Overview

The use of experiments in political science is increasingly common. Researchers are incorporating laboratory, survey, field, and natural experiments into their research designs. This course will introduce students to experimental techniques and applications of experiments in political/social science. We will address both the advantages of experiments and their disadvantages in political science research, and we will cover topics from across political/social science to demonstrate the utility of experimental research. We will cover some statistical material, but this class is not a substitute for statistical methodology courses.

This course will be taught as a seminar. Therefore, I do not expect to lecture regularly, but rather expect to have in-class discussions and presentations as the bulk of our course time. The course will give you the ability to be an informed consumer of a wide-range of experimental research and provides starting place for conducting your own experimental research.

Required Books

*Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, Eds. Druckman et al. (“Handbook” in the syllabus below)

*Experimental Political Science*. by Rebecca Morton and Kenneth Williams

Both textbooks are posted on iLearn.

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

**Participation** (50%): You need to be prepared to discuss the readings and occasionally to present different readings and your own ideas. We will also have a variety of in-class assignments that contribute to this portion of the grade.

**Final Paper** (50%): The final paper involves an experimental research design that is written in the form of a pre-analysis plan. At the end of the course I would like you to have a fully-designed experiment that could be implemented in short order. More information will be provided about the requirements for this assignment. The final version of the paper will be due during the last class.

**Class Cancellation**

In the event a class is canceled (due to natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.
Office Hours
I am available to meet with you in my office during office hours from 10:30am to 12pm on Wednesday. If you cannot make this time, we can schedule an appointment.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time to class. If a student must miss a class, he or she should arrange to get notes from a fellow student.

Scientific and Professional Ethics
The work you do in this course must be your own. Feel free to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others but, when you do, make it known whose ideas you are working with. You must explicitly acknowledge when your work builds on someone else's ideas, including ideas of classmates, professors, and authors you read. If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own, ask the course professor who will give you guidance. **Plagiarism Policy: Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Students engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will both receive an ‘F’ in the course and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.**

Instructor Feedback and Communication
The best way to get in touch with me is via email. If you do not hear from me in three business days, please re-send your message as it may have gone to spam.

Expectations and Logistics
The class format is a seminar, and therefore it is expected that you will have completed and thought about the reading before attending class. It is incumbent on every participant in the class (instructor and students alike) to maintain an environment conducive to learning. We should always remember that people bring differences with them into the classroom and that these differences should be respected. It is imperative that each of us maintain civility and professionalism when asking questions and making comments.

   It is fine to take notes on a computer or tablet if the instructor is lecturing. It is expected that you are not using the computer for other activities during class. If students are using computers for things unrelated to class, then we will revisit the computer policy.

   Please respect your fellow classmates—be on time, don’t be disruptive, turn off your cell phones, and really listen to them when they participate.

   Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should speak with me in the first few weeks of the course so we can make proper arrangements.

Week 1: Experiments in Political Science and Potential Outcomes Model

Morton and Williams Chapters 1-3

EGAP Methods Guide on *10 Types of Treatment Effect You Should Know About*
[http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-types-treatment-effect-you-should-know-about](http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-types-treatment-effect-you-should-know-about)
**Week 2: Aspects of Well-Designed Experiments**

Morton and Williams, Chapter 7, 8 & 10

EGAP Methods Guide on 10 Things You Need to Know about Randomization
http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-things-you-need-know-randomization


Handbook chapter 4: Students as Experimental Participants: A Defense of the “Narrow Data Base” (James Druckman and Cindy D. Kam)

**Week 3: Laboratory Experiments**

Morton and Williams, Chapter 9


**Week 4: Applications of Laboratory Experiments**


**Week 5: Survey Experiments**


Week 6: Applications of Survey Experiments

Draft of Pre-Analysis Plan Due. Details to follow


Week 7: Field Experiments

Handbook, Chapter 9 by Alan Gerber


Week 8: Political Cognition and Reasoning


Week 9: Studying Hard/Impossible to Manipulate Issues


**Week 10: Causal Mechanisms in Experiments & Ethics**

*Final Paper Due*


Humphreys, Macartan. “Ethical Challenges of Embedded Experimentation.”
http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/20110912Ethics.pdf

David Nickerson, 2011, “When the Client Owns the Data”

Morton/Williams Chapter 12 (Ethics) and 13 (Deception)