



Experimental Methods

Professor: Dr. Kathleen Searles
E-mail: ksearles@lsu.edu

Introduction: This course provides students with experience in designing experimental studies. Once rare in the social sciences, experimental methods have increased opportunities for inference and renewed interest in causality. This course integrates substantive and applied concerns and as such, we will explore the logic of experimentation, develop an understanding of experimental design and (less so) analysis, and work through how to design and implement experimental studies. Students will read examples of experimental work, discuss methodological considerations, and engage in practical issues related to experimental implementation. Students will be tasked with 1) setting forth an experimental design and, 2) presenting this design to the class. See guidelines for experimental design and presentation for more details on evaluation.

Class notes:

As we will often do activities in class that require word processing, students are required to bring their laptops to class each day.

When possible I have provided the pdfs for articles and chapters on the [course website](#). I ask that you purchase the following two texts for the course due to their frequency of assignment.

- Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press.
- Field, Andy, and Graham Hole. 2003. *How to Design and Report Experiments*. SAGE Publications. Ch. 1.

Course Outline

Note: Be prepared to discuss readings in class each day and please bring your laptops.

1. June 6, Monday: Introduction to Experiments

- a. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1.
- b. Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams. N.d. [From Nature to the Lab: The Methodology of Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.

10-21
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2017



Recommended Readings:

- Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green (2012). *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Ch. 1.
- Kanthak, Kristin and Jonathan Woon. Forthcoming. "Women Don't Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Whitt, Sam, and Rick K. Wilson. 2007. "The Dictator Game, Fairness and Ethnicity in Postwar Bosnia." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 655-668.
- Blattman, Christopher, Alexandra C. Hartman, and Robert A. Blair. 2014. "How to Promote Order and Property Rights under Weak Rule of Law? An Experiment in Changing Dispute Resolution Behavior through Community Education." *American Political Science Review* 108(4).
- McDermott, Rose. 2002. *Experimental Methodology in Political Science, Political Analysis* 10(4), pp. 325-342.
- Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Elizabeth A. Stuart. *Misunderstandings Between Experimentalists and Observationalists About Causal Inference. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, 171(2):481–502, April 2008.

2. June 7, Tuesday: Why Experiments? Selecting a Research Question

- a. Issenberg. "[The Death of the Hunch](#)." Slate, May 22, 2012.
- b. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3.
- c. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Pick a chapter of interest to you from 10-30 (not Ch. 15) and answer these questions; bring responses to class.

Assignment: Answer the following questions for the chapter you select from the Handbook. What is the authors' research question? What is their research design? What is their sample? What statistical analyses do they conduct? What are their conclusions?

Recommended Readings:

- *Special issue on experimental methods in Political Analysis, Vol 10, No. 4, Autumn 2002.* <http://www.pan.oupjournals.org/content/vol10/issue4/index.shtml>

3. June 8, Wednesday: Causality

- a. Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams. N.d. [From Nature to the Lab: The Methodology of Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3.

Recommended Readings:

- Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green (2012). *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Ch 3.
- Dickson, Eric, Catherine Hafer, and Dimitri Landa. 2008. *Cognition and Strategy: A Deliberation Experiment. Journal of Politics* 70(4): 974-989.

10-21

JULY

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2017



4. June 9, Thursday: Planning for an Experiment

- a. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.
- b. Field, Andy, and Graham Hole. 2003. *How to Design and Report Experiments*. SAGE Publications. Ch. 1.

Assignment: Bring a potential research question to share with the class.

Recommended Readings:

- Searles, Kathleen, and Kyle Mattes. Forthcoming. "It's a Mad, Mad World Using Emotion Inductions in a Survey." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.
- Brader, Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 959-978.
- Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk. 2006. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing during a Political Campaign*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 052161306X

5. June 10, Friday: Designing an Experiment

- a. Field, Andy, and Graham Hole. 2003. *How to Design and Report Experiments*. SAGE Publications. Ch. 3.
- b. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Ch. 8.

Recommended Readings:

- Phelps, Elizabeth A. and Laura A. Thomas. 2003. "Race, Behavior and the Brain: The Role of Neuroimaging in Understanding Complex Human Behaviors." *Political Psychology* 24:747-758.

6. June 13, Monday: Measurement and Crafting an Instrument

- a. Dunn, Dana. 2013. *Research Methods for Social Psychology*. Wiley Press. Ch. 6, 8.

Recommended Readings:

- *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire* by Jean M. Converse and Stanley Presser. Sage Publications. 1986.
- Clifford, Scott, and Jennifer Jerit. Forthcoming. "Do Attempts to Increase Respondent Attention Increase Socially Desirable Responding?" *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." by John Zaller and Stanley Feldman. *American Journal of Political Science*, 1992.

10-21

JULY

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SUMMER SCHOOL

2017



7. June 14, Tuesday: Practical Considerations

- a. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (p. 562). Cambridge University Press. Ch. 4, 6.
- b. "Comparing Contemporaneous Laboratory and Field Experiments on Media Effects." by Jennifer Jerit, Jason Barabas, and Scott Clifford. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2013.

Recommended Readings:

- Leeper, Thomas J., and Kevin J. Mullinix. "What if You Had Done Things Differently? Testing the Generalizability of Framing Effects with Parallel Experiments." Working paper.
- "Cross Sample Comparisons and External Validity." by Yanna Krupnikov and Adam Seth Levine. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 2014.
- Cassese, Erin, Leonie Huddy, Todd Hartman, Lily Mason, and Christopher Weber. 2013. "Socially-Mediated Internet Surveys (SMIS): Recruiting Participants for Online Experiments." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46(4):775-784.
- Clifford, Scott and Jennifer Jerit. "Is There a Cost to Convenience? An Experimental Comparison of Data Quality in Laboratory and Online Studies." Forthcoming at the *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.
- "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influences of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature." by David O. Sears. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1986.

8. June 15, Wednesday: Ethical Considerations

- a. Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams. N.d. [*From Nature to the Lab: The Methodology of Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 11.
- b. Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green (2012). *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Appendix A.

Recommended Readings:

- Milgram, Stanley. 1963. "Behavioral Study of Obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67: 371-378.
- Singer, Eleanor, and Felice J. Levine. 2003. "Protection of Human Subjects of Research: Recent Developments and Future Prospects for the Social Sciences." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67: 148-164.
- Whitbourne, Susan Krauss. 2013. *The Rarely Told True Story of Zimbardo's Prison Experiment*. *Psychology Today*. July 20. (<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillmentanyage/201307/therarelytoldtruesoryzimbardosprisonexperiment>)



9. June 16, Thursday: Analyzing an Experiment

- a. Field, Andy, and Graham Hole. 2003. *How to Design and Report Experiments*. SAGE Publications. Ch. 4-5, 8.

Recommended Readings:

- *Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green (2012). Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation. Ch 3, 12.*

10. June 17, Friday: Writing up a Research Report and Presentations

- a. Field, Andy, and Graham Hole. 2003. *How to Design and Report Experiments*. SAGE Publications. Ch. 9, 11-12, 16.

Assignment: Students give final presentations and turn in research design