POL611 RESEARCH SEMINAR IN PUBLIC OPINION AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR
SPRING 2013 (Thursdays 7:00-9:50) BRNG B206 Dr. Suzanne Parker 2254 Beering
OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 3-5 or by appointment
EMAIL: parker5@purdue.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This research seminar focuses on public opinion. The course has three main foci: (1) an analysis of theories, concepts, and controversies in the study of public opinion; (2) an examination of different kinds of data, research designs (experimental, quasi-experimental, panel, longitudinal, and cross-sectional), and levels of analysis; (3) the design and execution of research projects of publishable quality by seminar participants using public opinion data. We will focus on the development of measures for analyzing public opinion and will examine several major approaches to public opinion—sociological, social-psychological, and economic explanations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Each student will be required to write a research paper in the area of American Politics which is of convention quality. The paper should be no longer than 20 pages (excluding tables but including the bibliography), and should be quantitative in nature. This may be a replication that extends the original research in some way, or an original research effort that employs one of the research strategies explored in the class.

The student will also be assessed on the basis of participation in the class. Students will be asked to bring examples of articles applicable to the topic being discussed in the class period, and will be expected to explain their article to the class.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:
Oskamp, Stuart. 1991. ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS. Prentice Hall. (NOTE: You will not be tested on this book; however, it is an excellent text written from the point of view of political psychology. It introduces sketches of people who have contributed to the study of political psychology. Any edition of this book is good
Morris Rosenberg. THE LOGIC OF SURVEY ANALYSIS. 1968. Basic Books. (OUT OF PRINT). This is a basic book on the analysis of survey data; however, it is still very relevant and it is well-written and easy to understand.

CLASS WEB PAGE:
http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~parker5/
Click on POL415 and then on POL611

Students will be provided with copies of out of print books (and other materials not in JSTOR); each student can make one copy for their own use (as permitted by copyright laws).

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ON CAMPUS:
In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course. Blackboard Vista web page, my email address: parker5@purdue.edu, and my office phone: 4963923. You can also find instructions on the web page for this class.
SYLLABUS POL611—SPRING 2013

WEEK 1
THE QUESTION OF MEASUREMENT IN SURVEY RESEARCH—Data
collection and concerns about survey data
What are attitudes?
How do we measure attitudes?
How do we collect information about them?
What do we need to watch for when collecting attitudes?
How do we analyze the data that we collect?

Herbert Asher, POLLING AND THE PUBLIC: WHAT EVERY CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW.
INTERNET RESOURCES ON SURVEY RESEARCH:
http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/whatsurvey.html
http://www.gsis.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/survey.html
Oskamp, chapters 1, 3, and 5

WEEK 2
MEASUREMENT IN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH, PART 1—Reliability of
indicators
How stable are political attitudes over a period of time, such as a 2-year period?
If attitudes are not stable, how meaningful are they?
Are some attitudes more stable than other attitudes?
Which attitudes are more stable and which are less stable?
What causes attitudes to change and how much of the change we see is due to unreliability
of the measures?

1. Readings:
   * Asher, Herbert. 1974. Some consequences of measurement error in survey data.
   * ______________. 1974. The reliability of the political efficacy items. POLITICAL
     METHODOLOGY. 1 (Spring): 45-72.

   Krosnick, Jon. 1991. The stability of political preferences: Comparisons of symbolic and
   nonsymbolic attitudes. AMERICAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE. 35
   (May): 547-76.

2. Using factor analysis in the construction of scales and determining the
dimensionality of indicators
   * Rummel, R. J. 1967. Understanding factor analysis. JOURNAL OF CONFLICT
   Kim, Jae-On and Charles W. Mueller. 1978. FACTOR ANALYSIS: STATISTICAL

     PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, 2nd ed. 468-514.

   Examples of Factor Analysis
   * Parker, Glenn and Suzanne Parker. 1979. Factions in Committees: The U.S. House of
     Representatives. AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW. 73 (1 March):
     85-102.

   * ______________. 1985. FACTIONS IN HOUSE COMMITTEES.
     University of Tennessee Press. Chapters 2 (Issue Conflict and Consensus) and
     Chapter 3 (Partisan and Ideological Cleavages).

   * Rusk, Jerrold and Herbert Weisberg. 1972. Perceptions of Presidential Candidates:
     Implications for Electoral Change. MIDWEST JOURNAL OF POLITICAL
WEEK 3
MEASUREMENT IN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH, PART 2—Measurement models and theory testing

1. Readings:

2. Examples of Arguments over Measurement:
   ATTITUDES AND NON-ATTITUDES CONTROVERSY

   Converse's Arguments About The Stability Of Political Attitudes

   Answers to Converse’s Non-Attitudes Arguments


   Converse's Responses to His Critics
OTHER EXAMPLES OF MEASUREMENT CONTROVERSIES

What do the trust in government questions measure?

How do you measure tolerance?

News Reception

3. Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis to determine validity and to check measurement models


How do you measure political efficacy?

What do the trust in government variables measure?


WEEK 4
EXPERIMENTATION IN PUBLIC OPINION, PART 1—Classic and quasi-experimental techniques
1. Readings:
*Cook, Thomas and Donald Campbell. 1979. QUASI EXPERIMENTATION: DESIGN AND ANALYSIS ISSUES FOR FIELD SETTINGS. Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapter 1—Causal Inference and the Language of Experimentation. (Chapter 3—Quasi experiment nonequivalent control group design.)
2. **Examples:**

**Classic Experiments**


**Quasi-Experiments**


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**WEEK 5**

**EXPERIMENTATION IN PUBLIC OPINION, PART 2—Population-based survey experiments**

1. **Readings:**

   

2. **Examples**


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**WEEK 6**

**EXPLAINING CHANGE ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL—Panel analysis in public opinion**

1. **Readings:**


2. **Example:**


   Markus, Gregory. 1979. ANALYZING PANEL DATA. Sage University Press.
WEEK 7
EXPLAINING CHANGE ON THE AGGREGATE LEVEL, PART 1—Trend analysis using cross-sectional data

1. Readings:

2. Examples:

WEEK 8
EXPLAINING CHANGE ON THE AGGREGATE LEVEL, PART 2—Cohort analysis of cross-sectional data

1. Readings:

Using aging, period and cohort explanations of over-time aggregate changes in opinion.

1. PERIOD EFFECTS:


2. AGING EFFECTS


3. GENERATION EFFECTS


WEEK 9
EXPLAINING CHANGE ON THE AGGREGATE LEVEL, PART 3—Pooled cross-sectional analysis and time-series analysis

1. Readings:


2. Examples:
Using pool-cross-sectional analysis

Using time-series analysis


WEEK 10  SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11
CAUSAL MODELING AND PATH ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC OPINION, PART 1—
Causal modeling using regression
1. Readings:
   * Blalock, Hubert. 1964. CAUSAL INFERENCES IN NONEXPERIMENTAL

2. Examples:
   Causal Modeling of Voting Behavior
   * Jackson, John. 1975. Issues, party choices, and presidential votes. AMERICAN
   Page, Benjamin and Calvin Jones. 1979. Reciprocal effects of policy preferences, party
     loyalties and the vote. AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW. 73 (4)
     Dec: 1071-89.
   Converse, Philip and Gregory Markus. 1979. A dynamic simultaneous equation model
     of electoral choice. AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW. 73 (4) Dec:
     1055-70.

WEEK 12
CAUSAL MODELING AND PATH ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC OPINION, PART 2—
Causal modeling using LISREL
1. Readings:
     TO LISREL. Sage University Papers.

2. Examples:
   * Parker, Suzanne and Glenn Parker. 1993. Why do we trust our congressman?

WEEK 13
META-ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC OPINION
   Church, Allan. 1993. Estimating the effect of incentives on mail survey response rates: a