

Survey Analysis Workshop and SPSS¹

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Author's note: History and development of the course

This set of tutorials constitutes a first shot at reconstituting the teaching materials for the postgraduate course **SR501 Survey Analysis Workshop** (part-time evening) which I developed and taught at the then Polytechnic of North London from 1976 to 1992.

The materials derive from teaching professional practice oriented courses in survey data collection, data management, computer processing and statistical analysis to social science students at the Polytechnic of North London since 1976, and represent a continuation of the computing and statistical elements of the Summer Schools in Survey Methods offered by the then SSRC Survey Unit from 1970 to 1976.

Originally taught over 20 sessions, split between one hour of statistics (from 1976 to 1980 by the late John Utting, from 1981 to 1988 by Jim Ring) and two hours of SPSS (taught throughout by John Hall) the course was targeted primarily at postgraduate students in the form of evening short courses. A sister course, Survey Research Practice, was taught over 10 sessions entirely by practising professionals from commercial and not-for-profit research organizations. In a much condensed form, survey analysis was also taught to final year undergraduate students on the new 4-year BA Applied Social Studies (Social Research Option) from 1979. On semesterisation, the sessions in Survey Analysis were reduced from 20 to 15 (later only 13), and in Survey Research Practice increased from 10 to 15 (later 14). When Jim Ring was unable to continue evening teaching, he provided an early draft of the additional statistical notes² for distribution to students whilst John Hall revamped the sessions into one hour of presentation followed by two hours of hands-on computing covering the statistical elements as and when appropriate, but not to the same depth. The undergraduate version of survey analysis was subsequently moved into the second semester of the second year of the re-validated course and continued into the modular degree scheme for BSc Social Science (SR206: Data Management and Analysis). It was compulsory for Social Research and strongly recommended for Sociology students. It continued as a part-time evening postgraduate course (SR501) for which, from 1990, students could gain 15 points towards a CNAA Masters' degree, provided they took the assessment.

For BSc Social Research students this not only complemented their statistics course, but also prepared them for effective professional placements in their 3rd year, since many of them later got jobs with their placement agency: others even found employment as researchers ahead of candidates with Master's or PhD's from other universities. Past students on the evening course are now frequently to be found in senior positions in UK social research.

These notes represent an attempt to fill a gap in the textbook provision for students who find computers and statistics daunting, and were mostly written before the appearance of the first edition of Marija Norusis' **SPSS Guide to Data Analysis**. They are not intended as a replacement, and should be used in conjunction with the recommended texts.

I am extremely grateful to previous students of the Survey Analysis Workshop and of the BA Applied Social Studies (Social Research Option) and BSc Social Science (Research Pathway) on whom earlier versions were tested and for whom they were written.

¹ SPSS Inc. was acquired by IBM in October, 2009. As a result, the organization's name changed immediately and is now [SPSS, an IBM company](#).

² See separate document [Statistical Notes](#)