

Field Experiments: P A 188G

Course Syllabus

Dates:

Saturday April 6: 8 am – 1 pm

Friday April 19: 1 pm – 6 pm

Friday May 3: 1 pm – 6 pm

Location: SRH 3.312

Spring Semester 2013

Professor Michael Findley

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Office Hours: M 10:00-12:00; Tu 1:30-3:00 (at Batts); TBA (at SRH)

Course Rationale

This five-week course will provide an introduction to randomized field experiments primarily in the context of international development. The course will consider the basic methodology of field experiments, including randomization, intervention, measurement, and inference with an emphasis on application of these ideas to a research question of interest. A project will be required and will entail the identification of a research question, the development of a theoretical argument to address the question, and the design of an experiment that applies the methodology to provide an answer.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course successfully should:

- Master the key elements of field experiments, including randomization, intervention, measurement, and inference;
- Understand how to develop an experimental design up to the point of implementation;
- Prepare an application to the institutional review board that clearly addresses the ethics of experiments.

Assignments and Grading:

Evaluations will consider the following elements (with weights included):

Prospectus	5%
Experimental Design / Mock Report	50%
Institutional Review Board Application	20%
Participation	25%

Deadlines

All assignments are due on the date and time specified in the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized. If assignments are turned in after the first five minutes of class but on the same day, a five percent penalty applies. If an assignment is turned in the day after it is due, a ten percent penalty applies. For each weekday after that an additional three percent penalty will accumulate. Thus, an assignment turned in five days late will receive a twenty-two percent penalty. Six days late, twenty-five percent, and so on.

Class Participation

This class is a research seminar. As such, participation in the discussions we have in class will be vital for the seminar's success. Because of this, significant weight is placed on your preparation for and performance in class discussions. I expect you to come to each class session prepared to discuss the reading for the day. I will be evaluating your performance in each of our class discussions. You should be prepared to make comments on each topic we cover, demonstrating an understanding of the core concepts we address.

In addition, each of you will **lead the discussion** on one of the readings and this will count as 15% of the 25% devoted to your participation grade. In leading the discussion, you will briefly summarize the reading and then ask the members of the seminar open-ended questions related to the strengths, weaknesses, and other aspects you find interesting/relevant in the readings. You also need to draw out lessons that apply (or will apply) to our projects and discuss the connections in concrete ways. The key will be to draw out insights from your peers that enlighten the class and illuminate the readings.

Please note that you must submit a full outline detailing how you intend to lead the discussion. The outline needs to be submitted to me by the day before class at 12 pm.

Experimental Design / Mock Report

This course is geared toward the successful completion of an experimental design. You should begin in advance to consider possible topics. I will also provide some possible topics. You will prepare the paper together with a group. In particular, you need to include (1) conceiving an abstract, (2) gathering potential sources from which to draw and drafting a brief, but critical literature review situating your work, (3) preparing an application to the Institutional Review Board, which governs research on human subjects, and (4) submitting the final draft and presenting it for review by the professor.

The paper should be sound methodologically. That is, it should posit a set of related hypotheses – including clearly specified relationships between independent and dependent variables – and then design a field experiment to evaluate the hypotheses using a randomized field experiment.

The experimental design / mock report should be 5,000 words in length on double-spaced pages (roughly 20 pages). It should be prepared with a consistent citation style, and it should be written in

clear, grammatically correct and engaging prose. The paper will encompass 50 percent of your total grade for this course and should occupy a significant amount of your attention. This will be due before the end of the term, likely May 10.

Presentation

You will be required to present your paper to the members of the class and defend your ideas against criticisms and objections they have. We will likely set up the presentations as a scholarly panel, where there are presenters, discussants and an audience that engage in a discussion of the papers. Your performance in the presentation will be calculated as 10% of the 25% of the grade devoted to participation.

Prospectus

Early in the semester (April 12), you will be required to submit a research proposal or prospectus. A research prospectus is a plan of attack for a research problem. The audience for the prospectus is the instructor and your peers in the class. Each group should meet with me before the prospectus is due so that I can suggest useful sources, possible angles of attack, and potential problems.

A quality prospectus includes the following:

1. It should clearly state a research question (which is not the same as a topic). The question should ask about relationships between variables.
2. It should apply a theoretical approach to research the question, drawing on relevant literature in political science (from this course and beyond it).
3. From that theoretical approach should stem hypotheses about relationships among independent and dependent variables. The hypotheses should point to causal relationships, e.g. if A then B. These hypotheses should be very clearly stated. You must include an explanation of the *causal mechanism(s)* that connects the independent to the dependent variable. You must explain the connections.
4. It should contain a discussion on how you will broadly design the relevant field experiment. You do not need to discuss these methods and sources at length, but you do need to identify them.
5. It should briefly discuss possible limitations to the research endeavor.
6. The prospectus should be 1000-1250 words in length on double-spaced pages.

Institutional Review Board Application

All research projects involving human subjects must be evaluated and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). To learn how this process works and about the importance of obtaining IRB approval, you need to prepare an application and turn it in to me. Note: Please do not turn it in to the IRB, unless you have immediate plans to carry out the research, which you should discuss with me.

The application is here: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/irbaccess.html>. There is no length requirement, but you need to fill out all parts of the application, including the sections of the Appendixes, where applicable. Note that understanding and anticipating the IRB's concerns is difficult and you will need to think carefully and repeatedly about this. You may use material already written from your abstract, prospectus, literature review, or research paper (or that will be in these documents), but the material should be used appropriately to answer the questions and address the IRB's concerns. In other words, if you simply copy and paste, you will likely miss the point of the questions in the application.

Plagiarism

UT students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are expected not only to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest.

While students should make a general commitment to proper academic conduct, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in the age of the internet, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers.

Writing submitted for credit at UT must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit a writing lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current *Harbrace College Handbook*, the *MLA Handbook*, and James D. Lester's *Writing Research Papers*.

Please also see the University Honor Code site for more information at:
<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.

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://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me 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.

Readings

All articles will be available online through blackboard or journal websites.

Proviso

The guidelines above and the course schedule below are very likely to be followed, but I reserve the right to modify them as I see fit during the course of the term. Especially given that this is a research seminar, you should expect changes in the structure of the course as your interests and strengths become clearer to me.

Course Schedule

Date	Day	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Apr 6	1	Opening Discussion of Applications	-Banerjee and Duflo. 2009. “The Experimental Approach to Development Economics.” <i>Annual Review of Economics</i> (151-178) (General)
		Syllabus / Logistics	-Humphreys & Weinstein. 2009. “Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> . (367-378) (General)
		Field Experiments as Method	-Green, Don, and Alan Gerber. 2002. “Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition.” In Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner (Eds). <i>Political Science: State of the Discipline</i> . New York: W.W. Norton. (805-832) (General)
		Project Discussions	-Findley, Michael, Daniel Nielson, and Jason Sharman. 2013. “Using Field Experiments in International Relations: A Randomized Study of Anonymous Incorporation.” Forthcoming in <i>International Organization</i> . (All) (International Relations)
			-Blaschke, et al. 2013. “Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Social Incentives for Crowdsourcing Development Information in Uganda: A Field Experiment.” Unpublished Manuscript. (All) (Comparative)
			<i>Recommended</i>
			-Seiter, John, and Robert Gass. 2005. “The Effect of Patriotic Messages on Restaurant Tipping.” <i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i> 35(6): 1197-1205.
			-Paluck and Green. 2009. “Deference, Dissent, and Dispute Resolution: An Experimental Intervention into Using Mass Media.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 103(4): 622-644.
			-Gerber, Alan, Don Green, and Josh Larimer. 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> . (33-48) (American)

Apr 12	1.5	Prospectus Due	-Email prospectus to Findley by 5 pm.
Apr 19	2	Applications Variants Project Discussions	<p><i>Substantive Applications (READ TWO)</i></p> <p>-Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." <i>World Politics</i> 55: 399-422. (<i>Parties and Voting</i>)</p> <p>-Hyde, Susan. 2007. "Experimenting in Democracy Promotion: International Observers and the 2004 Presidential Elections in Indonesia." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 8(2): 511-527. (<i>Election Monitoring</i>)</p> <p>-Fearon, James, Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2009. "Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion after Civil War." <i>American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings</i> 99(2): 287-291. (<i>Peacebuilding</i>)</p> <p>-Chattopadhyay, Radhabendra, and Esther Duflo. 2004. "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India." <i>Econometrica</i> 72(5): 1409-1443. (<i>Gender</i>)</p> <p>-Cohen, Jessica, and Pascaline Dupas. 2009. "Free Distribution or Cost Sharing: Evidence from a Randomized Malaria Prevention Experiment." <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> 125(1): 1-45. (<i>Health/Quantity Estimation</i>)</p> <p>-Olken, Benjamin. 2007. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 115(2): 200-249. (<i>Corruption</i>)</p> <p>--Duflo and Hanna. 2005. "Incentives Work: Getting Teachers to Come to School." Unpublished Manuscript. (<i>Education</i>)</p> <p>-Dupas, Pascaline. 2009. "Do Teenagers Respond to HIV Risk Information: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Kenya." <i>American Economic Journal: Applied Economics</i> 3: 1-34. (<i>Health</i>)</p> <p><i>Field Experiment Variants (READ BOTH)</i></p> <p>-Blattman, Christopher. 2009. "From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 103(2): 231-247. (<i>Natural Experiment</i>)</p> <p>-Harris, Adam, and Michael Findley. 2013. "Is Ethnicity Identifiable? Lessons from an Experiment in South</p>

			Africa.” <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution. (Lab in Field Experiments)</i>
May 3	3	Methods / Ethics	-The Common Rule: Link Here (For IRB)
		Strengths / Limitations	-The Belmont Report: Link Here (For IRB)
		Presentations	-Bertrand and Mullanathan. 2004. “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination” <i>American Economic Review</i> 94(4): 991-1013. (Ethics: Deception)
			-Milgram, Stanley. 1963. “Behavioral Study of Obedience.” <i>Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology</i> 67(4): 371-378. (Behavioral Outcomes; Ethics)
			-Zimbardo, Philip. 1973. “A Pirandellian Prison.” <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> . April 8, 1973. (Behavioral Outcomes; Ethics)
			-Paluck, Elizabeth. 2010. “The Promising Integration of Qualitative Methods and Field Experiments.” <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences</i> 628: 59-71. (Research Procedures)
			-Paluck, Elizabeth. 2008. “Methods and Ethics with Research Teams and NGOs: Comparing Experiences Across the Border of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo.” In C. Sriram et al. (Eds.), <i>Surviving Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations</i> . Routledge. (Research Procedures)
			-Deaton. 2009. “Instruments, Randomization, and Learning about Development.” <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i> 48(2): 424-455. (Limitations)
			-Brigham, et al. 2013. “Aversion to Learning in Development? A Global Field Experiment on Microfinance Institutions.” Unpublished Manuscript. (Limitations)