AE2 - Public Opinion and Survey Research
(62323412)
AECC (Electives) - (AECCE) Credit:4

Course Objective
This course will introduce the students to the debates, principles and practices of public opinion polls in the context of democracies, with special reference to India. It will familiarize the students with the principles and practice of survey research and conceptualizing and measuring public opinion using quantitative methods. The course will give special attention to developing basic skills pertaining to the collection, analysis and utilization of quantitative data.

Course Learning Outcomes
On the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Understand the importance of public opinion in a democracy and the role of survey research in comprehending the working of a democratic political system
- Learn about the methods used for conducting surveys and interpreting survey data
- Acquire basic skill sets related to understanding public opinion formation and conducting research through the use of sample date, framing a questionnaire, etc.
- Acquire basic skill sets related to measurement of public opinion such as data analysis using statistical methods.

Unit 1
Introduction to the course (6 lectures)
>   Definition and characteristics of public opinion, conceptions and characteristics, debates about its role in a democratic political system, uses for opinion poll

Unit 2
Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys: Representation and sampling (6 lectures)
>   a. What is sampling? Why do we need to sample? Sample design.
>   b. Sampling error and non-response
>   c. Types of sampling: Non random sampling (quota, purposive and snowball sampling); random sampling: simple and stratified

Unit 3
Survey Research (2 lectures)
>   a. Interviewing: Interview techniques pitfalls, different types of and forms of interview
>   b. Questionnaire: Question wording; fairness and clarity.

Unit 4
Quantitative Data Analysis (4 lectures)
>   a. Introduction to quantitative data analysis
>   b. Basic concepts: correlational research, causation and prediction, descriptive and inferential Statistics

Unit 5
Interpreting polls (6 lectures)
　　　Prediction in polling research: possibilities and pitfalls
　　　Politics of interpreting polling

References

I. Introduction to the course

R. Erikson and K. Tedin, (2011) *American Public Opinion,* 8th edition, New York: Pearson Longman Publishers, pp. 40-46.

G. Gallup, (1948) *A guide to public opinion polls* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1948. Pp. 3-13.

II. Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys: Representation and sampling

G. Kalton, (1983) *Introduction to Survey Sampling* Beverly Hills, Sage Publication.

Lokniti Team (2009) 'National Election Study 2009: A Methodological Note', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. XLIV (39)

Lokniti Team, (2004) 'National Election Study 2004', *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. XXXIX (51).

'Asking About Numbers: Why and How', *Political Analysis* (2013), Vol. 21(1): 48-69, (first published online November 21, 2012)

III. Survey Research

H. Asher, (2001) 'Chapters 3 and 5', in *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know,* Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

R. Erikson and K. Tedin, (2011) *American Public Opinion,* 8th edition, New York, Pearson Longman Publishers, pp. 40-46.

IV. Quantitative Data Analysis

A. Agresti and B. Finlay, (2009) *Statistical methods for the Social Sciences,* 4th edition, Upper saddle river, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall,

S. Kumar and P. Rai, (2013) 'Chapter 1', in *Measuring Voting Behaviour in India*, New Delhi: Sage.

V. Interpreting polls

R. Karandikar, C. Pyne and Y. Yadav, (2002) 'Predicting the 1998 Indian Parliamentary Elections', *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 21, pp.69-89.

M. McDermott and K. A. Frankovic, (2003) 'Horserace Polling and Survey Methods Effects: An Analysis of the 2000 Campaign', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67, pp. 244-264.

Additional Resources:

Additional Readings:

K. Warren, (2001) 'Chapter 2', in *In Defense of Public Opinion Polling,* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 45-80.

W. Cochran, (2007) 'Chapter 1', *Sampling Techniques,* John Wiley & Sons.

G. Gallup, (1948) *A Guide to Public Opinion Polls.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 14-20; 73-75.

D. Rowntree (2000) *Statistics Without Tears: An Introduction for Non Mathematicians,* Harmon dsworth: Penguin.

Teaching Learning Process
Students will be taught different forms of sampling methods and will receive training in conducting surveys. They will be given interactive lectures on measuring public opinion and will be taught quantitative methods and imparted with basic skills of collection, verification and analysis of data.

Suggested Student Exercises:
1. Discussion of readings and Indian examples. Groups of students to collect examples of and discuss various sample based studies across many fields: e.g. consumer behaviour, unemployment rates, educational standards, elections, medicinal trials etc.
2. Non-random sampling: The students have to identify one group of people or behaviour that is unique or rare and for which snowball sampling might be needed. They have to identify how they might make the initial contact with this group to start snowball rolling.
3. Give the students the electoral list of an area in Delhi (http://ceodelhi.gov.in). The students have to draw a random sample of n number of respondents.
4. For this activity, working with a partner will be helpful. The class should first decide on a topic of interest. Then each pair should construct a five-item self report questionnaire. Of the five items, there should be at least one nominal response, one ordinal response and one interval. After the common questionnaire is constructed putting together the questions from everyone, working in pairs, the questionnaire should be administered on different individuals.
5. Give the students a questionnaire from any public opinion survey and ask them to identify the type of variables.

Assessment Methods
Students will be assessed on continuous basis followed by end term examination. Internal assessment will be conducted at the end of each unit which may include term papers, assignments, projects and viva- voce. They will be assessed on the basis of their ability to critically apply their conceptual understanding to the field work. They will be required to submit project report on any one unit of the syllabus before end term examination.

Keywords
Analysis, Collection, Data, Public Opinion, Quantitative, Sampling, Survey