



SOCI702

Social Survey Research: Issues and Practices

S1 Evening 2019

Dept of Sociology

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	4
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	7
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	8
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	9
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	10

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Contact via Email

Department of Sociology, Level 2, AHH (16 University Avenue)

By appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

SOC830

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 understand 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 analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

Conduct original research using quantitative research methods.

General Assessment Information

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

More information is available from *Policy Central* [here](#).

University Grading Policy

The grade that a student receives will signify their overall performance in meeting the learning outcomes of the unit of study. Graded units will use the following grades

HD	High Distinction	85-100
D	Distinction	75-84
Cr	Credit	65-74
P	Pass	50-64
F	Fail	0-49

Return of Marked Work

As per university policy, written assessments will be returned to students within three weeks of the submission date. Early assignments will not be marked early. And, the short class test held during the examination period at the end of the semester will not be returned to students.

Special Consideration (Extensions)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

More information about Special Consideration is available [here](#).

Late Penalties

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. online quiz.

Campus Wellbeing

Macquarie University offers a range of wellbeing services (including [but not limited to]: health, welfare, counselling, disability and student advocacy services) that are available to you at any time during your studies. Campus Wellbeing is here to support you and help you succeed, both academically and personally. More information is available [here](#).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Online Quiz	20%	No	1st April
R Analysis Tasks	30%	No	Week 7, 9, 11 and 13
Survey Research Report	40%	No	17th June
Course Participation	10%	No	Ongoing

Online Quiz

Due: **1st April**

Weighting: **20%**

Online quiz will consist of 20 multiple-choice or true-or-false questions, and you will have 30

minutes to complete it. You will be asked to read each question and select the BEST response from the available options. This quiz will draw on course materials from the lectures and workshops from week 1 to week 5.

The online quiz will become available on Thursday 28th March, and you can undertake the quiz until Monday 1st April (by 5:00 pm EST). It will become available via the course **iLearn** page.

The quiz can be taken only once, and it is up to you to ensure that you have time available to undertake the quiz.

More information will become available in week 4 and 5 of the semester. As per the Faculty of Arts policy, **no late submissions will be accepted for the online quiz.**

Note) In the event of technical difficulties, it is your responsibility to contact the unit convenor before the due date and follow the instructions on **iLearn** in notifying the university. We advise you to ensure that you can access the link to the quiz on Thursday 28th March (without starting the quiz unless you want to).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods.
- Critically understand 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.

R Analysis Tasks

Due: **Week 7, 9, 11 and 13**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will have four analysis tasks, which are take-home assignments. In week 7, 9, 11 and 13, students will be required to complete and submit each analysis task in due time (normally before the next class begins). These tasks are intended to assess students' skills to analyse survey datasets using R. They consist of several statistical problems that students should address. Each task contributes to 7.5% of students' overall marks. Using R is a must for this task. Students will learn all the necessary R codes in the lectures.

Each task will be posted on the **iLearn** page. The report should be submitted via **Turnitin**, and it will be marked via **GradeMark**. Please do not submit hard copies of this task and ensure that you have access to the **Turnitin** link before the due date. More information 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 data analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate

analysis.

- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods.

Survey Research Report

Due: **17th June**

Weighting: **40%**

This task is a research paper of 2,000 to 3,000 words. This task is designed to assess students' overall ability to address social science inquiries using quantitative research skills. It will require you to select a research topic, formulate research hypotheses, analyse datasets, and interpret the statistical outcomes. Using **R** is a must for this task.

For the data analysis, three Australian datasets will be provided on the **iLearn** page: *the 2009 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes* (which focuses on social inequality), *the 2012 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes* (which focuses on family and gender) and *Crime Rates Datasets for NSW Local Government Areas*. For this assessment task, students are required to choose one of these three datasets. The report should be submitted via **Turnitin**, and it will be marked via **GradeMark**. Please do not submit hard copies of this task and ensure that you have access to the **Turnitin** link before the due date. More information will be provided in week 8.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Course Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Students are expected to attend weekly lectures. To meet the requirements of this course, you need to attend at least 80% of the lectures (not counting excused absences). Also, you are expected to participate actively. Students who score highly for course 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 three lectures, he or she will lose all course participation points.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods.
- Critically understand 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 analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

Delivery and Resources

Lecture and workshop times

Lectures will take place on Mondays from 6 pm to 9 pm in [23 Wallys Walk - 105 Tutorial Rm](#) (previously W5A 105). Lecture recordings and visual materials can also be accessed using **ECHO360** on the **iLearn**.

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://openstax.org/details/books/introductory-statistics>)

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

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

Online Learning Platform

methods101.com is an online learning platform of quantitative research methods managed by me and Dr. Nicholas Harrigan (Senior Lecturer in Sociology at MQ). This website provides online teaching materials to help students learn statistical software programs.

Technology used

The following technologies are used in the course:

iLearn

Important information about the weekly schedule for the course, course readings and assessment are all available on the course **iLearn** page. If you do not have access, please contact IT help. **You are required to check iLearn and your student email regularly for course updates and information.**

iLab

iLab is the university's Remote Desktop system that allows you to connect to university computers remotely. It allows you to use **R** over the internet on- and off-campus computer

(desktop computer or laptop). If students cannot access **iLab**, the university has some computers with **R** in the library and digital lounge (C5C - 17 Wally's Walk) that are available to students outside of class hours. Please note that these labs can become very busy during peak periods.

Turnitin and GradeMark

The written assessment for the course needs to be submitted via **Turnitin**. A link to **Turnitin** is available via the Assessments tab on the iLearn page. Please contact the convenor if you cannot find it (do not leave it until the due date of the assessment). Assessments will be marked via **GradeMark** and returned to students electronically.

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 and password at <https://mqedu.qualtrics.com>.

R/RStudio

R is the name of the statistical programming language, and **RStudio** is a convenient interface of **R**. You can download both **R** and **RStudio** for free at:

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

R and **RStudio** are available in **iLab** as well (see above). Week 6 class will introduce how to install **R** and **RStudio**. After setting up **R** and **RStudio**, it is also necessary to install the following packages for the course:

- summarytools
- sjPlot
- sjmisc
- sjlabelled
- tidyverse
- gmodels
- gplots

Unit Schedule

- **Week 1:** Introduction to Social Survey Research
- **Week 2:** Quantitative Research Design
- **Week 3:** Unit of Analysis, Measurements and Sampling

- **Week 4:** Sampling Method and Constructing Survey Questionnaires
- **Week 5:** Survey Administration
- **Week 6:** Introduction to R and RStudio / Univariate Analysis
- **Week 7:** Univariate Analysis
- **Week 8:** Normal Distribution and Sampling Distribution
- **Week 9:** Estimating Confidence Intervals
- **Week 10:** Testing Hypotheses
- **Week 11:** Bivariate Association
- **Week 12:** Regression Analysis
- **Week 13:** Multiple Regression Analysis

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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 understand 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 analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.
- Conduct original research using quantitative research methods.

Assessment task

- Survey Research Report

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 skills in writing good survey questions.
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively.
- Develop useful data analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quiz
- R Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Report
- Course Participation

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 understand sociological research.
- Develop useful data analytic skills including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quiz
- R Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Report
- Course Participation

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

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

Assessment tasks

- Online Quiz
- R Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Report

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

- R Analysis Tasks
- Survey Research Report
- Course 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

- Learn foundational knowledge of social survey methods.
- Develop useful skills in writing good survey questions.
- Develop useful skills in administering social surveys effectively.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quiz
- Course Participation