

POLS 3394
Public Polling and Survey Techniques
Summer 2017

Instructor: Dr. April A. Johnson
Class Time: Mon/Wed 2:00pm-4:45pm
Class Location: Social Sciences Building, Room 2033
Office Hours: Mon/Wed 1:00pm-2:00pm
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Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to the practices and applications of political surveys. The specific topics covered in this course range from broad, theoretical conceptualizations of public perceptions to more pointed, detailed data collection methodologies. Students will learn the overarching goals of empirical inquiry, the relationship between a population and a sample, the art of questionnaire design, survey implementation, data management, and data analysis. A background in statistics and/or research methods will be helpful in this course, though it is not a requirement. At the end of the semester students should be able to: (1) articulate the theoretical and practical objectives of public opinion polling, (2) identify issues of error and bias in survey research, (3) understand the relationship between expressed attitudes and actual behavior, and 4) assess the overall usefulness of polling in the American political landscape. The primary objective of this course is for you to become critical consumers of public opinion and the methodologies used to derive them.

Required Texts

Students are not required to purchase a textbook for this course. However, required readings will be posted in electronic format in D2L.

Evaluation of Course Objectives

Quizzes: There will be four quizzes given during class time. For the most part quiz questions will come from previous readings/lectures, however some questions may reference the readings assigned for that day (i.e., you must read before coming to class). There will be no makeup quizzes allowed under any circumstances.

Projects: Students will complete three projects related to survey design and the interpretation of public opinion data. Instructions for these assignments, as well as a grading rubric, will be handed out during the second week of classes.

Final Paper: Each student will be required to write one 5-8 page final paper in which they analyze and evaluate the concepts we've discussed. Instructions for this written assignment will be handed out roughly three weeks before it is due. Papers should be uploaded to the Dropbox in D2L by the deadline listed. Late papers will not be accepted for any reason.

Attendance/Professionalism: I expect each and every student to come to class, to be attentive and to be engaged in both lectures and discussion. **Attendance is especially important for our abbreviated summer schedule.** Attending class means that you are on time and that you do not leave until I have formally concluded class for that day. *Students who are a no show, join class late and/or who leave before class ends will not be given credit for attending.*

Attending class, however, does not equate to participating in it. Participation includes asking questions about the readings (write down questions as you read!), answering questions posed by the instructor, and responding to the comments made by your classmates. I encourage all students to think critically and to share their insights and inquiries with the class.

In addition to attendance and participation, students will be assessed on the professionalism with which they conduct themselves. Professionalism means that students are focused on course material, accountable for their own learning and respectful in their communication both inside and outside of the classroom. Incivilities, such as texting, chatting, or excessive classroom disruptions, will lower your grade in this course.

Distribution of Grades

15% Attendance/Participation/Professionalism
30% Final Paper
35% Projects (~11% each)
20% Quizzes (5% each)

Grading Scale

A	90-100	C	70-79	F	59 or below
B	80-89	D	60-69		

Electronics Policy

Above all, please be respectful to both the instructor and your fellow classmates when using electronic devices. While electronics are not prohibited in the classroom, students generally do better by [taking handwritten notes](#) and [minimizing digital distractions](#). In order to maximize your in-class learning, attentiveness and participation I highly recommend unplugging. If a student's use of electronics is consistently problematic/disruptive I will ask them to leave the classroom.

Policy for Missed or Late Work

Missing or late work/attendance will be accepted only under extenuating circumstances and with proper (medical) documentation. Students will generally not be allowed to make up missing coursework/attendance due to transportation, weather, technology, family and/or personal issues, though certain exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe religious holidays must notify the instructor of the date(s) they will be absent within the first two weeks of class. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to honor the request and not penalize the student for missing the class. If an examination or project is due during the absence the instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the assessment at an earlier date.

Disability Policy

Students who require accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams, designated note takers, etc.) to complete and participate in this course are welcome. However, in order for the instructor to recognize these accommodations students must officially document their disabilities with the office of Student Disability Services. *Note: Students seeking accommodations should do so within the first two weeks of the semester, as testing and documentation often takes time. The instructor will not grant accommodations retroactively.* Please visit the Student Disability Services website at sss.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Electronic Communication

Communication for this course will be sent to your official university email address. ***It is your responsibility to read the email in your official university email account and to do so in a timely manner (at least twice per week).*** If you choose to forward your official university email to another off-campus account, faculty are *not responsible* for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts.

Writing Assistance

The KSU Writing Center helps students in all disciplines improve their written work. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you on topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty and adherence to KSU's Student Codes of Conduct is expected at all times. Any student found to have engaged in academic misconduct such as plagiarism, collusion, or submitting non-original work is subject to disciplinary sanctions from the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. The term "collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with any other person in preparing work offered for academic credit. Students are advised that faculty routinely use online software (e.g., Turnitin, SafeAssign) both to prevent plagiarism and to assist in verifying when/if it has occurred.

If I suspect that a student has committed plagiarism, even if it is his or her first time, the student will receive a zero on the assignment and an incident report will be filed with the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. For more information about plagiarism and prevention go to www.plagiarism.org. To view the Kennesaw State University Student Codes of Conduct visit <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>.

Miscellaneous Policies

[Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement](#)

[Confidentiality and Privacy Statement \(FERPA\)](#)

[Course Accessibility Statement \(ADA statement\)](#)

[Ethics Statement](#)

[Sexual Harassment Statement](#)

[University – Student Rights Statement](#)

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to amend or correct this course syllabus as necessary. If the instructor amends or corrects this syllabus students will be properly notified of any changes.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Wed 5/31	Public Opinion: What Is It and What Is It Good For?	*Newport: What Other People Think *Erikson 1-6 *Bardes: How Public Opinion Data are Used
Mon 6/5	Shapers of Opinion, Attitudes of the American Public	*Erikson: Political Socialization and Political Learning *Bardes: Political Orientations *Erikson: Group Difference in Public Opinion
Wed 6/7	Historical Background, Ethical Concerns Quiz 1	*Bardes: Measuring American Opinion: The Origins of Polling *Weisburg: Chapter 14- Ethics in Surveys
Mon 6/12	Introduction to the Scientific Method	*Newport: Behind the Curtain *Erikson pg. 27-32
Wed 6/14	No Class <i>Project 1 Due at 11:59pm</i>	---
Mon 6/19	Theoretical Approaches to Measurement, Models of Opinion Formation and Change	*Newport: Do the People Know Enough? *Erikson: Microlevel Opinion (3-1) *Bohner & Dickel: Attitudes and Attitude Change
Wed 6/21	Methodology and Design Quiz 2	*Erikson 2-3 *Fowler: Designing Questions to be Good Measures
Mon 6/26	No Class	---
Wed 6/28	No Class <i>Project 2 Due at 11:59pm</i>	---
Mon 7/3	The Sampling Process, Techniques for Survey Implementation	*Fowler: Methods of Data Collection *Fowler: Sampling *Kellner: A Journalist's Guide To Opinion Polls
Wed 7/5	Survey Error and Sources of Bias Quiz 3	*Weisburg: Chapter 2- Survey Error *Fowler: Nonresponse
Mon 7/10	<i>Field Trip: KSU Burress Institute (KSU Center, 3333 Busbee Dr. NW)</i>	KSU Burress Institute 2016 Year in Review http://burruss.kennesaw.edu/research.php

Wed 7/12	Predicting Voter Behavior <i>Project 3 Due at 11:59pm</i>	*Erikson 2-4 *Kurtzleben: 4 Possible Reasons The Polls Got It So Wrong This Year
Mon 7/17	Opinion Polls in the Media, Information Cascades	*Nisbet: Horse Race Coverage & the Political Spectacle *Rothschild & Malhotra: Are Public Opinion Polls Self-Fulfilling Prophecies?
Wed 7/19	New Methodologies for Gauging Opinion Quiz 4	*Japac et al.: Big Data in Survey Research *McCabe: Google Eyes Move Into Political Polling Work *Marcotte: Twitter Researchers Offer Clues For Why Trump Won
Final Paper Due Wednesday July 26, 2017 By 11:59pm		

*Posted in D2L

To view academic deadlines, including add/drop dates, please visit <http://registrar.kennesaw.edu/>