

Experimental Methods in Political Science Government 385L

Bethany Albertson, Office BAT 4.124, balberts@austin.utexas.edu, office hours: Wednesday 9:00-12:00 & by appointment.

Mike Findley, Office BAT 3.108, mikefindley@utexas.edu, office hours: Th 12:30-3:30; & by appointment.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Issues of academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously and any finding of cheating or other unethical behavior will be pursued to the full extent possible under university policy. Students should consult the University of Texas Honor Code.

Your course grade is based on the following components:

Seminar Participation:	20%
Written Assignments:	30%
Class Presentation:	10%
Final Paper:	40%

Required Book: Morton, Rebecca B., and Kenneth C. Williams. 2010. *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seminar Participation: We expect that you show up to class ready to participate. While you're reading you should take notes - highlight ideas that you find interesting or questionable and be ready to discuss them in class.

Written Assignments: During the course of the term we will assign short (2 page, double spaced) write-ups, such as critiques of articles, or preliminary writing for you own papers. We will also assign some data/coding assignments to give you experience implementing experimental techniques such as randomization or analysis tests.

Final Paper: You will turn in a research design proposal early in the semester. This will need to be updated and polished before you implement your experiment. It will then be turned into the final paper. Thus, the 40% listed will be earned in different stages.

Projects

You will need to fully complete an experiment during this course. This will require you to stay especially engaged in the first 5--6 weeks in order to solidify a feasible, quality design. That said, we have each taught versions of the course in which students were required to complete and experiment and some terrific projects have emerged.

We have access to a number of resources that will make the experiments possible. For lab experiments, the Government experiments lab is available. For survey and field experiments we can also use the lab, but also the university has a site license to Qualtrics, which is easy to use and yet powerful. Other experiments can be carried out by email, on the web, facebook, and in many other ways that we will discuss.

For your projects, we encourage you to identify a question that will support a possible dissertation project or otherwise advance your research and develop that into an executable experiment. Another option would be to do a replication and possible extension of an existing experiment, where the extension could involve a new manipulation/moderator/etc or perhaps just consider how the results of an earlier study hold up in a perhaps different political environment (e.g., U.S. during Trump administration, U.K. with Brexit, Colombia post-peace deal, etc).

Access

The University of Texas at Austin is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471--6259, <http://diversity.utexas.edu/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify us of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergencies

Please also see the following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512--471--5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>. 1. Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. 2. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. 3. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. 4. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. 5. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. 6. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512--232--5050. 7. Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency.

Family

We are not aware of an official university policy on children in the classroom. The following is an attempt to insure family friendliness while also maintaining a proper learning environment. [We borrowed heavily and adapted these policies from Melissa Cheyney's syllabus. [Link here](#)]

1. All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary.
2. For older children and babies, unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. We ask that all students work to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
4. In all cases where babies and children come to class, please sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for others' students, you may step outside until their need has been met. For our part, we will work with you should you need to step out so that you can remain caught up.
5. Finally, often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have finally gone to sleep. While we maintain the same high expectations for all students in our class regardless of parenting status, we are happy to problem-solve with you in a way that helps you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.

Class Schedule

January 22: Research Design I

1. Milgram, Stanley. 1963. "Behavioral Study of Obedience" *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67(4): 371-378.
2. Burger, Jerry M. 2009. Replicating Milgram: Would People Still Obey Today? *American Psychologist*.
3. Zimbardo, Philip G. 1973. Pirandellian Prison. *New York Times Magazine*. April 8.
4. Whitbourne, Susan Krauss. 2013. The Rarely Told True Story of Zimbardo's Prison Experiment. *Psychology Today*. July 20.
(<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201307/the-rarely-told-true-story-zimbardo-s-prison-experiment>)

Begin discussion of interests

Assignment: Find an article related to your substantive interests that uses an experiment. Briefly summarize the article, and offer your critique (roughly 2 pages, double--spaced). E-mail to both of us by January 28th at noon.

January 29: Research Design II

1. Morton/Williams Chapters 1 - 3: "The Advent of Experimental Political Science" "Experiments and Causal Relations" and "The Causal Inference Problem and the Rubin Causal Model"
2. Jamison. "The Entry of Randomized Assignment into the Social Sciences."
3. Skim the following for application examples from us:
 - Jensen, Findley, Nielsen: Electoral Institutions and Electoral Cycles in Foreign Direct Investment: A Field Experiment on Over 3,000 U.S. Municipalities.
 - Albertson. 2011. Religious Appeals and Implicit Attitudes. Political Psychology.

February 5: Research Design III

1. Morton/Williams [Chapters 4-5](#)
2. Instrument design: <http://www.pewresearch.org/methods/u-s-survey-research/questionnaire-design/>

February 12: Workshop experiment designs for the whole class.

Res design presentation; 5 students turn in draft design proposal and presentation by **Feb 11** at noon.

1. Morton/Williams Chapters 7-8: "Validity and Experimental Manipulations" and "Location, Artificiality, and Related Design Issues"
2. -Nisbett: The Anticreativity Letters: [Link here](#)
3. -Loehle: A Guide to Increased Creativity in Research: [Link here](#)
4. Albertson & Gadarian. Did that Scare You? Political Analysis. 2016

February 19: Workshop experiment designs for the whole class continued.

Res design presentation; 8 students turn in draft design proposal and presentation by **Feb 18** at noon.

1. Morton/Williams Chapters 9-10: "Choosing Subjects" and "Subjects' Motivations"
2. -Belmont Report: [Link here](#)
3. -The Common Rule: [Link here](#)
4. -Readings may be assigned later depending on design discussions.

February 26: Lab Experiments I

-IRB apps due to the IRB by **Feb 26**

Assignment: Convert research design and IRB documents into a preregistration document. See www.e-gap.org for examples. These do not need to be extensive, but should contain all information in the EGAP online form as well as your design and IRB material in the form of an

analysis plan where you identify clear hypotheses and expected tests. E-mail to both of us by **Feb 25** at noon.

1. Grossman: Lab--in--field experiments (from APSA comparative newsletter)
2. Adreoni & Vesterlund- Which is the Fair Sex? Gender Differences in Altruism.
3. White, Laird & Allen. 2014. Selling Out? The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest. APSR.
4. Druckman, James and Cindy D. Kam. 2011. Students as Experimental Participants: A Defense of the 'Narrow Data Base,'" in James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds., *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011

March 5: Lab Experiments II

1. Tomz: Audience costs in IR
2. Harris and Findley: Is Ethnicity Identifiable (Lab in field experiment)
3. Rothstein and Eek: Political Corruption and Social Trust
4. Karpowitz & Mendelberg: Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation

March 12: Survey Experiments I

1. Mutz, Diana. Population Based Survey Experiments. 2011. Selected chapters.
2. Berinsky et al. 2011. Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals. *Political Behavior*. 2011.
3. Andrews, Caitlin. "Foundations of Loyalty: Horizontal, Clientelist, and Charismatic ties in the Argentine Peronist Movement". Canvas.
4. Rosenfeld, Imai, and Shapiro. "An Empirical Validation Study of Popular Survey Methodologies for Sensitive Questions."

March 19: Spring Break

March 26: Survey Experiments II

1. Berinsky, Huber and Lenz "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk" *Political Analysis*
2. Barabas and Jerit: Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid
3. Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined. *Political Analysis*, 15(1): 1-20.
4. Mullinix, Kevin, Thomas J. Leeper. James N. Druckman, and Jeremy Freese. 2015. "The Generalizability of Survey Experiments." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2(2): 109-138.

April 2: Field Experiments I

1. Baumeister, et al: Psychology as the science of self--reports and finger movements: [Link here](#)
2. Pedulla, David. 2016. Penalized or Protected? Gender and the Consequences of Nonstandard and Mismatched Employment Histories. *American Sociological Review*.
3. Wantchekon: Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin
4. Kalla, Joshua and David Brockman. 2015. Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment. *American Journal of Political Science*.
5. Haenschen, Katherine. "Social Pressure on Social Media: Using Facebook Status Updates to Increase Voter Turnout"
6. McClendon, Gwenth H. 2014. "Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics: A Field Experiment at an LGBT Pride Rally" *American Journal of Political Science*.

April 9: Field Experiments II

1. Butler and Brookman: Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents
2. Dupas: Do Teenagers Respond to HIV Risk Information?
3. Duflo and Hanna: Incentives Work
4. Cohen and Dupas: Free Distribution or Cost Sharing
5. Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov. "Empowering Women through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan" *American Political Science Review*.
6. Karpowitz, Christopher, J. Quin Monson, and Jessica R. Preece. 2017. "How to Elect More Women: Gender and Candidate Success in a Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(4): 927-943.
7. Cooper 2018. State Capacity and Gender Inequality. Job Market Paper.
Recommended: Olken: Monitoring Corruption
Recommended: Page: Accepting the Gay Person

April 16: Natural Experiments

1. Dunning: Chapters Chapters 1 and 2 "Introduction: Why Natural Experiments" and "Standard Natural Experiments".
2. Hyde: The Observer Effect in Int'l Politics
3. Longo, Matthew, Daphna Canetti and Nancy Hite-Rubin. 2014. A Checkpoint Effect? Evidence from a Natural Experiment on Travel Restrictions in the West Bank. *American Journal of Political Science*. DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12109
4. Lelkes, Yphtach, Gaurav Sood, Shanto Iyengar. 2015. The Hostile Audience: The Effect of Access to Broadband Internet on Partisan Affect. *American Journal of Political Science*.
5. Healy & Malhotra: Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance
Recommended: Posner: The Political Salience of Cultural Difference

April 23: Miscellaneous topics (tentative)

1. Morton/Williams Chapters 11-12: "History of Codes of Ethics and Human Subjects Research" and "Ethical Decision Making and Political Science Experiments"
2. Arceneaux, Gerber, Green: Comparing Experimental and Matching Methods (Matching)
3. Findley, Harris, Milner, Nielson: Elite and Mass Perceptions of Foreign Aid in Uganda (Elites)
4. Hafner -Burton et al: Decision Makers Preferences for International Legal Cooperation (Elites)
5. Paluck, Shepherd, Aronow. "Changing Climates of Conflict: A Social Network..."
6. Montgomery, Jacob M., Brendan Nyhan, and Michelle Torres. "How Conditioning on post-treatment variables can ruin your experiment and what to do about it." *American Journal of Political Science*.
7. Klar, Samara, Thomas J. Leeper, and Joshua Robison. 2018. "Studying the Role of Identities with Experiments: How to Weigh the Risk of Posttreatment Bias against that of Priming Effects"

April 30: Miscellaneous Topics (tentative)

1. Morton/Williams Chapter 13: "Deception in Experiments"
2. Dunning, Thad. "Transparency, Replication, and Cumulative Learning: What Experiments Alone Cannot Achieve." (Limits of experiments)
3. Grossman, Humphreys, Sacramone-Lutz. "Information Technology and Political Engagement: Mixed Evidence from Uganda." (Scaling up experiments)
4. Findley et al. "External Validity in Parallel Global Field and Survey Experiments on Anonymous Incorporation." (Comparison of field and survey)
5. Paluck: Experiments and Qualitative
6. Williamson, Vanessa. 2016. "On the Ethics of Crowd sourced Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics*.
7. Sinclair, Betsy, Margaret McConnell and Donald P. Green. 2012. "Detecting Spillover in Social Networks: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments." *The American Journal of Political Science* 56(4):1055-1069

May 7: Final Presentations

- 1-Morton/Williams Chapter 14: "The Future of Experimental Political Science"