POLS401/532 – Survey Research Methods[1]

Instructor: Mert Moral

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Office Hours: By appointment only. M 2:30-3:30pm and R 1:30-2:30pm. FASS2109 or via Zoom.[2]

Lectures: M 3:40-6:30pm via Zoom, to which I will connect from FASS1103.[3]

Course Description

Surveys have long provided researchers with representative, reliable, and valid information and served as an indispensable tool for our understanding of especially public opinion and electoral behavior. The main objective of this course is to introduce advanced undergraduate and graduate students to a set of universally recognized principles that have been guiding scientific survey studies in the last decades.

Over the course of the semester, we will focus on all major stages of survey research –i.e., research question formulation, sampling, mode of data collection, questionnaire design, pilot testing, interviewing, as well as cleaning, managing, and weighting survey data, and simple hypothesis testing employing survey data. This course pays particular attention to practice as well. We will examine and evaluate several national and cross-national survey studies, and applied social science research. Moreover, students will design their own survey instruments and acquire the necessary software skills commensurate with their level to be able to examine, edit, and weight survey data and employ survey data for hypothesis testing.

Upon completion of this course, students will be equipped with the fundamental skills to design, carry out, and evaluate survey studies and have a thorough understanding of the scientific methods used to collect survey data, and advantages, limitations, and all major stages of survey research.

No prior experience or course work in survey methodology is required for this course. However, many course topics are technical and may require further explanation. Moreover, survey research includes elements of both art and science. While traditional lectures and assigned materials will cover the scientific nature of survey research, the art part requires getting your hands dirty. Hence, both undergraduate and graduate students will be asked to design their own survey instruments. Other course requirements consist of an online midterm and a (face-to-face) final examination, four short assignments, participation in in-class and online discussions, and attendance for undergraduate students; an oline midterm exam, four short assignments, attendance and participation in in-class and online discussions, and a final research paper for graduate students.

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[1]We may have to revise the course plan according to the reassessment to be made country-wide, regarding higher education, at the beginning of April. The content to be delivered is certain but the method of course delivery, the number and dates of exams, and some other details are subject to change.

[2]Please click on the hyperlink (in blue) to set up an appointment and connect to the virtual office-hour meeting for which the login information will be (re)sent via Calendly.

[3]Note that meetings will not be recorded as per the University regulations.

Course Outline and Important Dates

Week 1	27.02	Why Survey Research?	Groves et al. Ch.1⋆
Week 2	06.03	Total Survey Error Approach	Groves et al. Ch.2
Week 3	13.03	Target Populations and Sampling Frames	Groves et al. Chs.3 and 4.1-4.3
Week 4[4]	20.03	Sampling	Groves et al. Ch.4.4-4.10⋆
Week 5	27.03	Modes of Data Collection	Groves et al. Ch.5
Week 6	03.04	Questionnaire Design	Groves et al. Ch.7
Week 7[5]	10.04	Evaluation, Reliability, and Validity	Groves et al. Ch.8⋆
Week 8	17.04	Online Midterm Exam	*No readings!*
Week 9	24.04	Interviewing	Groves et al. Ch.9⋆
Week 10	01.05	No class	*No readings!*
Week 11	08.05	Ethics and Experiments	Groves et al. Ch.11⋆
Week 12[6]	15.05	Processing Survey Data	Groves et al. Chs.6 and 10⋆
Week 13	22.05	Operations and Descriptive Statistics	⋆*See the "Additional Readings"*
Week 14	29.05	Hypothesis Testing and Wrap-up	Groves et al. Ch.12⋆
	05.06	Final Research Paper	

Textbooks

– You should have a hard/soft copy of the following textbook we will use in POLS401/532:

- Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2009. *Survey Methodology.* Second Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

– The textbook is available in the University bookstore (Homer) and reserved in the Information Center (IC), which can be checked out for only 24 hours to ensure that all students have a chance to read the assigned chapters in a timely manner.

– Additional (required) readings for the weeks indicated with ⋆ in the previous section are listed below and also uploaded to the "Resources" section of the course page.

– Some recent readings indicated with an additional ? will most likely replace older ones on the same topic (indicated with !) next year and are suggested readings only for graduate students.

Additional Readings[7]

⋆ **Week 1 (27.02) - Why Survey Research?**

– Brady, Henry E. 2000. "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33 (1):47-57.

– Smith, Tom W. 2013. "Survey-Research Paradigms Old and New." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 25 (2):218-29.

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[4]Please ensure that you have access to Stata/MS Excel during our online meetings on the dates indicated with the yellow color.

[5]Rescheduled following the YÖK announcement, not part of the midterm exam.

[6]We may need to reschedule this lecture given the Parliamentary and Presidential elections on May 14th, TBA later.

[7]Assigned readings indicated with the plus sign are suggested for undergraduate and required for graduate students.

⋆ **Week 2 (06.03) - Total Survey Error Approach**

– Groves, Robert M., and Lars Lyberg. 2010. "Total Survey Error: Past, Present, and Future." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74 (5):849-79.

– Jennings, Will, and Christopher Wlezien. 2018. "Election Polling Errors across Time and Space." *Nature Human Behaviour* 2 (April 2018):276-83.

– Silver, Nate. 2020. "The Polls Weren't Great. But That's Pretty Normal." https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-polls-werent-great-but-thats-pretty-normal/

– Silver, Nate. 2021. "The Death Of Polling Is Greatly Exaggerated." https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-death-of-polling-is-greatly-exaggerated/

⋆ **Week 3 (13.03) - Target Populations and Sampling Frames**

– Moral, Mert. 2019. A Comparative Study of the Individual and Contextual Determinants of Invalid Votes in Europe. In *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781526478733.

– OECD Development Communication Network. 2017. "Understanding Public Attitudes to Sustainable Development: Overview of International Surveys." https://www.oecd.org/dev/pgd/Overview_of_International_Surveys_on_Sustainable_Development_DevCom_%20Nov2017.pdf. [Online]

– Universitas Osloensis Institutt for Statsvitenskap (ISV). 2018. "Comparative Survey Data on Values, Attitudes and Opinions." https://www.sv.uio.no/isv/tjenester/kunnskap/datasett/survey_data.html#values. [Online]

+ Heath, Anthony, Stephen Fisher, and Shawna Smith. 2005. "The Globalization of Public Opinion Research." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 8: 297-333.

⋆ **Week 4 (20.03) - Sampling and Sample Size**

– Creative Research Systems. 2023. "Sample Size Calculator." https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm. [Online]

– FiveThirtyEight. 2020. "FiveThirtyEight's Pollster Ratings: Based on the Historical Accuracy and Methodology of Each Firm's Polls." https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/pollster-ratings/.

– Moral, Mert. 2022. "Politics as (Un)Usual? An Overview of the June 2018 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Turkey." In *Elections and Public Opinion in Turkey: Through the Prism of the 2018 Elections*, eds. A. Çarkoğlu and E. Kalaycıoğlu. New York: Routledge. [Available on SU Course+]

+ (For foreign students:) Aydaş, İrem. 2020. *Pre-Election Polls in Turkey*, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Sabancı University, Unpublished MA Thesis. pp.6-51 [Available on SU Course+].

+ (For Turkish speakers:) Aydaş, İrem, Mert Moral, and Yasemin Tosun. 2022. *Türkiye'de Seçim Anketlerinin Toplam Anket Hatası Perspektifinden Bir İncelemesi" [An Examination of Election Polls in Turkey from the Total Survey Error Paradigm Perspective]. Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 51(1): 87-110.

+ Chang, Linchiat, and Jon A. Krosnick. 2009. "National Surveys via RDD Telephone Interviewing Versus the Internet: Comparing Sample Representativeness and Response Quality." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (4):641-78.

+ Yeager, David S., Jon A. Krosnick, Linchiat Chang, Harold S. Javitz, Matthew S. Levendusky, Alberto Simpser, and Rui Wang. 2011. "Comparing the Accuracy of RDD Telephone Surveys and Internet Surveys Conducted with Probability and Non-Probability Samples." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75 (4):709-47.

⋆ **Week 5 (27.03) - Modes of Data Collection**

+! Couper, Mick P. 2013. "Is the Sky Falling? New Technology, Changing Media, and the Future of Surveys." *Survey Research Methods* 7 (3):145-56.

+? Couper, Mick P. 2017. "New Developments in Survey Data Collection." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43:121-45.

+ Galesic, Mirta, and Michael Bosnjak. 2009. "Effects of Questionnaire Length on Participation and Indicators of Response Quality in a Web Survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (2):349-60.

+ Kreuter, Frauke, Stanley Presser, and Roger Tourangeau. 2008. "Social Desirability Bias in CATI, IVR, and Web Surveys: The Effects of Mode and Question Sensitivity." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72 (5):847-65.

+ Prior, Markus. 2013. "Visual Political Knowledge: A Different Road to Competence?" *Journal of Politics* 76 (1):41-57.

⋆ **Week 6 (03.04) - Questionnaire Design**

– Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. 2016. "Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 5: Design Report (Sample Design and Data Collection Report)." https://cses.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/cses5_DesignReport.pdf. [Online]

– Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. 2016. "Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 5 (2016-2021) Questionnaire." https://cses.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/cses5_Questionnaire.txt. [Online]

+ Blumberg, Stephen J. 2007. "Coverage Bias in Traditional Telephone Surveys of Low-income and Young Adults." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71 (5):734-49.

+ Fricker, Scott, Mirta Galesic, Roger Tourangeau, and Ting Yan. 2005. "An Experimental Comparison of Web and Telephone Surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (3):370-92.

+ Groves, Robert M. 2006. "Nonresponse Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Household Surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70 (5):646-75.

+ Medway, Rebecca L., and Jenna Fulton. 2012. "When More Gets You Less: A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Concurrent Web Options on Mail Survey Response Rates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (4):733-46.

⋆ **Week 7 (10.04) - Evaluation, Reliability, and Validity**

– Carmines, Edward G., and Richard A. Zaller. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

– Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. "Statistical Conclusion Validity and Internal Validity." In *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*, ed. W. R. Shadish, T. D. Cook and D. T. Campbell. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

⋆ **Week 9 (24.04) - Interviewing**

– Davis, Darren W. 1997. "The Direction of Race of Interviewer Effects among African-Americans: Donning the Black Mask." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1):309-322.

– Tourangeau, Roger, and Tom W. Smith. 1996. "Asking Sensitive Questions: The Impact of Data Collection Mode, Question Format, and Question Context." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60 (2):275-304.

?+ Eisele, Gudrun, Hugo Vachon, Ginette Lafit, Peter Kuppens, Marlies Houben, Inez Myin-Germeys, and Wolfgang Viechtbauer. 2022. "The Effects of Sampling Frequency and Questionnaire Length on Perceived Burden, Compliance, and Careless Responding in Experience Sampling Data in a Student Population." Assessment 29 (2):136-51.

+ Leiner, Dominik J. 2019. "Too Fast, too Straight, too Weird: Non-Reactive Indicators for Meaningless Data in Internet Surveys." *Survey Research Methods* 19 (3):229-48.

⋆ **Week 11 (08.05) - Ethics and Experiments**

– Aytaç, S. Erdem, and Ali Çarkoğlu. 2018. "Presidents Shaping Public Opinion in Parliamentary Democracies: A Survey Experiment in Turkey." *Political Behavior* 40 (2):371-93.

– Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104 (2):226-42.

!+ Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20 (3):351-68.

+ Hangartner, Dominik, Elias Dinas, Moritz Marbach, Konstantinos Matakos, and Dimitros Xefteris. 2019. "Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Make Natives More Hostile?" *American Political Science Review* 113 (2):442-55.

?+ Kennedy, Ryan, Scott Clifford, Tyler Burleigh, Philip D. Waggoner, Ryan Jewell, and Nicholas J.G. Winter. 2020. "The Shape and Solutions to the Mturk Quality Crisis." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8 (4): 614-29.

⋆ **Weeks 12 & 13 (15-22.05) - Operations and Descriptive Statistics**

– Çarkoğlu, Ali, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, S. Erdem Aytaç, and Mert Moral. 2018. "Turkish Election Study 2018 Post-control Questionnaire."

– Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp.143-187 [Available on SU Course+].

⋆ **Week 14 (29.05) - Hypothesis Testing**

– Sapsford, Roger. 2011. "Keeping It Simple: Tabular Analysis." In *Survey Research*, ed. R. Sapsford. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Grading

– Grades will be given on a 100-point scale. Cumulative final grades will then be converted to letter grades at the end of the semester as follows: 85-100=A, 80-84=A-, 75-79=B+, 74-70=B, 65-69=B-, 60-64=C+, 55-59=C, 50-54=C-, 45-49=D+, 40-44=D, 0-39=F.

– For undergraduate students, class requirements, in turn, constitute 30% (final exam), 25% (midterm exam), 35% (short assignments), 10% (participation and attendance) of final grades.

– For graduate students, class requirements, in turn, constitute 30% (final research paper), 25% (midterm exam), 35% (short assignments), 10% (participation and attendance) of final grades.

Course Requirements

- **Midterm and Final Examinations**

  – You will take a two hours-long online midterm examination on April 17, 2023. The midterm aims to assess your knowledge about some key concepts and design features you will have learned in the first half of the semester, and consists of three short questions requiring a thorough understanding of all lecture slides and assigned readings, and a short essay where you will evaluate a publicly available poll/survey from the perspective of the total survey error approach.

  – The three hours-long final exam (the date and medium will be announced later) will consist of four short-essay questions and include all topics we will have covered throughout the semester.

- **Short Assignments**

  – Over the course of the semester, you will submit five short assignments that will together constitute 35% of your final grade.

  – The first short assignment will ask you to examine the design of a scientific survey conducted in Turkey and evaluate it from the perspective of the total survey error approach.

  – The second assignment will ask you to examine several publicly available polls for the June 23, 2019, Istanbul municipality re-elections, compute the margins of error and mean absolute errors, and discuss possible sources of discrepancies, if any.

  – The third assignment will ask you to search for a scientific national or cross-national survey study of which the questionnaire is publicly available, and report the related survey items that are used in scholarly literature to measure a construct of your choice (e.g., vote choice, income, ethnicity, economic evaluations, policy preferences). You will then propose alternative survey items and discuss how such alternative question types, wordings and/or response options would allow you to better measure the construct.

  – The fourth assignment asks you to posit/state a simple/bivariate hypothesis where the dependent variable approximates the construct you identified in the second assignment, then employ the 2018 Turkish Election Study (TES) data to conduct a simple hypothesis (chi-square or t-) test.

– The fifth assignment asks you to posit/state a simple/bivariate hypothesis and test it by employing the 2019 Istanbul Municipality Election Study data.

⋆ Assignment-specific instructions will be provided during the lectures (depending on our progress) and the assignments will be due the following lecture.

- **Final Research Paper** – *only for graduate students*

– You may choose to research any topic/research question on public opinion or electoral behavior.[8] Your research, however, should clearly identify a research question that has not been sufficiently addressed or answered in previous literature, and you should posit a hypothesis that takes a "cause and effect" form.

– Depending on your level of methodological expertise, you will design survey items suitable for the task at hand, or write a full paper employing survey data from a scientific national or a cross-national survey.

– Your paper should be organized as follows:

- Introduction – approximately 2 pages, where you briefly state your research question and explain why it should be studied (i.e., the relevance of your study), how and in what regards your research contributes to the primary debate(s) in literature, and your main *point* (theoretical argument).

- Literature review – approx. 2-3 pages, where you discuss the state of previous research, rival and/or conflicting explanations of your phenomenon of interest, and explain how and in what regards your study differs from previous literature (i.e., the novelty of your research).

- Theoretical expectations – approx. 2 pages, where you clearly explain your *theoretical expectations* informed by the previous literature, explain the direction of the causal relationship between your outcome of interest and main explanatory variable/s, and deduct at least one testable *hypothesis.*

- Research design – approx. 2-3 pages, where you provide *conceptual and operational definitions* of your dependent and main explanatory/independent variable/s, describe how you will *look into* the problem –e.g., hypothesis testing (and/or model specification and estimator), ruling out rival explanations, decision rules, important assumptions, and potential econometric problems and their solutions.

- Empirical findings – approx. 2-3 pages, presentation, graphical illustration, and interpretation of your findings in both statistical and substantive terms.

- Conclusion – approx. 2 pages, a short summary of what you have done and why you have done that, along with a short discussion of the significance of your findings for the related literature, strengths and limitations of your study, and how your research does and further research would improve our understanding of the topic.

Software

– You may use either Stata 17 SE or MS Excel for the short assignments.

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[8]Please note that we must have a meeting before March 27, 2023, to discuss your proposed topic.

– Before Week 4, you should have a relatively recent version of the software of your preference installed on your personal computer.

– Installation instructions for Stata 17 SE and Microsoft Office 365 are available on the IT Department's website. If needed, please email your TA, Tarık B. Mert, or open an IT ticket to get help with remote installation.

Classroom Policy, Attendance, and Participation

– Some of the assigned textbook chapters, and other required and supplemental meetings are technical and may thus require further explanation and clarification. We will thus follow a traditional lecture format in the first half of each week. You are, however, strongly advised and will be frequently encouraged to ask any and all questions you might have.

– In the second half of each class, we will discuss the real-world implications of many survey design features and their practical applications in the scholarly literature employing survey data (i.e., theoretical mechanism and expectations, research design, and empirical evidence in the assigned readings), and learn how to use Stata and/or MS Excel to organize, describe, and analyze survey data.

– You can miss 1 (one) class/meeting without any grade penalty. Each other missed class/meeting will result in a 2.5-point grade penalty on your final grade.

– You should be prepared to have a well-informed assessment of assigned readings for each lecture.

– Note that your participation and attendance are graded together. Attending the class without necessary preparation (i.e., having read the assigned readings and finished the short assignment, if any,) and not taking part in the in-class discussions will result in a bad participation grade.

– You must turn off your cell phones during lectures and discussion sessions. You may use your computer (or tablet) only for course-related activities. I may ask those violating these two simple rules to put their electronic devices away or leave the class/meeting room.

Syllabus

– This syllabus includes essential information and administrative requirements about when, how, and what you should do to pass this course with a good grade. Please read it carefully and reread it before you email your teaching assistant or instructor.

– The PDF version of the syllabus on SU Course+ is the official syllabus for this course as it is updated periodically.[9] Please visit the course page to view its most recent version.

Course Page and e-mails

– After each lecture, I will post the lecture slides and weekly problem sets, if any, to the course page.[10]

– I will use your Sabanci University email to communicate administrative and other course-related issues with you. Therefore, please check your email regularly and, if necessary, reply in a timely

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[9] Course content, requirements, and policies are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

[10] Any content published on SUCourse+ was created to be used and distributed within Sabanci University. The intellectual property rights of the content belong to the instructor and Sabancı University without any limitations. It cannot be used, copied, or reproduced by third parties without the prior written permission of the instructor and Sabanci University.

manner.

– The fastest way to contact me is always via email. Please feel free to email me anytime about any **relevant** academic or non-academic issue.

Formatting, Writing, Late Submission, and Grade Appeal

– A list of course requirements and a tentative schedule are provided above. The exact schedule is, however, contingent on our progress and subject to change upon prior notice.

– There are no margin or font requirements for written assignments. You should, however, turn in stapled and professional-looking papers (i.e., with your name, page numbers, proper citations, a properly formatted bibliography, and professional-looking tables and/or graphs).

– Note that I pay particular attention to writing and the correct use of terminology. I will provide you with annotated copies of your written assignments to improve your writing in both form and content. You are expected to take our comments into account in your remaining assignments.

– Please proofread your assignments for spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

– Late submissions for all short assignments will be penalized by 1 (one) point for each hour they are late. You will receive 0 (zero) if your short assignments are late for more than 4 (four) days, and if your final research paper is late by more than 1 (one) hour.

– Except for serious circumstances documented by the University Health Center or a hospital (and approved by the faculty administration) and students with disabilities, there will not be any make-up assignments or extensions.

– If you are unsatisfied with the grade you received, you may write a formal memorandum explaining your concerns and requesting that your grade be reviewed. I will respond to your inquiry in writing and not discuss your grade with you in person.

Academic Honesty

– As its Research Misconduct Policy suggests, Sabanci University expects students to do their own work and acknowledge others when presenting their work.

– As a scholar-in-training, it is your responsibility to do your own work and properly cite your sources using an appropriate format. Please refer to APSA's Style Manual for the preferred citation format for this class, especially if you are unsure about what to or how to cite.

– Minor penalties for citation and bibliographical errors will accumulate in the case of a consistent pattern, and any case of plagiarism or other sorts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

– Note that all written assignments for this course are written take-home exams according to the YÖK regulations. Therefore, plagiarism in take-home exams will be considered cheating and pursued to the limits of the University and YÖK rules.

Accommodation

– Extra time for assignments and other necessary arrangements for students with disabilities and from the disaster zone will be made in conjunction with the Center of Individual and Academic Development and the instructor.