This class is an introduction to all aspects of survey research and polling, from sampling to questionnaire design to methods of data collection to data analysis. The goal of the class is to give you an introduction to every major topic so you can become a well informed consumer of surveys and so you will be prepared for an entry-level job in a survey research or market research firm. You won’t be expert in everything but you will know enough to ask the right questions and you will certainly know more than most people.

**Topics covered**

Survey research deals with how we can draw probability samples of a population, design interview questionnaires to measure social characteristics or attitudes or behaviors, and how we analyze those data.

In outline form, the class will cover

- Introduction to modern polls and surveys
- Simple random sampling and margin of error calculation
- Complex sampling designs and margin of error calculation
- Practical shortcomings of sample designs
- Data collection methods
- Questionnaire design
- Interviewing
• Data analysis
• Ethical considerations in polling

Textbook and readings

The primary readings are drawn from the class textbook, Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. *Survey Research Methods, 4th edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. In the rest of this syllabus, I refer to this text as **SRM**. The text is available in an electronic version from Amazon.com at much lower price than the print edition. Since the Amazon Kindle reader is available free for both OS-X and Windows computers as well as for iPad, iPhone, Android, and for the actual Kindle reader, it should be very easy for you to use the electronic edition. If you for some reason prefer the print edition, you can order it from Amazon.com as well or any bookstore of your choice.

In addition to the **SRM** readings there will be a number of additional readings from current newspaper and internet sources, journal articles and an occasional book chapter. These readings will be found either online or sent through the class email list. These readings will change as the “real world” presents opportunities to read about current issues in polling. They represent our opportunity to connect the academic study of polls with how they are used in practice.

I have decided to rely primarily on the email classlist for everything, rather than Learn@UW. I find keeping everything in email means you get the conversation in order and it becomes searchable as well as allowing response and discussion to take place in the same mail stream. **YOU NEED TO SAVE ALL CLASS RELATED EMAILS FOR LATER REVIEW AND READING!** I strongly suggest you create a folder within your email application for the class and put all the email there. You can even set your mail software to automatically move all class mail to that folder so it is easy to find. That is what I do.

Using the classlist this way means you must follow one absolutely critical practice: The subject line of every email MUST begin with **PS544**. I will be using automated processing of your emails and that will assume class related mail begins with PS544 on the subject line. You MUST follow this convention exactly or your mail will be ignored and I will not search around for mail that fails to follow this very simple convention. Not “ps544”, not “PS 544”, not “544” but **PS544**.

Grades

Grading will be based on two in-class exams and three take-home exercises. Exams will focus on the readings and lecture material. The exercises will concern sampling, constructing a survey instrument and analyzing survey data. Each of these five components will count as 20% of your grade. There will not be a final exam.
Academic Misconduct

Be sure you are familiar with the University and College rules defining academic misconduct. Plagiarism or other forms of cheating are wrong and you should not do such things.