

POL 305 – Experimental Political Science
Fall 2019
Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 2:00-2:50 PM
Schroeder 201

Instructor: Dr. Carl L. Palmer
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Course Objectives:

This course is designed to build students' familiarity with the concepts, methods, and application of randomized experiments as a tool to understand political behavior. In doing so, students will think critically about the validity of experiments as viable explanations for political behavior and public policy, as well as the ethical and normative considerations of utilizing experiments to understand such (including issues such as deception).

By the end of the course, students will have a firm basis in the theoretical and statistical elements that compose the experimental method, and also have an overview of key findings based upon experiments in the domain of American politics. To meet this broader goal, students should be able to meet the following specific objectives:

- Describe the logic of randomized experiments as causal explanations for outcomes
- Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of experiments as tools of study
- Apply the experimental method to a relevant political science question

Required Readings:

- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds. 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press – available online at: <https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/documents/undergraduate/cambridge-handbook.pdf>
- 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
- All additional readings will be made available via ReggieNet.

Course Policies:

1. Exams must be taken at the times specified in the syllabus; makeup exams will be given only in the most extreme circumstances, with provided documentation of the absence. Makeup exams will consist of four essay questions. If you know you cannot make any one of the exam dates listed in the syllabus, you should not take this class.
2. Students will be expected to bring all readings to class to facilitate discussion.
3. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university's policies regarding plagiarism and cheating online at the Dean of Students Office website.

4. All assignments must be submitted *at the beginning of class* on the due date in the syllabus; late assignments will lose 10% credit per day late. All assignments *must* be typed unless otherwise instructed.
5. To be considered for a regrade assignments or exams must be accompanied by a no greater than 1-page (single spaced) memo detailing your claim. Memos must provide justification for a change of grade using examples from course material, and will only be accepted after a 24-hour *cooling-off* period. Memos must be submitted within one week of the initial return date for the assignment or exam.
6. Usage of cell phones in lecture will not be permitted. Please silence all cell phones before coming to class. If I see anyone using a cell phone in class I will administer a pop quiz which will affect your participation grade. Laptop computers and tablets are permissible so long as they are used for *academic* uses during lecture.
7. Students may not photograph or use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions or visual materials that accompany them (e.g., lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations). Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's Code of Student Conduct.
8. If you have special needs that require accommodation for exams, please let me know early on so that the appropriate measures can be taken. You will be required to provide documentation of your requirements.
9. If you have any questions at any point in the class, PLEASE ask. I will be happy to answer any questions about the course material. This includes if lecture is moving too quickly, or simply do not understand something. Keep in mind that this is YOUR responsibility.
10. Email: I strongly encourage email questions and comments. However, when you write you are expected to write as you would in any professional correspondence: Capital letters to start the first word of a sentence, "Dear Professor Palmer" (or "Hi Professor Palmer") to open the email, correct spelling, capital letters in the correct places, punctuation, etc. ("Hey" is not appropriate.) It is likely that I will not answer emails phrased inappropriately or that include misspellings, etc., or I may give you a two-word response, "Course Expectations," meaning that you should re-write your email in a more appropriate form and resend it. I will not answer questions that can be answered if you read the syllabus. I will either not answer or write back a one-word response: "syllabus". See <http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1795>.
11. Lecture slides will not be posted online. Students missing class will be expected to obtain notes from other students in the class.

Course Requirements:

There will be 100 total points available in this course. Final grade breakdowns are as follows:

- A: 90-100
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70

D: 69-60
F: 59 and below.

Final grades will **not** be rounded

Points for the course will be allocated as follows:

Participation/Reading Quizzes (5%): 5 pts

While the course will primarily involve lecture, we will make time for active engagement with, and discussion of the readings. Students are expected to bring all readings to be discussed to each class meeting. Failure to come prepared will negatively reflect participation.

Additionally, pop reading quizzes will be administered. Students must be present for the quiz to receive credit, and the quizzes may not be made up.

Experimental Design (30%):

There will be a required 8-10 page (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font) experimental design, due at the time of the final exam. In preparation for the final product, you are required to submit your research question for approval (1pt), an evaluation of related experimental research (2pts), and a finalized experimental design (2pts). The topic will be of your own choosing and will be worth 25pts.

Due dates are listed in the syllabus. **Final papers will not be accepted from students failing to complete all assignments related to the paper. Assignments related to the paper will not be accepted any later than two weeks after the original due date.**

Exam 1 (20%): 20pts

Multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

Exam 2 (20%): 20 pts

Multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

Exam 3 (20%): 20 pts

The final exam *will not* be cumulative, and will consist of multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

Class Presentation (5%): 5pts

The final class meetings you will present your experimental design to the class. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your presentation.

Course Schedule:

Section I: Concepts

Week 1: Experimentation and Causality – An Introduction

Aug. 19 – Introductions and syllabus

Aug. 21 – Experimental Political Science

- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. “Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts.”

Aug. 23 – Experiment brainstorming session

Week 2: Cause and Effect

Aug. 26 – Causality

- Morton, Chapter 2

Aug. 28 – Rubin Causal Model

- Morton, Chapter 3

Aug. 30 – APSA Meeting, no class

Week 3: Control and Randomization – Topics due 9/6

Sept. 2 – Labor Day, no class

Sept. 4 – Controlling for observables

- Morton, Chapter 4, pp. 101-108, 127-131

Sept. 6 – Randomization

- Morton, Chapter 5, pp. 145-155, 182-193

Week 4: Types of Experiment

Sept. 9 – Lab Experiments

- Iyengar, Shanto. “Laboratory Experiments in Political Science.”

Sept. 11 – Survey Experiments

- Sniderman, Paul M. “The Logic and Design of the Survey Experiment: An Autobiography of a Methodological Innovation.”

Sept. 13 – Field Experiments

- Gerber, Alan S. “Field Experiments in Political Science.”

Week 5: Exam

Sept. 16 – Review

Sept. 18 – Exam 1

Sept. 20 – Experiment brainstorming

Section II: Issues in Experimentation

Week 6: Validity

Sept. 23 – Intro

- Morton, Chapter 7

Sept. 25 – Internal vs. External Validity

- McDermott, “Internal and External Validity.”

Sept. 27 – Further examples

- Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. “Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?” *American Political Science Review*. 104(2): 226-42

Week 7: Subjects

Sept. 30 – College Students

- Sears, David O. 1986. “College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influences of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology’s View of Human Nature.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 51(3): 515-30.

Oct. 2 – Alternatives to College Students

- Kam, Cindy D., Jennifer R. Wilking, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister.” 2007. “Beyond the ‘Narrow Data Base’: Another Convenience Sample for Experimental Research. *Political Behavior*, 29(4), 415-440.

Oct. 4 – Comparing Subject Pools

- Druckman, James N., and Cindy D. Kam. “Students as Experimental Participants: A Defense of the ‘Narrow Data Base’.”

Week 8: Recruitment and Deception – Experimental Review due 10/11

Oct. 7 – Intro

- Morton, Chapter 10

Oct. 9 – Further Examples

- Dickson, Eric S. “Economics vs. Psychology Experiments: Stylization, Incentives, and Deception.”

Oct. 11 – Deception

- Morton, Chapter 13

Week 9: Ethics

Oct. 14 – Ethics

- Morton, Chapter 12

Oct. 16 – Further Examples

- <https://www.vox.com/2018/6/13/17449118/stanford-prison-experiment-fraud-psychology-replication>
- <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/28/17509470/stanford-prison-experiment-zimbardo-interview>

Oct. 18 – Further Examples

- Le Texier, Thibault. “Debunking the Stanford Prison Experiment.” *American Psychologist*.

Week 10: Exam

Oct. 21 – Review

Oct. 23 – Exam 2

Oct. 25 – Experiment brainstorming

Section III: Applications

Week 11: Candidates

Oct. 28 – Name Recognition

- Kam, Cindy D. and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2013. “Name Recognition and Candidate Support.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 971-986.

Oct. 30 – Communication

- Milita, Kerri, Elizabeth N. Simas, John Barry Ryan, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2017. “The Effects of Ambiguous Rhetoric in Congressional Elections.” *Electoral Studies*. 46(1): 48-63.

Nov. 1 – Scandal

- Berinsky, Adam J., Vincent L. Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee Shaker, and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2011. “Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals.” *Political Behavior*. 33(2): 179-202.

Week 12: Get Out the Vote – Experimental Design due 11/8

Nov. 4 – Voter Registration Drives

- Nickerson, David W. 2015. “Do Voter Registration Drives Increase Participation? For Whom and When?” *Journal of Politics* 77(1):88-101.

Nov. 6 – Social Pressure

- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2010. “An Experiment Testing the Relative Effectiveness of Encouraging Voter Participation by Inducing Feelings of Pride or Shame.” *Political Behavior*. 32(3): 409-22.

Nov. 8 – Persistence

- Davenport, Tiffany C., Alan S. Gerber, Donald P. Green, Christopher W. Larimer, Christopher B. Mann, and Costas Panagopoulos. 2010. “The Enduring Effects of Social Pressure: Tracking Campaign Experiments Over a Series of Elections. *Political Behavior*. 32(3): 423-30.

Week 13: Stereotyping

Nov. 11 – Is Stereotyping Inevitable?

- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. “Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 56(1): 5-18.

Nov. 13 – Candidate evaluations

- Kam, Cindy D. 2007. “Implicit Attitudes, Explicit Choices: When Subliminal Priming Predicts Candidate Preference.” *Political Behavior*. 29(3): 343-367.

Nov. 15 – Policy

- Perez, Efen O. 2010. “Explicit Evidence on the Import of Implicit Attitudes: The IAT and Immigration Policy Judgments.” *Political Behavior*. 32(4): 517-45.

Week 14: International Relations

Nov. 18 – Support for Conflict

- Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2008. “The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach.” *The American Political Science Review*. 102(1): 95-106.

Nov. 20 – Leadership

- Croco, Sarah E. 2014. “The Flipside of Flip-Flopping: Leader Inconsistency, Citizen Preferences, and the War in Iraq” *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 12(3): 237-57.

Nov. 22 – Elite Perception

- Clemons, Randy S., Rolfe D. Peterson, and Carl L. Palmer. 2016. “Priming Assad: Ethnic Priming and Attitudes Toward Military Action in Syria.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12(3): 433-49.

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 25, 27, & 29 – No class, Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: Experimental Design Presentations

Dec. 2, 4, & 6

POL 305 Syllabus Contract

To acknowledge that you have read and accepted the course syllabus and that you understand your responsibilities for this semester you must upload a digitally signed syllabus contract. To digitally sign your syllabus contract download this page and type your name and below. Signed syllabus contracts should be uploaded as a pdf to ReggieNet by Monday, August 26, 2019, at the beginning of class.

Name

Date