal that will be independent of the group grade for your project.

Civic Engagement Project Written Team Assignments

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE POSTED TO YOUR ONLINE TEAM DISCUSSION AREA ON THE CLASS SAKAI SITE BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS FOR EACH DATE

Team Assignment 1: With your team, meet with NBT Staff to learn about their organization. Prepare a report (one per team) that does at least the following (questions are for illustration):

Identifies the organization and its structure. What does the organization do? What is it about? Is it all volunteer? Is there paid staff? How many people work with the organization?

Describes the mission. What is the mission statement? Who does the organization serve? What is its purpose?

Explains what the partner wants to learn from this project. What is its goal for the survey? What does it want to learn about itself or about the public? What is the specific goal for your section of the survey?

Lists at least three key potential questions that might be asked in your section. These do not have to be in final format, but instead should provide some direction for the definition of questions and response options to be done in Assignment 2. Since we are working with an existing survey,

this includes the possibility of adding new questions or revising existing ones. Also identify which questions in your section should NOT be changed.

Team Assignment 2: Prepare questions to be asked in our survey. Working with NBT staff, your team will develop a series of questions and response options that will ultimately be used when we do the survey. You will do this in two steps. First your team will prepare a draft set of questions with potential response options, working from the existing survey instrument and recommending additions, deletions, and questions that should not be changed. You will review those questions and responses with NBT staff, and get their ok. You will then turn them into a final form which I will collect and combine with the other team questions into a single survey instrument. In the final form we will have time to ask about 8-12 questions of each respondent for each team (not including demographics.) You will also work with NBT staff to define the demographic information that they will need you to collect.

Team Assignment 3: Prepare and present a report for section of the project analyzing the responses to their questions and providing a summary of findings. We will talk about the format of this report in detail during the semester. The report will be presented in class, and staff from your community partner will be invited to join us for the presentation. The final written report will be delivered to the partner.

Grading

Civic Engagement Project (team)	25%
Civic Engagement Journal	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Class Participation:	25%

Note: Your Recitation grade will be the same as your class grade, ASSUMING you complete all recitation requirements successfully and attend all sessions. Failure to complete recitation requirements successfully will lower your grade for the recitation section.

Required Books

Asher, Herbert. 2012. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen should Know*. 8th Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-60426-606-1.

Rea, Louis and Richard A. Parker. 2005. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 9780787975463

Fink, Arlene. 2009. *How to Conduct Surveys: A Step by Step Guide*. 4th Edition. Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4129-6668-9

Books will be available at the Rutgers Book Store and New Jersey Books, but you can also readily get them from online sources. Other required readings will be made available either on paper or online.

Schedule

Our class work is divided into “theory” and “practice”. For “theory:” work we will read and discuss the various components of survey research as noted in the schedule. For “practice” work you will do team work and meet with your community partner as you work to develop your civic engagement project.

	<i>“Theory”</i>	<i>“Practice”</i>
Jan 17	<p>Introduction to Course & The Role of Survey Research in American Politics</p> <p>READ: Asher Ch 6 & 7</p>	<p>You will determine your ranked preference for your project team and email no later than Jan 19. Teams will be assigned via email by Jan 21</p> <p>TEAM ASSIGNMENT: Meet with Community Partner; complete Team Assignment #1 due Feb 2</p>
Jan 19	<p>What is a survey? What is a poll? Are they different?</p> <p>READ: Fink, Ch 1; Rea & Parker, Ch 1; Asher, Ch 1; How to Analyze a Poll (Sakai); Rutgers-Eagleton Poll Website (eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu)</p>	
Jan 24	<p>READ: New Brunswick Tomorrow 2008 Survey Instrument (Sakai); www.nbtomorrow.org (NBT Web site)</p>	<p>Project Planning; Jeff Vega, president of New Brunswick Tomorrow, joins us.</p> <p>Individual Assignment: Reflection #1; due Feb 2.</p>
Jan 26	<p>Questionnaire Design & Questions</p> <p>READ: Rea & Parker, Ch 2; Fink, Ch 3 NES Panel/Cross-sectional studies (www.electionstudies.org)</p>	<p>Individual Assignment: Human Subjects Training due Feb 7; must bring completion certificate to class.</p>
Jan 31	<p>More on Developing Questions</p> <p>READ: Rea and Parker Ch 3 Fink Ch 2; Asher Ch 3</p>	
Feb 2	<p>Types of Surveys & Ways of Using Survey Questions</p> <p>READ: Fink, Ch 5 Redlawsk, Tolbert, and Franko (Sakai) Knoll, Redlawsk, and Sanborn (Sakai)</p>	<p>Team Assignment #1 DUE online</p> <p>Reflection #1 DUE online</p> <p>TEAM ASSIGNMENT: Prepare draft questions for your part of the survey; Complete Assignment #2, Drafts due online Feb 16</p>

Feb 7	<p>Ethics and Human Subjects</p> <p>READ: Human Subjects Training Online Links to Ethics issues (Sakai)</p>	Human Subject Training Due Today
Feb 9	<p>What do answers to questions mean?</p> <p>READ: Asher, Ch 2 Zaller & Feldman (Sakai) Bishop, et al. (Sakai) Survey Practice Article (Sakai)</p>	
Feb 14	<p>Sampling & Margin of Error</p> <p>READ: Rea & Parker, Ch 6, 8, 9; Fink Ch 4; Asher Ch 4</p>	
Feb 16		<p>Teams meet in class to finalize survey question drafts</p> <p>Team Assignment #2 DRAFT QUESTIONS DUE online</p> <p>Individual Assignment: Reflection #2; due Feb 23</p>
Feb 21	<p>Issues in Non-Response and Bias</p> <p>READ: Groves, et al. (Sakai) Keeter, et al. (Sakai) AAPOR Cell Phone Task Report (Sakai)</p>	Final versions due March 3
Feb 23	<p>Interviewer effects on data collection</p> <p>READ: Asher, Ch 5; Tucker (Sakai) Kane & Macaulay (Sakai); Durrant, et al. (Sakai)</p>	Reflection #2 DUE online
Feb 28		Teams meet in class to work on questions
Mar 1	<p>Issues in Survey Research: Internet data collection vs. telephone surveys</p> <p>READ: Schaffner; Kapelner & Chandler; Chang & Krosnick (all on Sakai)</p>	Team Assignment #2 FINAL QUESTIONS DUE online
Mar 6	<p>Pre-testing</p> <p>READ: Presser and Blair (Sakai)</p> <p>Visit from Survey Research Professional</p>	Each team must complete 5 pre-tests and bring to class. We will review the full questionnaire in class, and make sure that it tests out ok, at least on paper.

Mar 8	MIDTERM EXAM	
Mar 13-15	<i>NO CLASS SPRING BREAK</i>	
Mar 20	Basics of Data Analysis I READ: Rea & Parker, Ch 7, 10, 11	Individual Assignment: Reflection #3, Due March 29
Mar 22	Basics of Data Analysis II READ: Rea & Parker, Ch 5; Fink Ch 6	
Weeks of March 25 and April 1	<p>INTERVIEWER TRAINING WILL BE SCHEDULED OUTSIDE OF CLASS</p> <p>During these two weeks you will be doing data collection. We will use scheduled class time as well as evening and weekend time to make the calls. Each student will spend about 20 hours or so on this part of the project during these two weeks with a goal of completing at least 30 surveys</p> <p>Reflection #3 DUE Online March 29</p>	
Apr 10	Organizing data and preparing to report READ: Rea & Parker, Ch 13; Fink Ch 7	<p>Individual Assignment: Reflection #4, Due Apr 17</p> <p>Team Assignment #3: Oral and Written Reports DUE May 4 DURING EXAM PERIOD FROM 12:00-3:00</p>
Apr 12	Basics of Data Analysis III	Groups will practice data analysis in class using SPSS
Apr 17		<p>Reflection #4 DUE Online</p> <p>Groups will work on reports in class</p>
Apr 19		<p>Groups will work on reports in class</p> <p>Assign FINAL Reflection, DUE online Apr 26</p>
Apr 24	Analyzing Polls/Polling and Democracy READ: Asher Ch 8 & 9	
Apr 26	Run Through: Analyzing OUR poll; What have we learned?	FINAL Reflection due ONLINE
MAY 4 12:00-3:00	<p><i>ORAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS (Team Assignment #3)</i></p> <p>FINAL Written report due ONLINE by Noon May 8</p>	