

Experimental Politics

L32 4025

<http://pages.wustl.edu/montgomery/teaching/experiments-politics>

CLASS MEETING	OFFICE HOURS
MW	Tues. 9 -11
2:30 - 4:00	and by appointment
Seigle Hall 205	Seigle Hall 243

Instructor Information

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Course Description

This class is a lab-style seminar in which we will design, field, and analyze an experimental study in political psychology. Our ultimate goal is to prepare a scholarly article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal of political science. This is an ambitious project that will require a substantial commitment from each student. It will also require *flexibility* since the course may evolve – perhaps substantially – during the semester in response to the needs of the project, our results, and issues raised by students. In particular, you will be expected to work in small groups with your colleagues throughout the semester both inside and outside the class to facilitate the design, implementation, and analysis of our experiment.

Prerequisites

Students are expected to have previously taken or be concurrently enrolled in Quantitative Political Methods (PS 363). Students may use a similar statistics course to meet this requirement with the permission of instructor.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain the value of experiments to scientific inquiry
- Critique previous experimental research in political science and psychology
- Design and conduct an original experiment
- Perform a statistical analysis of experimental data
- Write a scholarly article reporting the results of an experiment

Plan of the course

The basic outline of the course is divided into four components. In Section 1, we will discuss the goals of science, the structure and value of experiments, and the concepts of statistical inference and causation. This portion of the course will begin with class discussion of assigned readings, a review of the basics of statistical inference, and an orientation to the statistical package we will use in class. To encourage engagement with these materials, students will be asked to design their own experiment and to offer analytical critiques of your colleagues' proposals.

In Section 2, the class will design and conduct an experiment. With my guidance, students will survey recent articles in political science and psychology, identify a promising theory or unresolved question, and write a short paper proposing an experiment that we could carry out. (This year, we will focus on the area of perceived political control, and I will provide the necessary readings for the class to become familiar with research in this area.) After these proposals have been presented, the class will decide which specific question to pursue.

We will then break into groups to design different portions of the experiment, which will be revised and combined. After finalizing the design and obtaining human subjects approval to conduct the study, we will collect experimental data from online participants on Amazons Mechanical Turk or an equivalent service.

In Section 3, we will work together to analyze the data and construct a manuscript reporting our findings. Each student will draft one part of the article (e.g., introduction, theory, procedures). I will combine these individual components into a draft manuscript that we will revise collaboratively.

The class will culminate in Section 4 with each student developing a critique of the paper's writing, argument, quantitative analysis, and experimental design, with recommendations for revisions. These proposed revisions will then (hopefully) be integrated into a manuscript that will be submitted to a scholarly journal after the completion of the course. Participation in revisions after the class ends will be totally optional.

Textbooks

In addition to assigned readings that will be posted on Blackboard, the following books are required and can be purchased at the bookstore.

Annabel Ness Evans and Bryan J. Rooney. 2010. *Methods in Psychological Research*, second edition. Sage Publications.

Irwin P. Levin. 1999. *Relating Statistics and Experimental Design*. Sage Publications.

Class Communications

The class will be run through Blackboard. I will use this to email you announcements, provide you with readings, and facilitate collaboration via the wiki and message boards. You **must** submit your work to me through Blackboard and not via email. You may email me with questions, although I will strongly encourage all questions to be posted on the message boards.

Academic Honesty

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. I strongly encourage you to review the University's policies regarding academic honesty, which you can read at: <http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>.

All students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. In this class especially, that means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original, and the ideas and contributions of others must always be appropriately acknowledged. Quotations must, of course, be acknowledged, but so must summaries, paraphrases, and the ideas of others. If you have any doubts or questions about documentation requirements, **please ask me**. Don't guess. Since this course is offered through the College of Arts & Sciences, any violations of academic integrity policy will be referred to the College's Academic Integrity Officer, Dean Dirk Killen.

Upon arrival at Washington University you signed a statement indicating that you have read and that you understand and that you will abide by the policies of the College of Arts and Sciences regarding academic integrity. You will be expected to honor that commitment. Academic honesty is at the very core of a University's mission of research, teaching, and learning. We cannot grow and develop as scholars and citizens of this community without honoring these promises that we make to one another. Remember: In many cases, academic integrity violations are the result of getting behind in coursework and making bad decisions under pressure. Keep up with your assignments, ask questions when you are unsure what is expected of you, and do not give in to the temptation to cut corners. Many today would agree that ready availability of prose on the internet presents greater temptation than in years past to cheat; many would also acknowledge that plagiarism is easier to detect in the computer age. The best way to guard against such a situation is to get an early start: don't neglect your coursework, don't procrastinate.

Religious observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term.

Late assignments – don't do it

Late assignments will not be accepted and no incompletes will be given for assignments or the course. Exceptions will be granted only under truly extraordinary circumstances at the request of your Academic Dean. This means that *you need to plan ahead*. When in doubt, turn your assignment in early. Late assignments will not be allowed due to delayed flights, midterms in other classes, etc.

Requirements and Evaluation

Grading in this class will be based on the components described below.

Class participation – 25%

By necessity, our collaboration will largely take place in the classroom. For most class sessions, we will spend approximately half of our time on lectures and discussion and about half the time working in small groups. As such, it is essential that each student make thoughtful and consistent contributions in class discussion and group work. At a minimum, however, you should attend class on time with your readings and assignments completed and be respectful of others during class discussion. To earn full credit you should come to class prepared with questions, comments, and actively engage the materials and tasks we take on.

One-page assignments (including Wiki participation) – 20%

During the quarter, students will be regularly asked to contribute to the design of our experiment on the Blackboard wiki and to complete a series of one-page assignments asking them to propose experiments, critique proposed experiments, and offer constructive criticisms to improve them. In each case, the goal of these assignments will be to teach you how to think analytically about answering social scientific questions using experiments. Your contributions will be evaluated based on creativity, insight, and attention to detail.

Proposed experiment – 15%

Each of you will work with me to select a research topic from the list I will provide you later in the semester or to choose a related topic (which I must approve). These topics are all closely related to the topic of perceived control, which will be the focus of the class experiment later in the semester. You will then write a 1000-1500 word paper summarizing recent research in that area and proposing an experiment that the class could realistically complete that would make an important contribution to that literature.

Additional detailed guidance for this assignment will be provided in the next few weeks. Since this will be a new type of assignment for most of you, I will review draft papers and provide feedback if you send them to me by October XX (optional). I will also try to make sample papers from other students available on Blackboard.

Contribution to article – 15%

Each student will be randomly assigned to produce a first draft of one component of the article (i.e., introduction, literature review, theory, experimental design, results, or conclusion). The exact nature of this assignment will depend on the composition of the class at this stage, the nature of the article necessitated by the class experiment, and the results. I will do my best to balance the difficulty of the assignments. You will produce a first draft and will then receive feedback and suggested revisions from your classmates that you can incorporate before the final draft is due.

Proposed revisions – 25%

Once we assemble the components of the article, each student will develop a 500-750 word paper critiquing *one* specific aspect of its writing, argument, and quantitative analysis and proposing revisions or future experiments to address the problems they have identified (5%). You will get feedback from your classmates on a draft before submitting a final version. The goal is to give you experience with the critique and revision process.

Students will then expand this to write a 1500 - 2000 word critique of the article as a whole for their final paper. It should propose further revisions and suggest future research projects that build on our results (20%).

Grading scale

The course is graded on the 10 point scale below.

Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
≥94	A	≥83	B	≥ 73	C	≥63	D
≥90	A-	≥80	B-	≥ 70	C-	≥60	D-
≥87	B+	≥77	C+	≥ 67	D+	<60	Fail

Teaching Assistants

There are two graduate teaching assistants who will be available to help you with R and any statistical analyses you do for this course. Both teaching assistants concentrate in social science or applied statistics and have vast experience in applied quantitative analysis.

Graduate TA
Ms. Viktoryia Schnose
Email: vschnose@wustl.edu
Office Hours: Th 4-6
Office Hours Location: Seigle L006

Graduate TA
Mr. Kevin McAlister
Email: kevinmcalister@wustl.edu
Office Hours: F 12-1, 2-3
Office Hours Location: Seigle L006

Software

During some classes, for group projects and for your homework, you will be using the R statistical package (<http://www.r-project.org/>). This package is widely used in political science, economics, psychology, sociology, and biostatistics. R is available for every computing platform, and most importantly, is free. Please bring your laptops to specified classes if you will need help installing the program.

Tentative Course Schedule

(1) Experiments: Why and how (9/5)

- Why experiments?

- Issenbeg. “Nudge the Vote.” *New York Times Magazine*. October 29, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/magazine/31politics-t.html>
- Gerber and Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Chapter 1
- Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, and Lupia. 2011. “Experiments in Political Science.” In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.
- Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, and Lupia. 2011. “Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts.” In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.
- Our plan of attack
 - King. 2006. “Publication, Publication.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 119-121 (stop where it says “Ground Rules”)
 - Evans and Rooney – Chapter 1

(2) Perceived control: Definitions and measurement (9/10)

- What is a perception of control?
 - Haidt and Rodin. 1999. “Control and Efficacy as Interdisciplinary Bridges.” *Review of General Psychology*. 317- 328.
 - Skinner. 1996. “A Guide to Constructs of Control.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Measuring perceived control
 - Evans and Rooney – Chapter 5
 - Montgomery. 2011. “Epiphenomenal Citizenship: Evaluating and Validating a Measure of Perceived Political Control” (Sections 1-3)
- *Small group*: Design a mini POC experiment

(3) Causality and experiments (9/12)

- Readings
 - McDermott. 2011. “Internal and External Validity.” In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.
 - Gerber and Green. 2012. Chapter 2.
 - (Graduate students only) Morton and Williams. 2010. Chapter 2. *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*.
- *Small groups*: Design an experiment.
- *Assignment*: Run the experiment for session 5

(4) Experimental design (9/17)

- Readings
 - Levin pp 1-15
 - Evans and Rooney, Chapters 7 & 8
 - Pronin, E., Wegner, D. M., McCarthy, K. and Rodriguez, S. (2006) “Everyday Magical Powers: The Role of Apparent Mental Causation in the Overestimation of Personal Influence.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- *Small Groups*: Critique of Wegner et al. experiments

(5) Hypothesis testing (9/19)

- Readings
 - Evans and Rooney Chapter 4
 - Levin pp 16-24
- *Small Groups*: Presentation/discussion of mini-experiments
- *NOTE*: Early drafts of experiment for comment due Friday by 5:00 PM.

(6-7) R, ANOVA & Regression (9/24&9/26)

- Readings
 - Levin pp 25-67
 - Evans and Rooney Chapter 13
- *NOTE*: Bring your laptops!!
- *NOTE*: Experimental proposal due Friday at 5:00 PM
- *Small Groups*: Practice statistical analysis

(8-9) Students present research proposals (10/1 & 10/3)

- Critique of classmates proposal due Friday at 5:00 PM

(10) Choose topic and basic design (10/8)

- Short essay on favored topic due at beginning of class

(11-12) Design study (10/10 & 10/15)

- Readings
 - Iyengar. 2010. "Laboratory Experiments in Political Science." In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*
- *Small Groups*: Work on Wiki
- *Assignment*: Work on Wiki
- *NOTE*: Bring your laptops!

(13) Human Subjects (10/17)

- Readings
 - Morton and Williams. 2011. *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality*. Chapters 11-13
- *Small Groups*: Work on IRB Protocol
- *Assignment*: Complete IRB training
- *Assignment*: Finish assigned section of Protocol

(14-15) Experiment construction (10/22-10/24)

- *NOTE*: Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups & Assignment*: Get experiment up and running.

(16) Pre-test analysis (10/29)

- *NOTE*: Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups*: Analyze pre-test data
- *Assignment*: TBD

(17) Experimental revisions (10/31)

- *NOTE*: Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups*: Discuss possible revisions
- *Assignment*: Implement revisions/File IRB amendment if necessary

(18) Components of an article 11/5

- Readings TBD

(19) Descriptive Stats./ Main Effects (11/7)

- *NOTE:* Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups:* Outline needed tables/Figures
- *Assignment:* Construct tables/figures

(20) Regression (11/12)

- *NOTE:* Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups:* Outline needed tables/Figures
- *Assignment:* Construct tables/figures

(21-22) Write the paper (11/14, 11/19)

- *NOTE:* Bring your laptops!
- *Small Groups:* Work on paper section drafts
- *Assignment:* Assigned sections due 11/25 at 5:00 PM

(23) Group feedback (11/26)

- Read the complete paper before class
- *Small Groups:* Feedback on sections
- *Assignment:* Revised sections due Friday at 5:00 PM

(24) Article discussion (11/28)

- *Assignment:* Preliminary final paper due Friday at 5:00 PM

(25) Feedback on Feedback (12/3)

- Feedback on critiques
- *Small Groups:* Discuss problems in the draft

(26) Turn in your papers (12/5)

- Final papers due at beginning of class
- Wrap up and cookies!

Paper topics

Apparent mental causation

- Wegner and Wheatley. 1999. "Apparent Mental Causation." *American Psychologist*.
- Wegner, Sparrow, and Winerman. 2004. "Vicarious Agency: Experiencing Control Over the Movements of Others." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Frith. 2004. "The Self in Action: Lessons from Delusions of Control." *Consciousness and Cognition*.

Illusion of Control

- Langer. 1975. "The Illusion of Control." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Langer and Rodin. 1976 "The Effect of Choice and Enhanced Personal Responsibility for the Aged: A Field Experiment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Langer and Roth. 1975. "Heads I win, tails it's chance: The illusion of control as a function of the sequence of outcomes in a purely chance task." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Action Identification

- Vallacher and Wegner. 1987. "What Do People Think They're Doing? Action identification and Human Behavior." *Psychological Review*.
- Vallacher and Wegner. 1989. "Levels of Personal Agency: Individual Variation in Action Identification." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Liberman, Sagristano, and Trope. 2002. "The Effect of Temporal Distance on Level of Mental Construal." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Political Efficacy (2)

- Kanazawa. 1998. "A Possible Solution to the Paradox of Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics*
- Finkel. 1985. "Reciprocal Effects of Participation and Political Efficacy: A Panel Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* 29(4):891-913.
- Morrell. 2005. "Deliberation, Democratic Decision-Making and Internal Political Efficacy." *Political Behavior*.
- Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk. 2009. "Efficacy, Emotions and the Habit of Participation." *Political Behavior*
- Ikeda, Kobayashi and Hoshimoto. 2007. "Does Political Participation Make a Difference? The Relationship Between Political Choice, Civic Engagement and Political Efficacy." *Electoral Studies*

- Kanazawa. 2000. "A New Solution to the Collective Action Problem: The Paradox of Voter Turnout." *American Sociological Review*

Strategic Voting

- Alvarez and Nagler. 2000. "A New Approach for Modeling Strategic Voting in Multiparty Elections." *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Blais, Nadeau, Gidengil, and Neviite. 2001. "Measuring Strategic Voting in Multiparty Plurality Elections." *Electoral Studies*.
- Morton and Williams. 2011. "Electoral Systems and Strategic Voting (Laboratory Election Experiments)" In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.

Turnout in close elections

- Schlozman, Verba, and Brady. 1995. "Participation's Not A Paradox: The View from American Activists." *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Acevedo and Krueger. 2004. "Two Egocentric sources of the Decision to Vote: The Voter's Illusion and the Belief in Personal Relevance." *Political Psychology*.
- Darmofal. 2010. "Re-examining the Calculus of Voting." *Political Psychology* 31(2):149 174.

Automaticity in political decision-making

- Redlawsk. 2002. "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making" *Journal of Politics*.
- Lodge and Tabler. 2005. "The Automaticity of Affect for Political Leaders, Groups, and Issues: An Experimental Test of the Hot Cognition Hypothesis." *Political Psychology*.
- Wegner and Wheatley. 1999. "Apparent Mental Causation." *American Psychologist*.

Social sources of perceived causation

- Kassin and Kiechel. 1996. The Social Psychology of False Confessions: Compliance, Internalization, and Confabulation. *Psychological Science*.
- Nash and Wade. 2008. Innocent But Proven Guilty: Eliciting Internalized False Confessions Using Doctored-Video Evidence. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*.
- Aarts, Custers, and Wegner. 2004. "On the Inference of Personal Authorship: Enhancing Experienced Agency by Priming Effect Information." *Consciousness and Cognition*.

Service Learning

- Hunter and Brisbin. 2000. "The Impact of Service Learning on Democratic and Civic Values." *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- Seider, Gillmor, and Rabinowicz. 2012. "The Impact of Community Service Learning Upon the Expected Political voice of Participating College Students." *Journal of Adolescent Research*.
- Kirlin. 2002. "Civic Skill Building: The Missing Component in Service Programs?" *PS: Political Science and Politics*.