SOCI702

Social Survey Research: Issues and Practices

S2 Evening 2017

Dept of Sociology

Contents

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
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W104, 2nd Level, Australian Hearing Hub
Friday 11am to 12pm or by appointment

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status
SOC 830

Unit description
Social surveys are now used widely in policy making, public debate, and social research. This unit explores the potentials and limits of social survey research in the social sciences. As well as exploring the theoretical issues of this approach, students will gain a practical and theoretical guide to the use of surveys in social research. Social surveys are usually designed to enable statistical analysis of survey data, so students will also be introduced to a range of data techniques including multivariate analysis. Students will use R in data analysis.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods

Critically analyze sociological research

Develop insight into theoretical accounts about survey responses

Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions

Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively

Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis

Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Multiple-choice Test	20%	No	Week 6
Analysis Tasks	30%	No	Week 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Survey Research Project	40%	No	Week 13
Participation	10%	No	On-going

Multiple-choice Test

Due: **Week 6**
Weighting: **20%**

This test will be administered during Week 6. The test is intended to assess students' fluency with the key concepts, terms, theories, and procedures of social survey research methods. Students will have 60 minutes to complete the test. It will cover materials from week 1 to week 5 on social survey. It will consist of 40 multiple-choice questions.

More information on the test will be provided on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods
- Develop insight into theoretical accounts about survey responses
- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively

Analysis Tasks

Due: **Week 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12**
Weighting: **30%**

Students will have six analysis tasks, which are take-home assignments. From week 7 to week 12, students will be required to complete and submit analysis tasks in due time after the class. These tasks are intended to assess students' skills to analyze survey datasets using the software R/RStudio. They consist of several statistical problems that students should address. Each task contributes to 5% of students' overall assessment.

Detailed guidelines will be provided on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis

Survey Research Project

Due: **Week 13**
Weighting: **40%**

This project is a research paper in which students will apply the skills they have learned in the classes to a topic of their own choosing. Students can choose between two types of survey research project to complete this assignment. The first type of research project is writing a research proposal. In the research proposal, students will design their own social surveys (e.g., the construction of survey questionnaires) that address their own research questions. Students need to review previous studies on their chosen topic and have to develop their own research hypotheses. It is not necessary to implement their designed surveys, but students will be required to provide a detailed explanation of how they would administer their designed surveys (e.g., the design of sampling) and which kind of statistical analysis is most suitable for testing the hypotheses. This research proposal will be evaluated primarily by students' ability to design social surveys, to formulate research questions and hypotheses, to write survey questionnaires, and to administer social surveys. The second type of research project is writing a complete research paper. In the research paper, students will analyze existing survey datasets (e.g., Australian General Social Survey, Household Income & Labour Dynamics of Australia) to address their own research questions, but will not be required to design their own social survey. In the research paper, students will propose their own research questions, develop hypotheses (including the literature review), explain the dataset, variables, and analytic method, analyze the dataset, and report the statistical result. The research paper will be evaluated primarily by students' ability to formulate research questions and hypotheses, to find a suitable dataset and variables, and to analyze the survey dataset. I recommend students to discuss with the unit convenor about their research project as early as possible.

More information on the project will be provided on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Critically analyze sociological research
- Develop insight into theoretical accounts about survey responses
- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Participation

Due: **On-going**
Weighting: **10%**

Active participation involves the attendance of at least 75% of the classes (not counting excused absences) and an active engagement in the classes. Students will be graded according to their contributions to in-class discussions. Students who score highly for in-class participation will be those who arrive to class on time, actively discuss assigned readings, share related materials they have discovered outside of class, and make connections to additional topics that enhance our course. Attendance is tremendously important. Missing classes will diminish this part of your grade. If a student is absent from more than 3 classes, he or she will lose all in-class participation points.

Further details will be provided on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Delivery and Resources

The first five classes focus on the design and implementation of social surveys, and the next seven classes on data analysis. Lectures and statistical labs are mixed, and we will meet TUE 6 pm at E4B 308. The class will run until 8 pm (and longer if needed).

Textbooks

This course draws on two required textbook.

- Vaus, David de (2014) *Surveys in Social Research*, 6th Edition, Allen&Unwin.
- Illowsky, Barbara and Susan Dean (2017) *Introductory Statistics*, OpenStax. (Available for free at https://d3bxy9euw4e147.cloudfront.net/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/Statistics-OP.pdf)

It is recommended to read the following textbook if students seek for comprehensive understanding of using the software R.

- Verzani, John (2014) Using R for Introductory Statistics, 2nd Edition, Taylor&Francis.

Survey and Statistical Software

Students will learn to use an online survey software Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online survey platform that makes it easy to build a survey and to collect survey data. Students can access Qualtrics using Macquarie University OneID number and password at the following website.

- **Qualtrics:** https://mqedu.qualtrics.com

For the second part of the unit, students will learn to use statistical software R for the quantitative data analysis. Students can download software R and its integrated development environment(IDE), RStudio for free at the following websites:

- **R:** https://www.r-project.org
- **RStudio:** https://www.rstudio.com

R and RStudio are available in iLab as well. In the class of Week 5, students will learn how to install R and RStudio.

Information about iLearn

Important information about the weekly schedule for SOCI702, course readings, and assessment are all available on the course iLearn page. If students do not have access, please contact IT help. Students are required to check iLearn and their student email regularly for course updates and information. Students may need to download and print materials.

Information about Turnitin and GradeMark

All written assessments for SOCI702 need to be submitted via Turnitin. A link to Turnitin is available via the Assessments tab on the iLearn page. Please contact the unit convenor if students cannot find it (do not leave it until the day of the assessment). Assessments will be marked via GradeMark and returned to students electronically.

Unit Schedule

Wk	Date	Lecture Topics	Lab Topics
1	1 Aug	Introduction to Social Survey Research • Vaus (2014), Ch. 1-2	No Lab
2	8 Aug	Research Design • Vaus(2014) Ch. 3-5	No Lab
3	15 Aug	Sample and Questionnaire • Vaus (2014) Ch. 6-7	Qualtrics: Introduction to Qualtrics
4	22 Aug	Survey Administration • Vaus (2014) Ch.8-9	Qualtrics: Creating Online Surveys
5	29 Aug	Measurement and Scale • Vaus(2014) Ch.10-12	R: Introducing R and RStudio
6	5 Sep	**Multiple-choice Test**	R: Data Management

Wk	Date	Lecture Topics	Lab Topics
7	12 Sep	Univariate Analysis • Vaus(2014) Ch. 13	R: Univariate Analysis
8	3 Oct	Normal and Sampling Distribution • Illowsky and Dean(2017) Ch. 6-7	R: Normal and Sampling Distribution
9	10 Oct	Confidence Intervals and Testing Hypotheses • Illowsky and Dean(2017) Ch.8-10	R: Confidence Intervals and Testing Hypotheses
10	17 Oct	Bivariate Analysis • Vaus(2014) Ch.14-15	R: Bivariate Analysis
11	24 Oct	Linear Regression Analysis • Vaus(2014) Ch.15-16	R: Linear Regression Analysis
12	31 Oct	Linear Regression Analysis2 • Vaus(2014) Ch.16-17	R: Linear Regression Analysis
13	7 Nov	Logistic Regression Analysis and More	No Lab

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is an integral part of the core values and principles contained in the Macquarie University Ethics Statement. Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application, and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- All academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim
- All academic collaborations are acknowledged
- Academic work is not falsified in any way
- When the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately
- See the link above for more information from Policy Central.

Extensions and Special Consideration

In the first instance, extensions for course assessments should be discussed with the unit convenor. Medical certificates or similar documentation will be needed to support requests for extensions. If you have any doubts about whether your situation qualifies for an extension, please contact the unit convenor.

Special consideration should be applied for when students experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration Form and all supporting documentation.

The special consideration policy is available online at: https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration

Late Penalties

Late work will not be accepted unless an extension or Special Consideration is granted. Turning in work late results in a penalty of 10 percent per day. If you are unable to turn in an assignment at the scheduled time, please contact the unit convenor before the due date.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://stu

dents.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyze sociological research
- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment task

- Survey Research Project

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods
- Develop insight into theoretical accounts about survey responses
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis

Assessment tasks

- Multiple-choice Test
- Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Project

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyze sociological research
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment task

- Survey Research Project

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods
- Critically analyze sociological research
- Develop insight into theoretical accounts about survey responses
- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Develop useful data analysis skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment tasks

- Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Project

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment tasks

- Multiple-choice Test
- Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Project
- Participation

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods

Assessment tasks

- Multiple-choice Test
- Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Project
- Participation