

Syllabus PUBPOL 587

Public Management: Survey Design for Organizations
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00-2:20PM
Weill Hall 1210
Winter 2023

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment

Course Description

Part of successful management is knowing how employees, managers, citizens, and other stakeholders think and feel about organizations in general, about particular policies, and about new initiatives and programs. It's also often important to know whether interventions are working: For example, if a manager has tried to change employee behavior in some way, are employees actually making the desired changes? How can managers get honest feedback about employee morale? When measuring public opinion on a complicated issue, how can you be sure that the responses you get are truly answering the questions you were trying to ask? When you are asking people to self-report about their behaviors, when can you trust their responses? In this module, students will learn best practices for how to design and implement surveys to assess issues like employee morale, public opinion, and program success. Students will not only review and assess existing survey research, but will gain hands-on experience in designing survey questions, collecting survey responses, and in interpreting survey data

Course Objectives

- Gain a critical understanding of the methodology and theories behind survey research as it applies to organizational issues;
- Learn to evaluate (and improve) existing surveys;
- Develop the ability to create new surveys to accurately assess concepts of interest;
- Learn how to use Qualtrics survey design software, which is commonly used in academia and the real world.

Text and Materials:

Fowler, Floyd J., Jr. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

(optional) Rea, Louis & Richard A. Parker (2014). *Designing and conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

(optional) Groves et al. (2004). *Survey methodology*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Laptop or other device (iPad, tablet, etc) with Microsoft Excel. On some days, we will be creating and assessing online surveys in class. For those days, you will need a personal electronic device with access to the internet. I will let you know in advance which days

you will need your device. If you do not have a laptop, please let me know ASAP so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Grading and Evaluation

Class Participation and Attendance (individual grade): 10%
In-class Qualtrics survey creation activity (individual grade): 5%
Group outline of survey project (group grade): 10%
Creation of draft survey (group grade): 5%
Participation/comments for own draft survey (individual grade): 5%
Final survey (group grade): 30%
Participation in all other group surveys (individual grade): 5%
Final paper (individual grade): 30%

Class participation and attendance

Attendance: This is a short course, and I expect you to attend all of the classes. Attendance will be taken every day. You may miss **one** class for any reason, no questions asked. Any unexcused absences beyond this class will affect your grade. Absences beyond that one class may be excused with written documentation of UM-related activities, job interviews, or illness in advance of the start of class. However, you will still be expected to meet all expectations for the course.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get class notes and any assignment updates from your fellow students before the next class. Classes will be lecture-captured, and you will be expected to watch the lectures before the next class. It is also your responsibility to get any assignments to the instructor *before* the day of the absence, otherwise they will be considered late. *Missing an in-class assignment without an excused absence will result in a failing grade for that assignment.*

Lateness: I understand that sometimes life happens and you may arrive a few minutes late. However, arriving late is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow students who arrived on time. Therefore, chronic lateness will be noted and will affect your grade.

Laptops & Cell Phones: You will sometimes need laptops (or tablets) for in-class assignments. Otherwise, I will (grudgingly) permit the use of laptops and tablets in the classroom, on an honor system. Electronic devices can be helpful for easy access to the readings and note-taking, but they should be used only for activities related to this class. **However, research suggests that students who use laptops/tablets during class retain less information and perform poorer in the class...even students who think they learn better with laptops. Despite even the best intentions, screens can be distracting to you and to those around you.** Cell phones should be silenced and out of view at all times.

Participation: I expect you to be present to class in both body *and* mind. You are encouraged to ask questions and make substantive contributions to class discussions. To facilitate class discussions, you are expected to show up to class having completed any readings assigned for that day.

I also expect that you will listen and respond respectfully to your classmates' contributions. This means actively engaging with their viewpoints rather than just waiting for your next chance to talk. Some of us are more comfortable than others about speaking in class, so encouraging your fellow students to have their voices heard is vital.

Assignments

In class assignments: You will have one in-class (graded) assignment on familiarizing yourself with Qualtrics. There will be another (ungraded) coding in class exercise to go over how to use Excel to do coding and some analyses. If you need to miss class on the day of in-class exercises, you should reach out to me in advance to figure out how to complete these assignments.

Survey project: You will be assigned to a group to create a survey together. This is a group assignment that has multiple components. You will be graded as a group for many of these, although some related assignments will be graded individually. See Canvas for more details.

Final paper: Your final paper for this class is a 5-page paper about the survey your group designed. Although the survey creation is a group assignment, the paper is an individual assignment. See Canvas for more details.

Handing in Assignments: All written assignments should be submitted as Word documents in Canvas by the start of class on the day they are due. Surveys should be shared via Qualtrics or email as specified. Give yourself plenty of time to submit each assignment. Canvas and my email tells me exactly when your assignment was submitted, and you will be penalized even if it is a few minutes late. If you miss class because of a pre-scheduled activity, you are still required to submit any assignments before the start of that class.

Late Policy: I will subtract 10% for assignments submitted after the start of class, and another 10% for each additional 24 hours thereafter that an assignment is late. Assignments that are more than 3 days late will not be accepted. If you miss class because of sickness, you should email me before the assignment is due to get an extension, in which case the assignment will be due within 3 days of the day you were sick or absent.

Writing Help: Whether you are new to research writing or an old pro, I encourage you to work with the Ford School's writing center. You can make these appointments online, using the following link: <http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/>

Academic Honesty and Learning Environment:

Ford School Inclusivity Statement: Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others

- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community

Ford School Public Health Protection Policy: In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course--including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project--you must follow all the public health safety measures and policies put in place by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. Up to date information on U-M policies can be found [here](#). It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, both those relating to the pandemic and other issues such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, can directly impact students' academic performance and overall wellbeing. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

You may access counselors and urgent services at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) and/or [University Health Service \(UHS\)](#). Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text '4UMICH' to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through the [University Health Service](#) and through [CAPS](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please reach out to U-M Services for [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations and how to communicate about your accommodations with your professors. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

Academic Integrity: The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one's own in writing or presentations, and failing to give full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and

ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action. The Ford School's policy of academic integrity can be found in the [MPP/MPA, BA, and PhD Program](#) handbooks. Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct and their consequences is available at: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11#112>

Use of Technology: Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (e.g. social media), you must first have informed consent. ***Without explicit permission from the instructor and in some cases your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings or pre-recordings from class, discussion section or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.***

Please review additional information and policies regarding academic expectations and resources at the Ford School of Public Policy at:
<https://intranet.fordschool.umich.edu/academic-expectations>

Survey Design for Organizations Class Schedule and Outline

NOTE: All readings other than those from Fowler text are available on Canvas.

Week 1-2: Overview of survey research in organizational settings

Class 1 (Jan 5): Introductions

Homework due:

- None

Class 2 (Jan 10): Overview of survey research and ethical issues

What is survey research? How is it different than other methods of data collection? What conclusions can you reach based on survey data? What types of surveys are used in organizational settings? What are the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects? What do they mean for surveys in organizations?

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 1
 - Church & Waclawski (2001) Designing and using organizational surveys: A seven-step process – Introduction Chapter (available electronically through UM library)
- Optional reading:
 - Groves et al. - Chapter 11 (goes in depth about ethical concerns in survey research)

Week 2-3: Identifying a research question and survey method

Class 3 (Jan 12): Methods of data collection, survey flow, and error

How are surveys administered? How does the “conversation” of a survey affect how questions are answered? What are the complications involved in asking about psychological constructs? Where can things go wrong?

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapters 2 and 5
 - Rea & Parker (2014) – Chapter 2

Class 4 (Jan 17): Qualtrics Survey Software

Qualtrics is one popular software for designing and distributing online surveys, and we will be using this for class assignments. This will give you an overview of how Qualtrics works and how you can use it to ask different types of questions.

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Sign into Qualtrics (<https://umich.qualtrics.com/>) and spend at least 30 minutes playing around with it. Try creating a new survey, making different types of questions, recoding variables, previewing a survey, looking at how to download data, etc. The manual I’ve posted to Canvas is a little outdated, but can walk you through some steps if you prefer to follow instructions. They also have pretty good guides online if you just Google Qualtrics and the thing you are trying to accomplish.
- Optional reading:

- Qualtrics Research Manual - Chapters 1-5
- Assignment
 - BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS
 - In-class Qualtrics survey creation assignment

Class 5 (Jan 19): No lecture due to IPE Exercise

- During class time, meet with group to discuss Survey Outline assignment for Tuesday (Decide what you want the topic of your survey to be and provide outline of the types of questions that will address that topic. What information do you want to be able to draw from this survey?)
- Kaitlin will be in 1210 to help/answer questions as needed

Week 4: Writing good questions

Class 6 (Jan 24): Question design

How should you go about designing questions for your survey? What response format should you use? What pitfalls should you avoid?

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 6
 - Rea & Parker (2014) – Chapter 3
- Optional Readings:
 - DeVellis, R. F. (2007). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. – Chapter 5 (more details on good formats)
- Assignment
 - Provide Survey Outline (1 page – see Canvas for details) Decide what you want the topic of your survey to be and provide outline of the types of questions that will address that topic. What information do you want to be able to draw from this survey?

Class 7 (Jan 26): Designing questions as a group

Homework due:

- Required reading – none!
- Assignments:
 - Find an example survey online (Pew and Gallup regularly post their questions (and answers) online, as do some politicians and non-profit organizations). Bring it into class to discuss what is good and bad about the questions they asked.
 - Think through the types of questions you'll want to ask in your survey, you will be crafting specific questions with your group in class.

Week 5: Interviewing and clarity

Class 8 (Jan 31): Pretesting survey questions

Just because you've spent time to carefully design your questions doesn't mean that respondents will understand what you are trying to ask or will answer in the ways you intend. Pretesting surveys can help pinpoint and correct problems before you waste time and effort collecting survey data.

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 7: Evaluating survey questions and instruments

- Optional Readings:
 - Groves et al. (2004) Chapter 8: Evaluating survey questions. (goes into more detail on evaluating items)
 - Rea & Parker (2014) – Chapter 4 (overview of using focus groups for pretesting)
 - Beatty, P. C. & Willis, G. B. (2007). Research synthesis: The practice of cognitive interviewing. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71(2), 287-311. (more details on cognitive interviewing)
 - Sudman, S., Bradburn, N., & Schwarz, N. (1996). Chapter 2: Methods for determining cognitive processes and questionnaire problems. In, *Thinking about answers: The application of cognitive processes to survey methodology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (more details on cognitive interviewing)
- Assignment:
 - Create a complete draft of your group survey and share with group members and Kaitlin.
 - Participate in your own survey. Make note of any problems/suggestions by the start of class.
 - BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS

Class 9 (Feb 2): Interview-based surveys

Most organizational surveys are now done via the web or on paper. However, you should be aware of some special considerations to keep in mind if conducting an interview-based survey.

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 8
 - Groves et al. - Chapter 9
- Optional Readings
 - Fowler & Mangione (1990) – Chapters 2 & 3 (more detail on standardizing interviewers)

Week 6: Sampling and Nonresponse

Class 10 (Feb 7): Sampling and Nonresponse overview

So far we've dealt with many issues related to measurement error. But what about the survey sample? Who should take the survey? How should you recruit them? How widely can you generalize the results?

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 3
 - Politico (2019) Pew: Phone polling in crisis again
 - Pew Research Center (2015) Coverage error in internet surveys
- Optional Readings:
 - Rea & Parker (2014) Chapter 9 (up until page 194)
 - Groves et al. - Chapter 4
 - Barlett et al (2001). Organizational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 19 (1), 43-50.
- Assignment:
 - Final survey due – send link to Kaitlin so she can share with class

Class 11 (Feb 9): Sampling and Nonresponse overview, continued

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapter 4: Nonresponse
- Optional readings:
 - Fulton (2016) Organizations and survey research (goes into more detail on how to assess non-response when organizations are the unit of interest)
 - Rea & Parker (2014) Chapter 9 (195-200) (overview of how to deal with nonresponse using SPSS)
 - Johnson, T. P., O'Rourke, D., Burris, J., & Owens, L. (2002). Culture and survey nonresponse. In Groves et al. (Eds.). Survey nonresponse. New York: Wiley-Interscience. (p. 55-69)
 - Porter, S. R. & Whitcomb, M. E. (2005). Non-response in student surveys: The role of demographics, engagement, and personality. Research in Higher Education, 46(2), 127-151.
- Assignment
 - Take everyone else's surveys by start of class on this day
 - BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS

Week 7: Coding and analyzing survey data

Congratulations, you've gotten people to take your survey! Now what?

Class 12 (Feb 14): Laptop day – Practice coding and analyzing survey data

Homework due:

- Required reading
 - Fowler (2014) – Chapters 9
 - BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS
- Optional readings
 - Fowler (2014) Chapter 10 – goes into weighting
 - Groves et al. - Chapter 10 (up to page 321) goes into more detail on coding schemes, weighting, etc.
 - Rea & Parker (2014) – Chapters 10-12 (This has how-to guides for analyzing data with SPSS, if you prefer that to Excel)
 - Croninger, R.G and Douglas, K.M. (2005). Missing data and institutional research. In Umbach, P.D., Survey research: emerging issues, New Directions for Institutional Research no. 127, pp 33-49. (Good overview of dealing with missing data)
 - Pike, G. R. (2007). Adjusting for nonresponse in surveys. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), Higher education: Handbook of theory and research (Vol. XIX, pp. 175-195). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. (Good discussion of issues related to weighting.)
- Assignment
 - Complete homework portion of analyzing survey data with Excel sheet, along with any questions/issues you came across so far. We will do the rest in class together.

Class 13 (Feb 16): Laptop day – Analyze your survey data with your groupmates.

- Required reading
 - Example survey write-up 1: Choi et al (2018)
 - Example survey write-up 2: De Wit et al (2017)
 - Strong Example Final Paper
 - BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS
- Assignment:

- Download your completed survey data into Microsoft Excel (following instructions from Tuesday's class) or in format to analyze using other software (R, STATA, SPSS, etc)
- Practice downloading your data into Excel format (follow instructions from end of Qualtrics in-class assignment)
- Check if there are any repeats/preview responses from your own group that need to be removed
- Make a record of which variables you have, what kind of variables they are
 - categorical
 - continuous
 - open-ended
- Come up with a coding plan for any open-ended questions
 - have two coders go through it independently
- Make a list of which variables will need to be recoded
 - reverse-coded items
 - dummy-coding for categorical variables
 - multiple option items for which you want to run chi-square tests
 - multi-item scales for which you would need to create composites and run internal reliability tests
- Make a list of what analyses you want to run
 - descriptive statistics like frequencies/means
 - correlations
 - tests of experimental conditions (either using ANOVA or regression)

Week 8 Wrap up

Class 14 (Feb 21): Wrap Up

Homework due:

- Reading
 - None!

Final Paper: Feb 23 5:00 PM