Course Overview

The course is designed to provide students with a basic introduction to the use of experimental methods in political and social sciences. Students will be exposed to methodological, theoretical and practical aspects of experimentation. No prior knowledge of experimental methods is required.

The course aims to:

(1) Introduce experiments as a research method in political and social sciences.

(2) Provide students with an understanding of the basic methodology behind experimental design and analysis.

(3) Critically analyze a selection of experimental studies related to social sciences.

Course objectives

Students will develop an understanding of the main foundations and assumptions of experimental methods in political and social sciences. Students will also gain insight into the experimental literatures and application in political science, economics, psychology and related disciplines. A core objective of the course is to hone students’ ability to critically read experimental designs and conclusions.

Requirements

Participation (20%)
Presentation (10%)
Short Paper (20%)
Term Paper (50%)

Required Texts:


**Recommended Texts:**


**Course Outline:**

**Introduction to Experimental Social Science (January 26, February 2):**

Druckman et. al.: Chapters 1.

Shadish et al.: Chapters 1, 8


Recommended: Morton and Williams: Chapters 1-4.

**Key Concepts: Causal Inference, Randomization, and Validity (February 9, 16)**

Druckman et. al.: Chapters 2-4.

Field and Hole: Chapter 1.
Shadish et al.: Chapters 2, 3


**Reporting Experimental Research Workshop (February 23)**

Field and Hole: Chapters 9-16.

Recommended: Gerber and Green: Chapter 13

Recommended: Morton and Williams: Chapters 7, 9.

**Experimental Design and Analysis Workshop (March 2, 9)**

Field and Hole: Chapters 3, 4-9

Shadish et al.: Chapters 4, 5, 8, 10-12

**Ethics, Human Subjects Research and IRB (March 23) (Paper proposals due)**

Druckman et. al.: Chapter 5.

Shadish et al.: Chapter 9


**Laboratory Experiments (March 30)**

Druckman et al. Chapter 6.


**Survey Experiments (April 6)**

Druckman et al. Chapters 8, 31.


Time Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS): tesselxperiments.org


Recommended: Mutz. D. (entire).

**Field Experiments (April 13)**

Druckman et al. Chapters 8, 31.


Recommended (Advanced Topics): Gerber and Green: Chapters 5-11.

**Quasi-Experimentation, Natural Experiments and Regression Discontinuity Designs (April 20)**

Shadish et al.: Chapters 6, 7.


**Integrating Experimental Research (April 27)**

Shadish et al.: Chapter 13


Recommended: Gerber and Green: Chapter 11.

**Student Presentations and Conclusion (May 4)**