

POSC 207: Experimental Political Science

Time and Date: Wednesday, 1:10pm to 4pm

Location: Jenkin Memorial Library

Professor Nick Weller

Office: 2220 Watkins Hall

Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:30 to 12pm

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>

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>

James E. Monogan III. 2015. "Research Preregistration in Political Science: The Case, Counterarguments, and a Response to Critiques." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48(3):425-429.

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine and Ara Norenzaya. 2010. "The weirdest people in the world?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. pp. 1-75

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

Clifford, Scott and Jennifer Jerit. 2014. "Is There a Cost to Convenience? An Experimental Comparison of Data Quality in Laboratory and Online Studies." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.

Grossman, Guy and Delia Baldassarri. 2012. "The Impact of Elections on Cooperation: Evidence from a Lab-in-the-Field Experiment in Uganda." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Tingley, Dustin. 2011. "The Dark Side of the Future: An Experimental Test of Commitment Problems in Bargaining." *International Studies Quarterly*, 55, pp. 521-5449

McCubbins, Mathew, Mark Turner, and Nicholas Weller. 2012. "The Challenge of Flexible Intelligence for Models of Human Behavior." *Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, Spring Symposium on Game Theory for Security, Sustainability and Health*.

Week 4: Applications of Laboratory Experiments

- Butler, Daniel M. and Thad Kousser. 2015. "How do Public Goods Providers Play Public Goods Games?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 40(2): 211-240
- Cason, Timothy J. and Vai-Lam Mui. 2015. "Individual versus Group Play in the Repeated Coordinated Resistance Game." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. Vol. 2, Issue 1. Pp. 94-106
- McEntire, Kyla Jo, Michelle Leiby, and Matthew Krain. "Human Rights Organizations as Agents of Change: An Experimental Examination of Framing and Micromobilization." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 109, No. 3.
- Druckman. November 2004. "Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects." *American Political Science Review*. 98(4):671-686.
- Woon, Jonathan. 2015. "An Experimental Study of Electoral Incentives and Institutional Choice." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. Vol. 1, Issue 2, pp. 181-200.
- McCubbins, Mathew, Ramamohan Paturi, and Nicholas Weller. 2009. "Connected Coordination: Network Structure and Group Coordination." *American Politics Research*.

Week 5: Survey Experiments

- Gaines, Brian, James Kuklinski and Paul Quirk. 2006. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis*.
- Transue, John E., Daniel Lee and John Aldrich. 2009. "Treatment Spillover Effects across Survey Experiments." *Political Analysis*.
- Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions Versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 579-616.
- Berinsky, Adam, Gregory Huber, and Gabriel Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis*.
- Berinsky, Adam J., Michele F. Margolis, and Michael W. Sances. 2014. "Separating the Shirkers from the Workers? Making Sure Respondents Pay Attention on Self-Administered Surveys." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3): 739-753.
- Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review*. 104(2): 226-242.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2013. "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices via Stated Preference Experiments." *Political Analysis*. 22:1-30

Week 6: Applications of Survey Experiments

Draft of Pre-Analysis Plan Due. Details to follow

- Hainmueller, J. and Hiscox, M. J. (2010). "Attitudes toward highly skilled and low-skilled immigration: Evidence from a survey experiment." *American Political Science Review*, 104(01), 61-84.
- Tomz, Michael. 2007. "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations." An Experimental Approach. *International Organization*.
- Trager, Robert and Lynn Vavreck. 2011. "The Political Costs of Crisis Bargaining: Presidential Rhetoric and the Role of Party." *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 55, Issue 5: 526-545
- Brader, Ted. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2): 388-405.
- Kirkland, Patrick and Alexander Coppock. 2016. "Candidate Choice without Party Labels: New Insights from U.S. Mayoral Elections 1945-2007 and Conjoint Survey Experiments."
- Tomz, Mike, and van Houweling, Robert, 2009. "The Electoral Implications of Candidate Ambiguity." *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 1: 83-98.

Week 7: Field Experiments

Handbook, Chapter 9 by Alan Gerber

- Grose, Christian. 2014. "Field Experimental Work on Political Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- List, John. 2011. "Why Economists Should Conduct Field Experiments and 14 Tips for Pulling One Off." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 25, N. 3. Pp. 3-16
- Sinclair, Betsy, Margaret McConnell and Donald Green. 2012. "Detecting Spillover Effects: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*. October.
- Nickerson, David. 2010. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments". *American Political Science Review* 102 (1) 49-57.
- Butler, Daniel M., and David E. Broockman. 2011. "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (3): 463-477.

Neblo, Michael A., Kevin M. Esterling, Ryan P. Kennedy, David M.J. Lazer, and Anand Sokhey. 2010. "Who Wants to Deliberate – and Why?" *American Political Science Review*. August. Pp. 566-683

Alvarez, R. Michael, Asa Hopkins, and Betsy Sinclair. 2010. "Mobilizing Pasadena Democrats: Measuring The Effects of Partisan Campaign Contacts". *The Journal of Politics* 72, 31-44.

Callen, Michael et. al. 2016. Improving Electoral Integrity with Information and Communications Technology. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.

Week 8: Political Cognition and Reasoning

Redlawsk, David P. 2002. "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making." *Journal of Politics*.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755-769.

Prior, Markus and Arthur Lupia. 2008. "Money, Time, and Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Quick Recall and Political Learning Skills." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52 (1): 168-182.

Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 496-515.

Slothuus, Rune, and Claes H. de Vreese. 2010. "Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects." *Journal of Politics* 72 (3): 630-645.

Albertson, Bethany and Joshua William Busby. 2015. "Hearts or minds? Identifying persuasive messages on climate change." *Research and Politics*. January-March 2015: 1-9

Week 9: Studying Hard/Impossible to Manipulate Issues

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Shang E. Ha. 2010. "Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships across Issue Domains and Political Contexts." *American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 111-133.

Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. 2009. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96 (5): 1029-1046.

Holland, Paul. 2003. Causation and Race.

Sen, Maya and Omar Wasow. 2016. "Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs that Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Greiner, D. James and Donald Rubin. 2011. "Causal Effects of Perceived Immutable Characteristics." *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. Vol. 93, No. 3. Pp. 775-785.

Hartman, Todd K., Benjamin J. Newman, and C. Scott Bell. 2014. "Decoding Prejudice Toward Hispanics: Group Cues and Public Reactions to Threatening Immigrant Behavior." *Political Behavior*. Vol. 36, Issue 1, pp 143-163

Albertson, Bethany and Shana Gadarian. 2016. "Did that Scare You? Tips on Creating Emotion in Experimental Subjects." *Political Analysis*. 24(4): 485-491

Week 10: Causal Mechanisms in Experiments & Ethics

Final Paper Due

Green, Donald P., Shang E. Ha, and John G. Bullock. 2010. [Enough Already about "Black Box" Experiments: Studying Mediation Is More Difficult than Most Scholars Suppose.](#) *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628 (March): 200-08.

Kosuke Imai, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley and Teppei Yamamoto "Unpacking the Black Box of Causality: Learning about Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Data", 2011, *American Political Science Review*, 105(4), pp. 765-789

Defoe, Allan, BaoBao Zheng, and Devin Caughey. N.d. "Confounding in Survey Experiments: Diagnostics and Solutions."

Acharaya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. N.d. "Analyzing Causal Mechanisms in Survey Experiments."

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

David Nickerson, 2011, "When the Client Owns the Data"
<http://scholar.harvard.edu/sites/scholar.iq.harvard.edu/files/dtingley/files/fall2011.pdf>

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