PLS416/516

XPS: Experimental Political Science

Fall 2022 | M 10:00-12:50 | 7.246

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Course Description

Experiments and experimental data have become popular in recent political science literature. Unlike observational studies, experimental design can build causal inferences by its design, not by data (or any statistical technique). Given the benefits of experimental design, experiments are preferred over other methodologies in testing causal inferences. This course introduces students to experimental literature in political science and some key concepts of experimentation in political science. The course consists of three parts. The first part (week 1 to 7) covers the basic logic and concepts of experimental design, including required elements, assumptions, and practical/ ethical issues of experiments. In the second part (week 9 to 13), students will participated in seminars and discuss research articles using experimental design. The third part (week 14 to 15) is dedicated to presentations and discussions of student projects.

This course is a graduate seminar with a mixture of seniors who have completed pre-requisite courses (PLS210 and PLS211, or other equivalent courses). Basic research skills and quantitative analysis techniques are assumed.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students 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 and experimental design to answer it using appropriate sources (PLO 1,2,3,4)
- Make their own evidence-based arguments (PLO 1,2)
- Listen to and be tolerant of different ideas (PLO 5)

Reading Materials

All readings (book chapters, articles) are available on the course Moodle. If there are any troubles in accessing them, contact the instructor immediately. There are some books on experimental design in political science. Feel free to read them on your own. Here are some examples of books on experimental design for social science research.

- Druckman, James N. 2022. *Experimental Thinking: A Primer on Social Science Experiments*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-1108994064).
- Imbens, Guido W. and Donald B. Rubin. 2015. *Causal Inference for Statistical, Social, and Biomedical Sciences*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-0521885881).
- 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).
- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green and James H. Kuklinski. 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 978-0521174558)
- Mutz, Diana C. 2011. *Population-based Survey Experiments*. Princeton University Press (ISBN: 978-0691144528).
- 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).
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2010. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis and Interpretation*. W.W. Norton & Company (ISBN: 978-0393979954).
- Johnston, George. 2008. *The Ten Most Beautiful Experiments*. Alfred A. Knopf (ISBN: 978- 1400041015)
- Campbell, Donald T., and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Cengage Learning (ISBN: 978-0395307878).

Course Requirements

Participation (30%) This is a seminar course, meaning that students and the professor are collaborating to build and sharpen our knowledge base of political science. Each session will have time for discussions, during which students will be asked to answer questions using their knowledge accumulated, comment thoughts of others, and lead a discussion. You must be prepared to speak and share your thoughts throughout each seminar. Attendance is mandatory but not counted toward participation (see the attendance section in other policies). Two measures are used to facilitate students' participation:

- *Reading notes (15%)*: Reading is one of the basic jobs for researchers. When you read a research article, you must comprehend it in an organized fashion so that you could retrieve it effectively whenever needed. To facilitate this, students will be writing reading notes for all course readings (no longer than 2 pages per note). We will divide the readings among the students in the course and compile notes every week. A sample note and signup sheet will be available on the first day of the class.
- *Co-chairing (15%)*: There will be student discussants in the second part of the course (i.e. seminar sessions). Discussants should provide discussion questions in advance (*one week prior* to the assigned session) so that the class will think over them when they read. After the seminar, discussants should email the summary of the discussions (no longer than 2 pages) to the instructor.

Critical review essay (30%) There will be an essay assignment (3000 words), in which students must choose and read *three or more research articles* on a closely related topic. In the essay, students critically evaluate each study and discuss how they are related to one another (be careful not just to summarize each study). The essay must be structured synthetically so that a given topic (across all studies under review) is addressed in different perspectives, causal inferences/mechanisms, and methods.

Term paper (40%) By the end of the course, students submit a research paper using experimental design. The topic and design must be consulted with the instructor in advance. There will be separate deadlines for segments of the term paper project.

- Research question & preliminary literature review
- Extensive literature review
- Research hypotheses and design
- Analysis and findings
- Final draft (5000 words, including tables)

For the final term paper project, a student subject pool is available. To use the subject pool for the project, the experiment must be conducted between 10 October and 11 November. Student experimenters must submit the record of participants (name and student ID numbers), so that proper compensations should be provided. Detailed instructions will be given in class.

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:

A	>95.0	A-	90.0-94.9	B+	85.0-89.9	B	80.0-84.9
B-	75.0-79.9	C+	70.0-74.9	C	65.0-69.9	C-	60.0-64.9
D+	55.0-59.9	D	50.0-54.9	F	<50.0		

Late submissions Not accepted. If students are in an emergency, they must submit proper documentation to justify late submission. For example, a simple medical note (spravka) may not suffice.

Missed assessments All course assessments are in forms of written assignments. Therefore, a make-up assessment past the deadline will not be granted under any circumstances. It is students' responsibility to manage their time accordingly and not to overdue an assignment. All grades are final and non-negotiable.

Academic misconduct This will be not tolerated. See the *Academic Misconduct* section for details.

Notes for MA students This course is a mixer of a graduate seminar and an upper-level undergraduate course. *MA students will serve the role of discussants every week*. All other course tasks are equally given. However, my expectations for graduate students will be higher than for undergraduate students.

Academic Misconduct

Official documents Zero tolerance is applied to any academic misconduct, including cheating, fraud, plagiarism. Read the NU Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures carefully. Here are links to important NU policies:

- Academic policies and procedures for undergraduate programs
- Student code of conduct and disciplinary procedures
- Undergraduate attendance policy and procedures

Plagiarism 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." Depending on the seriousness of this type of misconduct, three categories are applied:

- Category A is to be led when minor plagiarism is suspected (usually less than 15%).
- Category B is to be led when a significant amount of the student's assignment/work (usually above 15%) is suspected to be plagiarized.

Penalties Academic dishonesty and misconduct in this course will be penalized by *a course failure* (F for final grade), *regardless of* categories or types of misconduct.

Important notes Students often misunderstand the procedure of academic misconduct reporting.

- The similarity score of turn-it-in is only an assisting tool, not a determining indicator of plagiarism. The instructor will manually examine students' writings to make decisions about plagiarism.
- All students involved in a misconduct will be subject to disciplinary actions and misconduct penalties. If someone asks you for sharing your paper, do not share it. If he/she uses any sentences from your paper, you will be also punished for provisioning unauthorized assistance for an assessment task.
- Penalties are decided by the course instructor, not by students or NU Student Code of Conduct. If students disagree to a penalty decision, they can appeal to the School Disciplinary Committee.
- If a misconduct report is submitted, the instructor may or may not meet with the student. There is no obligation for the instructor to discuss the action with the student before or after the report.

Other Policies

Attendance There will be an in-person meeting per week (Mondays). If a student misses more than 20% of the course meeting, *including excused absences*, a failing grade (F for the final grade) will be automatically assigned. For MA students, 10% is applied.

Assistance for physical/mental needs If a student needs special attention due to his/her own physical or mental conditions, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor at 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.

Communications My door is always open for students during office hours. Or students can email to set up an appointment for a meeting in non-office hours. For other communications, feel free to email me (I do not check Moodle messages).

Course Schedule and Readings

Readings are available on Moodle (if not, contact the instructor). Black bullets are required, and white bullets are recommended.

Week 1. Introduction

- Druckman, J.N. 2022. "Why a Primer on Social Science Experiments?" *Experimental Thinking*, chapter 1.
- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "The advent of experimental political science" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 1.
- Druckman, Green and Kuklinski. 2006. "The growth and development of experimental research in political science," *APSR*, 100(4):627-35.
- Neal, B. 2020. "Motivation: Why you might care" *Introduction to causal inference: From Machine Learning Perspective* chapter 1.

Week 2. Causal inference and potential outcomes

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Experiments and causal relations" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 2.
- Imbens, G.W. and Rubin, D.B. 2015. "Causality: the basic framework" *Causal Inference for Statistics, Social, and Biomedical Sciences*. Chapter 1.
- Imbens, G.W. and Rubin, D.B. 2015. "A brief history of the potential outcomes approach to causal inference" *Causal Inference for Statistics, Social, and Biomedical Sciences*. Chapter 2.

Week 3. Assumptions of experiments

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "The causal inference problem and the Rubin causal model" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 3.
- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Controlling observables and unobservables" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 4.

Week 4. Designing experiments

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Randomization and pseudo-randomization" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 5.
- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "The experimentalist's to-do list" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 15.
- Alferes, V.R. 2012. *Methods of Randomization in Experimental Design*

Week 5. Reporting and evaluating experiments

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Validity and experimental manipulations" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 7.
- Levin, I.P. 1999. *Relating Statistics and Experimental Design*

- Brown, S.R. and Melamed, L.E. 1990. *Experimental Design and Analysis*
- Geber, A., Arceneaus, K., Boudreau, C., Dowling, C., Hillygus, S., Palfrey, T., Biggers, D.R. and Hendry, D.J. 2014. "Reporting guidelines for experimental research: A report from the experimental research section standards committee," *JEPS* 1(1): 81-98.
- Coppock, A. 2021. "Visualize as you randomize: Design-based statistical graphs for randomized experiments," *Advances in Experimental Political Science* Chapter 17.

Week 6. Types of experiments

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Location, artificiality, and related design issues" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 8.
- Barabas, J. and Jerit, J. 2010. "Are survey experiments externally valid?" *APSR* 104(2): 226-242.
- Auspurg, K. and Hinz, T. 2015. *Factorial Survey Experiments*
- Gaines, B.J., Kulklinski, J.H. and Quirk, P.J. 2017. "The logic of the survey experiment reexamined," *Political Analysis* 15(1):1-20.
- Atzmuller, C. and Steiner, P.M. 2010. "Experimental vignette studies in survey research," *Methodology* 6(3): 128-138.
- Blair, G. and Imai, K. 2012. "Statistical analysis of list experiments," *Political Analysis* 20(1): 47-77.
- Dunning, T. 2008. "Improving causal inference: Strengths and limitations of natural experiments," *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 282-293.
- Iyengar, S. 2011. "Laboratory experiments in political science," *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* Chapter 6.
- Sniderman, P.M. 2011. "The logic and design of the survey experiment: An autobiography of a methodological innovation," *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* Chapter 8.
- Druckman, J.N. and Kam, C.D. 2011. "Students as experimental participants: A defense of the 'narrow data base'," *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* Chapter 4.

Week 7. Ethical and practical issues of experiments in political science

- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "History of codes of ethics and human subjects research" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 11.
- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Ethical decision making and political science experiments" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 12.
- Morton, R. and Williams, K. 2012. "Deception in experiments" *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality* Chapter 13.
- Druckman, J.N. 2022. "Designing 'good' experiments," *Experimental Thinking* Chapter 6.

Week 8. Fall break

Week 9. Seminar "Political polarization"

- Rogowski, J. and Sutherland, J. 2016. "How ideology fuels affective polarization," *Political Behavior* 38(2): 485-508.
- Bail, C.A. et al. 2018. "Exposure to opposing views on social media can increase political polarization," *PNAS* 115(37): 9216-9221.
- Banks, A., Calvo, E., Karol, D. and Telhami, S. 2021. "#polarizedFeeds: Three experiments on polarization, framing, and social media," *The International Journal of Press and Politics* 26(3): 609-634.
- Druckman, J.N. et al. 2021. "How affective polarization shapes Americans' political beliefs: A study of response to the COIVD-19 pandemic," *JEPS* 8: 223-234.
- Wolsky, A.D. 2022. "Scandal, hypocrisy, and resignation: How partisanship shapes evaluations of politicians' transgressions," *JEPS* 9: 74-87.

Week 10. Seminar "Voting behavior and choices"

- Gerber, A.S. and Green, D.P. 2000. "The effects of canvassing, telephone calls, and direct mail on voter turnout: A field experiment," *APSR* 94(3): 653-663.
- Gerber, A.S., Green, D.P. and Larimer, C.W. 2008. "Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment," *APSR* 102(1): 33-48.
- Gerber, A.S., Karlan, D. and Bergan, D. 2009. "Does the media matter? A field experiment measuring the effect of newspapers on voting behavior and political opinions," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1(2): 35-52.
- Bryan, C.J., Walton, G.M., Rogers, T. and Dweck, C.D. 2011. "Motivating voter turnout by invoking the self," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108(31): 12653-12656.
- Shler, D.J., Citrin, J., Dougal, M.C. and Lenz, G.S. 2017. "Face value? Experimental evidence that candidate appearance influences electoral choice," *Political Behavior* 39: 77-102.

Week 11. Seminar "Immigration and identity politics"

- Brader, T., Valentino, N.A., Suhay, E. 2008. "What triggers public opposition to immigration? Anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat," *AJPS* 52(4): 959-978.
- Hainmueller, J. and Hiscox, M.J. 2010. "Attitudes toward highly skilled and low-skilled immigration: Evidence from a survey experiment," *APSR* 104(1): 61-84.
- Soroka, S., Wright, M., Johnston, R., Citrin, J., Banting, K. and Kumlicka, W. 2017. "Ethnoreligious identity, immigration, and redistribution," *JEPS* 4: 173-182.
- Klar, S., Leeper, T. and Robison, J. 2020. "Studying identities with experiments: Weighing the risk of posttreatment bias against priming effects," *JEPS* 7: 56-60.
- Chiang, Y. 2021. "Indirect reciprocity for mitigating intergroup hostility: A vignette experiment and an agent-based model on intergroup relations between Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese," *JCR* 65(2-3): 40.-426.

Week 12. Seminar "Political authority and civil responses"

- Chen, J., Pan, J. and Xu, Y. 2016. "Sources of authoritarian responsiveness: A field experiment in China," *AJPS* 60(2): 383-400.
- Liu, H. 2019. "The logic of authoritarian political selection: Evidence from a conjoint experiment in China," *PSRM* 7(4): 853-870.
- Robinson, D. and Tannenberg, M. 2019. "Self-censorship of regime support in authoritarian states: Evidence from list experiments in China," *Research and Politics* online.
- Aytac, S.E., Schiumerini, L. and Stokes, S. 2018. "Why do people join backlash protests? Lessons from Turkey," *JCR* 62(6): 1205-1228.
- Beazer, Q.H., Brabtree, C.D., Fariss, C.J. and Kern, H.L. 2021. "When do private actors engage in censorship? Evidence from a correspondence experiment with Russian private media firms," *BJPS* online version.

Week 13. Seminar "Use of force"

- Press, D.G., Sagan, S.D. and Valentino, B.A. 2013. "Atomic aversion: Experimental evidence on taboos, traditions, and the non-use of nuclear weapons," *APSR* 107(1): 188-206.
- Sukin, L. 2020. "Credible nuclear security commitments can backfire: Explaining domestic support for nuclear weapons acquisition in South Korea," *JCR* 64(6): 1011-1042.
- McDonald, J. and Walsh, J.I. 2021. "The costs of conflict and support for the use of force: Accounting for information equivalence in survey experiments," *JEPS* 8: 195-202.
- Allison, D.M., Herzog, S. and Ko, J. 2022. "Under the umbrella: Nuclear crises, extended deterrence, and public opinion," *JCR* (online first)
- Carnegie, A., Kertzer, J.D. and Yarhi-Milo, K. 2022. "Democratic peace and covert military force: An experimental test," *JCR* (online first)

Week 14. Wrap-up (reserve)

- Stoker, G. 2010. "Exploring the promise of experimentation in political science: Micro-foundational insights and policy relevance," *Political Studies* 58: 300-319.
- Druckman, J.N. 2022. "Innovations in experimental designs: Opportunities and limitations," *Experimental Thinking* Chapter 4.

Week 15. Presentations