

POS6757 Survey Research

Fridays, 8:30 to 11:30

Spring 2024

Location: McCarty Hall A, room 2196

Zoom: <https://gqrr.zoom.us/j/89302234031?pwd=Xg8ZbVFeshjXW2vruLzaToBMmaTy9y.1>

Instructor: Elizabeth Sena

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Objectives:

1. Be able to distinguish high quality public opinion research from poor quality.
2. Understand how to put together a basic public opinion research plan for a campaign.
3. Understand basic methodologies for conducting public opinion research.
4. Able to write about and analyze public opinion research
5. Be able to do work both in-person and in a remote setting to prepare for the campaign and consulting environment.

Policies and Grading

Please turn your cell phones off.

It is a given that attendance, class participation and good questions are a part of any graduate seminar. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the instructor in advance if at all possible. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Your grade will reflect your performance in the following areas:

1. 10% Class Participation – this means active participation in our weekly discussions, not just attendance. Oral communication skills are essential to political campaigns. Class participation will be based on the following:
 - a. Clear and pertinent comments during class discussions.
 - b. Insightful and inventive contributions in role-playing games.
 - c. Constructive suggestions during strategy and message workshop segments.
 - d. Presentations
2. 20% Review of Public Polling Memo
3. 25% Focus Group Guide
4. 25% Survey Questionnaire
5. 20% Survey Analysis Memo

Assignments should be emailed to me one hour before class starts or they will be considered late and marks will be deducted.

Required Books:

Asher, Herb. *Polling and the Public; What Every Citizen Should Know* 9th Edition. CQ Press 2016.

Fowler, Jr. Floyd, J et al. *Survey Methodology*. 2nd Edition. Sage Publications, 2014.

Dillman, Don, et al. *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, John Wiley and Sons, 2014.

Required Articles (Provided):

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

2020 Polling Problems

- <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/18/pollsters-2020-polls-all-wrong-500050>
- <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/unity/2021/01/11/polling-problems-and-why-we-should-still-trust-some-polls/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/upshot/polls-what-went-wrong.html>
- <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/collaborative-report-examines-polling-problems-2020-election>

2024 Polling Problems

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/2024-polls-got-right-got-wrong-trump-harris-rcna181105>
- <https://www.npr.org/2024/11/12/nx-s1-5188445/2024-election-polls-trump-kamala-harris>

Focus Groups

- <http://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf>
- <http://www.cse.lehigh.edu/~glenbn/mm/FocusGroups.htm>
- https://www.uml.edu/docs/FG%20Tips%20sheet_RK_tcm18-167588.pdf

Please note: I will send other articles to read throughout the course

January 16, 2026 Introduction: measuring public opinion

Reading for Class:

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

January 23, 2026 Types of Public Opinion Research

Reading for Class:

- <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/why-2016-election-polls-missed-their-mark/>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2023/04/19/how-public-polling-has-changed-in-the-21st-century/>
- Asher Chapter 1, 6, 9
- Dillman Chapter 1
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/course/public-opinion-polling-basics/>

Assignment Due: Review of Public Opinion Polling

January 30, 2026 Conducting Focus Groups

Reading for Class:

- <http://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf>
- <http://www.cse.lehigh.edu/~glenbn/mm/FocusGroups.htm>
- https://www.uml.edu/docs/FG%20Tips%20sheet_RK_tcm18-167588.pdf

February 6, 2026 Designing Surveys: Sampling Design

Reading for Class:

- APPOR Sampling methods for political polling
https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/Sampling-Methods-for-Political-Polling.pdf
- APPOR Report of APPOR task force on non-probability sampling
https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/NPS_TF_Report_Final_7_revised_FNL_6_22_13.pdf
- APPOR Margin of Error
https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/Margin-of-Sampling-Error.pdf
- PEW Oversampling is used to study small groups, not bias poll results
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/25/oversampling-is-used-to-study-small-groups-not-bias-poll-results/>
- Fowler Chapter 3, 4
- Asher Chapter 4

February 13, 2026 Response rates and Data Collection

Reading for Class:

- PEW Assessing the representativeness of public opinion surveys
<http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys/>
- PEW What low response rates mean for telephone surveys

<http://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/15/what-low-response-rates-mean-for-telephone-surveys/>

- Fowler Chapter 5
- Asher Chapter 5
- Dillman Chapter 2, 3

Assignment Due: Focus Group Guide

February 20, 2026 Mock Focus Group

Reading for Class: None – Focus Group Guide must be completed

NOTE: You must attend this class in order to complete the focus group memo

February 27, 2026 Survey Design Part I

Reading for Class:

- APPOR What is a push poll? <https://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Resources/AAPOR-Statements-on-Push-Polls.aspx>
- APPOR Likely and Unlikely Voters and Assessment of Campaign Dynamics https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/Erikson,_Panagopoulos_and_Wlezien-1.pdf
- Asher Chapters 2, 3
- Fowler Chapter 7,8
- Dillman Chapter 4,5

March 6, 2026 Survey Design Part II

Reading for Class:

- Fowler Chapter 9,11
- Dillman Chapters 7,9,10,11

Assignment Due: Focus Group Report

March 13, 2026 Errors, Weighting and Data Preparation

Reading for Class:

- APPOR Likely and Unlikely Voters and Assessment of Campaign Dynamics https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/Erikson,_Panagopoulos_and_Wlezien-1.pdf

- PEW Can likely voter models be improved?
http://www.pewresearch.org/files/2016/01/PM_2016-01-07_likely-voters_FINAL.pdf
- PEW What low response rates mean for telephone surveys
<http://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/15/what-low-response-rates-mean-for-telephone-surveys/>
- PEW A basic question when reading a poll: Does it include or exclude nonvoters?
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/16/does-poll-include-or-exclude-nonvoters/>
- PEW Oversampling is used to study small groups, not bias poll results
- <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/25/oversampling-is-used-to-study-small-groups-not-bias-poll-results/>
- Fowler Chapter 10

Assignment Due: Questionnaire (Survey)

March 20, 2026 March Break

March 27, 2026 Survey Analysis

Reading for Class:

- APPOR Measuring sub group preferences
https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/Measuring-SubGroup-Preferences.pdf
- PEW A basic question when reading a poll: Does it include or exclude nonvoters?
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/16/does-poll-include-or-exclude-nonvoters/>
- Asher Chapter 7, 8

March 29, 2024 Modelling – Micro targeting

Reading for Class:

- <https://www.predictiveanalyticsworld.com/machinelearningtimes/how-uplift-modeling-helped-obamas-campaign-and-can-aid-marketers/2613/>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/how-big-data-broke-american-politics-n732901>

April 3, 2026 No Class

April 10, 2026 Campaign Research Plan

Reading for Class:

- Will be provided in advance

Assignment : Survey Analysis Memo

April 17, 2026 Final Class