

Enhance and Advance Summer Workshop
McCourt School of Public Policy

A Critical Look at Political Polling

10am-12:00pm Eastern Time
July 13, 14 and 15, 2020

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This workshop is a short version of my semester-long course, PPOL 761 “Political Polling.”

Workshop Description: Polling is used to study a broad range of things in the world of government and public policy. These include measuring the public's political opinions, predicting elections, mobilizing supporters when lobbying for change or trying to win elections, and planning and evaluating public policies. Methods of polling are also changing rapidly because of the prohibitive difficulty of interviewing people on the phone, requiring new sampling and interviewing methods to keep up with changing technology and lifestyles. This course introduces students to modern methods for conducting and interpreting public opinion polls, including writing a questionnaire, drawing a survey sample, interviewing and weighting. In doing so, the course also covers the psychological processes involved in holding political opinions and answering survey questions.

Session Topics:

Monday July 13: “Survey Error and Sampling”

Tuesday July 14: “Changing Survey Modes and Intro to Weighting”

Wednesday July 15: “Writing Clear Questions and Getting Honest Answers”

Optional:

Read: Traugott, Michael. “Americans are Drowning in a Sea of Polls.” February 25, 2020

(<https://theconversation.com/americans-are-drowning-in-a-sea-of-polls-127477>)

Listen: NPR Science Friday, “The Science Of Polling In 2020 And Beyond.” January 17, 2020.

(<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/science-of-polling/>)

Some figures and terms in the lecture slides are from this textbook:

Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler Jr., Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2009. *Survey Methodology, Second Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience.