

PLS416/516

XPS: Experimental Political Science

Fall 2018 | T 17:00–19:50 | Room 8.141

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Course Description

The use of experiment and experimental data is no longer the privilege of natural scientists or psychologists, but increasingly common among social scientists in general. This seminar is designed to introduce students to experimental literature in political science. We will cover important concepts of experiment (treatment, randomization, causality), types of experiment (lab, survey, field, and natural), basic logics of experimental design, and practical issues of conducting experiments (ethics and procedures). We will also read and discuss applications of experimental research across topics within the discipline, including foreign policy making, bargaining, collective action, and political participation. While we read experimental studies in different subfields of political science, students will also have opportunities to develop and conduct their own experimental research.

This is a graduate seminar with a mixture of seniors, who have completed pre-requisite courses (PLS210 and PLS211, or other equivalent courses). It means that students are expected to finish reading assignments and other writing assignment (see the course requirements section). I will give lectures on the basics of experimental design during the first 3-4 weeks. After those weeks, students will be assigned to lead each week's seminar. Students not contributing the seminar will be penalized.

Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)

By the end of this course, student will be able to:

- Present their ideas and the information in an appropriate format (PLO 3)
- Describe and interpret basic experimental design and results (PLO 1, 2)
- Develop a research question in and answer it using appropriate source (PLO 1,2,3,4)
- Make their own evidence-based arguments (PLO 1,2)
- Listen to and be tolerant of different ideas (PLO 5)

Textbooks

Two books from the Cambridge University Press are used as main textbook of this course. We will also read research articles using experimental design. All course materials are available on the Moodle or at the library. You will receive an email for more information on course materials. In below I recommend a few books on experimental methods (★=required, ☆=recommended).

- ★ Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green and James H. Kuklinski. 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-0521174558, hereafter *Handbook*)
- ★ Morton, Rebecca and Kenneth Williams. 2010. *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-0521136488, hereafter *Causality*).
- ☆ Morgan, Stephen L. and Christopher Winship. 2014. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research* (2nd edition). Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-1107694163).
- ☆ Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2010. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis and Interpretation*. W.W. Norton & Company (ISBN: 978-0393979954).
- ☆ Mutz, Diana C. 2011. *Population-based Survey Experiments*. Princeton University Press (ISBN: 978-0691144528).
- ☆ Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Cengage Learning (ISBN: 978-0395307878).

Course Requirements

Students are expected to invest reasonable time to complete requirements of this course, including finishing the reading assignments, writing a term paper and presenting their experimental research. In below provided are brief explanations of those requirements. More details of each assignment will be given during the class.

Participation (10%) This is an extremely small class. Every student's contribution is crucial for the success of this course. Attend all sessions and participate in the seminar actively. Remember that this is a seminar course. My lecture will be minimized to give the foundation of experiments. Be prepared for critiquing experiments from readings. If necessary, I will give a pop-up quiz. Each student should be prepared to leave one or more seminar sessions throughout the semester.

Research proposal (20%) This course requires two original experimental design papers, in which students demonstrate their abilities of critical writing, understanding of experimental design, and plans of research. All papers must be typed and properly structured as research proposals. There will be a special session to discuss students' proposals before the fall break. Only approved proposals can be developed into a term paper project. Details will be announced in the class.

Reading notes (20%) Students will submit *typed* notes on the readings (1-2 pages) on a weekly basis. Each student should select no less than two articles from assigned readings of the week to write reading notes. All reading notes must be submitted in class before the seminar begins. For unselected articles, students still need to read them and prepare for the seminar. I may ask questions about readings in class since I expect all students to have thoroughly done all readings. Reading notes are due on every Saturdays.

Term paper (30%) This course doesn't have a final exam. But there will be a final term paper, in which students must demonstrate their research ability using experimental methods. I expect that one of research proposals should be developed to a term paper. The paper should be no shorter than 5,000 words. Students are encouraged to use all the knowledge/skills they have gained in their previous PSIR classes.

Seminar leading (20%) We will read 4-5 research articles of experimental political science on a weekly basis. Students should prepare productive discussion during each seminar session. I expect that every student should lead more than two sessions.

Grading Policy

Grading scale The final grade is determined by the student's overall performance of all course requirements in absolute terms, not relative. Following the University's grading scale, a student's final grade will be given by taking the percentage of points earned by the students as follows: Students, who

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|-----------------|-----|----------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Participation | 10% | | A | 95-100 | A⁻ | 90-94.9 | |
| Team project | 10% | B⁺ | 85-89.9 | B | 80-84.9 | B⁻ | 75-79.9 |
| Response papers | 30% | C⁺ | 70-74.9 | C | 65-69.9 | C⁻ | 60-64.9 |
| Essay | 50% | D⁺ | 55-59.9 | D | 50-54.9 | F | <50 |

fail to follow the rules of this course, will receive penalties. Each penalty will deduct points from your grade as specified in below:

Late submission Late submissions are accepted *only with penalties and conditions*. A late submission will be penalized by a 10-points deduction of the baseline score (80%) for each or a part of day. If you turn in your assignment 2 days late, the highest point you can receive is 80%. If your submission is late five days or more, you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Repeated (unexcused) absence All unexcused absence will result in negative points for the student's participation score. If a student missed classes more than 20% of the course, he/she will fail this course (see the Attendance Policy).

Misconduct penalty This will never be tolerated. Students must be familiarized themselves to the student code of conduct and the university regulations about academic misconduct. If you don't agree with the penalty imposed by the instructor, you can appeal to the SHSS Disciplinary Committee. However, the best practice is not to create such cases of appeal in the first place. See the Academic Misconduct Policy for more information.

Miscellaneous There will be no extra assignments/credits in this course. Make-up assignments will not be granted under any circumstances. It is students' responsibilities to manage their time accordingly not to overdue an assignment. All grades are final and non-negotiable. Penalties, however, can be appealed only through the SHSS disciplinary committee.

Note for MA students This course is a mixer of a graduate seminar and an upper level undergraduate course. All course tasks are equally given. However, my expectations for graduate students will be higher than for undergraduate students.

Academic Integrity Policy

Official documents Students must become familiarized with the NU Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, which is the official document outlining policies and procedures about academic misconduct. Here are links to important NU policies:

- Academic policies and procedures for undergraduate programs (English/Russian).
- Student code of conduct and disciplinary procedures (English/Russian).
- Undergraduate attendance policy and procedures (English).

Fraud This refers to any attempts to deceive the student's original status of works and/or efforts, including cheating during any types of tests, forgery of documents, and fake attendance. Punishment for fraud and cheating is as follows:

- **Fraud check-in** will result in a zero point for the student's entire attendance score after one class-wise warning.
- **Cheating** refers to a use and/or a suspected use of unauthorized assistance or an intentional noncompliance with in-class test rules. For instance, chatting with a classmate also constitutes an act of cheating, regardless of the content of the conversation.
- **Forgery** is a serious crime. This may result in a police investigation. If a forgery or an attempt of forgery is found, I have to report to the authority to prevent further consequences. This will result in a course failure and a possible expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism This is a crime. A plagiarism is defined as "an act of using someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own without appropriate acknowledgement or quotation marks." Following the NU guidelines and the Student Code of Conduct, I use three categories of punishment.

- **Category A** is to be led when minor plagiarism is suspected (e.g. one paragraph, or 3-4 consecutive sentences). For category A, the student will get zero point for that assignment.
- **Category B** is to be led when a significant amount of the student's assignment/work is suspected to be plagiarized (e.g. one page, or more than two paragraphs). For category B, the student will fail this course and possible disciplinary actions (e.g. no stipend till the end of next semester) will be enforced by the University.
- **Category C** is to be filed when the entire work of the students is suspected. For this type of misconduct, the student may be expelled from the University.

Attitude Students are responsible for their behavior as a responsible citizen and member of NU community. Use your common sense before you act to judge if your action to be taken is appropriate. I expect all student in this course will follow basic rules as illustrated in below, but not limited to. A serious violation of any of those will result in a disciplinary action.

- The official language of teaching/learning is English in this class.
- Students must show proper respect to each other.
- Physical and/or verbal violence is never tolerated under any circumstances.
- Both the instructor and students should comply to course policies as well as the University regulations

👁 Attendance Policy

Attendance The instructor will take attendance on a random basis. There is no ‘late check-in’ or ‘tardy.’ If you show up five minutes after the attendance is taken, you are considered as *absent*.

Excused absence Absence is excused only for reasons specified in below. Students are responsible for providing proper documentations and notification. If proper documentations are not provided, it will not be excused.

- Medical excuses (students’ own illness) - A proper medical note is required. It must be submitted through the student services within two weeks from the (last) date of absence. Otherwise, absence will not be excused.
- University events - The student must notify me of any preplanned activities imposed by the NU or other equivalent entities, *excluding* works and internship. Such notices must be delivered to and cleared by me at least one week prior to the date of absence.
- Family emergencies - In cases of *accidents* that have direct influence on the student’s immediate family member(s) or co-residing member(s), the student’s absence will be excused only after proper documents are provided through the student services.
- Other occasions (e.g. family gatherings, wedding ceremonies, vacations) will *not* be excused.

Minimum attendance rate If a student’s attendance rate is below *80%*, the student will *automatically fail* this course. Excused absences are not counted for computing the attendance rate.

Check-in fraud If there is an evidence of fake check-in or a suspicious record of fraud, your attempt to cheat will be punished of an academic misconduct. See the *Academic Integrity Policy* for further information.

Other Policies

Technologies in class Unless you are instructed otherwise, the use of following items are *prohibited* during the class: cellphones, tablets, laptops, and other sound-producing devices. Use pens and notebooks for note taking, which indeed enhances the learning process in a longer-term. There is a scientific proof that handwriting makes you smarter. Here is a link to [an article from the Wall Street Journal](#).

Communications If you need to meet me in person, you can visit during office hours, or write an email to make an appointment. All appointment must be made through email, not verbally. No walk-in meetings are allowed.

Assistance for physical/mental needs If a student needs a special attention due to his/her own physical or mental conditions, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor in the beginning of the semester. If necessary, the instructor can demand official documentation on the student's condition. Upon such requests, the student should provide appropriate records/proofs of the condition. If not provided, the requests may not be considered at all.

Changes to syllabus The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be communicated in class and via Moodle.

Course Schedule

The course schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be notified via the Moodle and class meetings no later than one week prior to the original schedule.

Week 1. Introduction to XPS

1. *Handbook*, chapters 1 and 2

Week 2. Causal inference and experimental data

1. *Causality*, chapters 3, and 4
2. Imai, Keele, Tingley and Yamamoto. 2011. “Unpacking the black box of causality: Learning about causal mechanisms from experimental and observational data.” *APSR* 105(4):765–789.
3. Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Deward H. Kaplan. 2004 “The illusion of learning from observational research,” in Ian Shapiro, Rogers Smith, and Tarek Massoud, eds., *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 3. Survey experiments

1. *Handbook*, chapter 8
2. Steiner, Atzmüller. 2016. “Designing valid and reliable vignette experiment for survey research: a case study on the fair gender income gap,” *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, 7(2):52-94.
3. Press, Sagan and Valentino. 2013. “Atomic aversion: Experimental evidence on taboos, traditions, and the non-use of nuclear weapons,” *APSR*, 104(2):188-206.
4. Blair and Imai. 2012. “Statistical analysis of list experiment,” *Political Analysis*, 20(1):47-77.
5. Hainmueller and Hiscox. 2010. “Attitudes toward highly skilled and low-skilled immigration: Evidence from a survey experiment,” *APSR*, 104(1):61-84.

Week 4. Laboratory experiments

1. *Handbook*, chapter 6
2. Bausch, Andrew W. 2015. “Democracy and war effort: An experiment.” *JCR*, 52(4):435–47.
3. Fudenberg, Rand and Dreber. 2012. “Slow to anger and fast to forgive: Cooperation in an uncertain world,” *AER*, 102(2):720-49.
4. Diekmann, Andreas. 2004. “The power of reciprocity fairness, reciprocity, and stakes in variants of the dictator game.” *JCR*, 48(4):487–505.

Week 5. Practical Issues of Experiments

1. Student must complete the CITI training and submit the certificate
2. *Causality*, chapters 12 and 13
3. Gerber et al. 2014. “Reporting guidelines for experimental research: A report from the experimental research section standards committee.” *JEPS*, 1(1):81–98.
4. Almereyda, Michael. 2015. *Experimenter*. An American biographical drama film on Stanley Milgram and his experiment on obedience.
5. A BBC documentary on the Stanford Prison Experiment (<https://youtu.be/XsRQVRoIPWE>).

Week 6. Field experiments

1. *Handbook*, chapter 9
2. Hainmueller, Jens, Michael J. Hiscox and Sandra Sequeira. 2014. "Consumer demand for the fair trade label: Evidence from a multi-store field experiment." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 97(2):242–256.
3. Gay. 2012. "Moving to opportunity: the political effects of a housing mobility experiment," *Urban Affairs Review*, 48(2):147-79.
4. Salganik and Watts. 2008. "Leading the herd astray: an experimental study of self-fulfilling prophecies in an artificial cultural market," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 74(4):338-55.
5. Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The effects of canvassing, telephone calls, and direct mail on voter turnout: A field experiment." *APSR*, 94(3):653–663.

Week 7. Bargaining and Public Good Games

1. Quek. 2017. "Rationalist experiments on war," *PSRM*, 5(1):123-42.
2. Tingley, Dustin. 2011. "The dark side of the future: An experimental test of commitment problems in bargaining." *ISQ*, 55: 521–544.
3. Dickson. 2010. "Leadership, followership, and beliefs about the world," *BJPS* (online first version).
4. Dickson, Eric S., Stanford C. Gordon and Gregory A. Huber. 2009. "Enforcement and compliance in an uncertain world: An experimental investigation." *JoP*, 71(4):1357–1378.
5. Ostrom, Eleanor, James Walker and Roy Gardner. 1992. "Covenants with and without a sword: Self-governance is possible." *APSR*, 86(2):404–417.

* Research Proposals Submission Due

- Due on 28 September (17:00 Moodle)
- Each student must submit two original proposals
- Must include testable hypotheses and research plan (timeline)

Week 8. Discussion of Research Proposals

- We will discuss each student's research proposal and experimental design.
- All students must read and get familiarized with all proposals before the class.
- Proposers should be prepared to answer questions about their proposals.

Week 9. Fall break

- No class
- Write the final research proposals
- Final proposals due on 14 October (17:00 Moodle)
- Each student must submit two original proposals
- Must include testable hypotheses and research plan (timeline)

Week 10. Voting and Mobilization

1. Herrnson, Hanmer and Koh. 2018. "Mobilization around new convenience voting methods: A field experiment to encourage voting by mail with a downloadable ballot and early voting," *Political Behavior* (online first version).
2. Kalmoe. 2017. "Mobilizing voters with aggressive metaphors." *PSRM* (online first version).

3. Sondheimer, Rachel M. and Donald P. Green. 2010. "Using experiments to estimate the effects of education on voter turnout." *AJPS*, 54(1):174–189.
4. Nickerson, David W. 2008. "Is voting contagious? Evidence from two field experiments." *APSR*, 102(1):49–57.
5. Druckman, James N. 2004. "Political preference formation: competition, deliberation, and the (ir)relevance of framing effects." *APSR*, 98(4):671–686.

Week 11. Foreign Policy Decision Making

1. Levendusky, Matthew S. and Michael C. Horowitz. 2012. "When backing down is the right decision: Partisanship, new information, and audience costs." *JoP*, 74(2):323–338.
2. Treger and Vavreck. 2011. "The political costs of crisis bargaining: presidential rhetoric and the role of party," *AJPS*, 55(3):536–45.
3. Tomz, Mike. 2007. "Domestic audience costs in international relations: An experimental approach." *IO*, 61(4):821–840.
4. Mintz, Alex, Steven B. Redd and Arnold Vedlitz. 2006 "Can we generalize from student experiments to the real world in political science, military affairs, and international relations?" *JCR*, 50(5):757–776.
5. Redd, Steven B. 2002. "The influence of advisers on foreign policy decision making: An experimental study." *JCR*, 46(3):335–364.

Week 12. Media, Framing and Judgement

1. Li and Zeng. 2017. "Individual preferences for FDI in developing countries: Experimental evidence from China," *JEPS*, 4:195–205.
2. Banks and Valentino. 2012. "Emotional substrates of white racial attitudes." *AJPS*, 56(2):286–297
3. Lee and Jang. 2010. "What do others' reactions to news on Internet portal sites tell us? Effects of presentation format and readers' need for cognition on reality perception," *Communication Research*, 37(6):825–46.
4. Brader Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What triggers public opposition to immigration? Anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat." *AJPS*, 52(4):959–978.
5. Hainmeuller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes toward highly skilled and low-skilled immigration: Evidence from a survey experiment." *APSR*, 104(1):61–84.

Week 13. Identity, Emotion, and Politics

1. Ihme and Tausendpfund. 2018. "Gender differences in political knowledge: Bringing situation back in," *JEPS* 5(1):39–55.
2. Ryan et al. 2016. "Emotional responses to disturbing political news: the role of personality," *JEPS*, 3(1):174–84
3. McCauley. 2014. "The political mobilization of ethnic and religious identities in Africa," *APSR*, 108(4):801–16.
4. Chuah et al. 2014. "Religion, ethnicity and cooperation: an experimental study," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 45(1):33–43.
5. McLeich and Oxoby. 2011. "Social interactions and the salience of identity," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 32(1):172–78.

Week 14. New Topics in XPS

1. Banks et al. 2018. "Two experiments on polarization and social media," *unpublished manuscript*
2. Gervais 2015. "Incivility online: Affective and behavioral reactions to uncivil political posts in a web-based experiment," *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 12(2):167-85.
3. Ahn et al. 2014. "Nonpolitical images evoke neural predictors of political ideology," *Current Biology* 24(22):2693-9.

Week 15. Reserved Week

*** Term Paper Submission Due**

- Due on 30 November (17:00 Moodle)
- Each student must submit a complete and final draft of the term paper
- No less than 5,000 words or 13 pages (12 sized Times New Roman font, single spaced)