

PMGT 211-POLLING
The George Washington University

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Summer 2008

OBJECTIVES

This course will concentrate on developing an understanding of quantitative survey research. Topics covered will include the proper uses of polls, methodology and survey design, reviewing poll results, drawing conclusions and recommendations from polls, and ethical issues in polling.

LOGISTICS

The class will meet at 1957 E Street, Room B17, on Thursday evenings (6:10 to 8:45 pm) for ten weeks beginning May 22nd and ending July 17th. The final exam will be taken on July 24th.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact either of us at our office between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm -- or make an appointment to stop by. You may also contact us by email at **btringali@tarrance.com** or **bmartino@tarrance.com**. In addition, one or both of us will try to show up for the class about a few minutes early each week.

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READING LIST

Two books will be used in this course, which each individual is responsible for purchasing and reading in full. Additional articles for the course work will be provided by the instructor the week before they are to be read. It is highly recommended that you keep these additional reading in a binder. All of this material will be the basis of class discussion and any of this information could appear on the final exam. The bottom line is do the reading if you expect to receive a passing grade.

The following are the texts which each individual is responsible for purchasing:

Weisberg, Herbert F., et al, An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling, and Data Analysis, Third Edition, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996 [ISBN 0-8039-7402-7]

Fowler, Floyd J., Survey Research Methods, Third Edition, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002 [ISBN 0-7619-2191-5]

Stonecash, Jeffrey M., Political Polling: Strategic Information in Campaigns, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Lanham, Maryland, 2003 {ISBN 0-7425-2553-8}

GRADES

Final grades for this course will be based upon class participation, two assignments, and a final exam. The first assignment will be a sample design project. The second will focus on questionnaire design. The third assignment will be a written analysis of poll results. The following is a breakdown of how your final grade will be calculated:

Class participation	10%
1 st assignment	20%
2 nd assignment	20%
3 rd assignment	20%
Final exam	30%

ASSIGNMENTS

#1—Sample Design

#2—Questionnaire Design

#3—Survey Analysis

CLASS OUTLINE

(All topics are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Additional reading materials may be handed out a week or two in advance.)

- May 22nd- Introduction
Discussion of course and introductions
The use of polling in politics- election campaigns and more
Polling in the development of strategy and tactics

Have read for this class:

Fowler- Chapter One

Weisberg- Chapters One and Two

Stonecash- Chapter One, Two and Three

- May 29th- Sampling
Probability versus non-probability
RDD versus listed samples

Have read:

Fowler- Chapters Two and Three

Weisberg- Chapter Three

Stonecash- Chapter Five

1st Assignment Distributed (due June 19th)

- June 5th- Questionnaire Design
Questionnaire guidelines
Question guidelines
Issues in measuring attitudes

Have read:

Fowler- Chapters Five and Six

Weisberg- Chapters Four, Six (Coding Schemes section only) and Seven

Stonecash- Chapter Four

- June 12th - Reading a Poll
Calculating Rates (response, cooperation, refusal, contact)
Variables, Levels of Data, Types of Error
Weighting decisions
Marginals and Tables
Asking the right questions

Have read:

Fowler- Chapter Eight

Weisberg- Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten (Probability Theory section only), and Eleven

Stonecash- Chapter Seven

2nd Assignment Distributed (due July 3rd)

- June 19th - Analysis and Writing
Focusing on what's important
Rules of thumb in campaign polls

Have read:

Weisberg- Chapters Thirteen, Fifteen, and Sixteen

Stonecash- Chapter Eight

1st Assignment Due

- June 26th - Message Testing and Regression
Push Questions versus "Push Polls"
Analyzing push messages- scores and multiple regression analysis

Have read:

Weisberg- Chapters Twelve, and Fourteen

Tringali- "Message Testing" Chapter

Stonecash- Chapter Nine

3rd Assignment Distributed (due July 17th)

- July 3rd - Ethics in Polling
Rights of respondents
Professional responsibilities

Have read:

Fowler- Chapter Nine and Ten

Weisberg- Chapter Seventeen

2nd Assignment Due

- July 10th- Fielding the Poll/ Future Methods
In person, mail, and self-administered polls
Telephone polling
Internet polling

Have read:

Fowler- Chapter Four and Seven (Overview of Interviewer Job section only)

Weisberg- Chapter Five

Stonecash- Chapter Six

- July 17th- Final Review

Have read:

Fowler- Chapter Eleven

Stonecash- Chapter Ten

3rd Assignment Due

- July 24th- Final Exam

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