

# JPSM/MPSM

## Survey Methodology Seminar Series

### When can we make inferences from nonprobability samples?

# JOSH PASEK

#### Presenter

Assistant Professor of Communication Studies  
Faculty Associate, Center for Political Studies  
University of Michigan

**Monday, April 6, 2015**  
**12:00-1:00pm**

Speaker will be at the University of Michigan  
Video Room 368 - ISR South Basement  
Room 1208 LeFrak Hall– Maryland

#### **Abstract**

In recent years, proponents of nonprobability sample surveys and alternative data collection techniques have questioned the foundations of traditional survey research. Although evidence of large biases using traditional methods has not yet emerged, declining response rates and rising costs may soon usher in a new paradigm in the survey world—one where probability sampling cannot be relied upon to guarantee population inference. Simultaneously, researchers and practitioners are increasingly attempting to reach valid population inferences from opt-in Internet surveys and data science techniques. Attempts to generalize from these techniques abandons the core assumptions that have supported nearly a century of survey research. As a field, we need to seriously interrogate nonprobability methods at the same time as we recognize the potential for growing biases when using traditional approaches. Collectively these concerns require us to reconsider the conditions necessary for accurate inferences and to treat accuracy as an empirical question rather than solely a theoretical concern. This talk proposes a foundation for identifying when data from nonprobability samples may nonetheless yield accurate conclusions and presents early evidence from a research program aimed at identifying these conditions.