

Survey experiments

Duration: 12 hours/3 days

February 16-18	14:00-18:00
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Course Description

This short course will introduce students to the logics and practice of experimental research in Political Science. We will discuss the framework and assumptions used to think about causality, and the different approaches. Then, we will concentrate on survey experiments. We will focus on their uses and varieties, as well as on the design, implementation and analysis. Each session will consist of an introductory lecture and a hands-on practical session. Students will be able to use either Stata or R for the practical sessions.

Course Content

Day 1: Introduction: Experiments and causal identification

- The potential outcomes framework
- Randomization
- Assumptions and violations
- Treatment effects: ATE, ITT, CACE, CATE
- Types of experiments in social sciences.

Day 2: Survey experiments

- Origin, history and evolution of survey experiments
- Uses of survey experiments
- Survey methodology
- Measurement/sensitive issues
- Causal identification
- Types of survey experiments
 - Priming
 - Framing
 - Endorsement
 - List experiments
 - Conjoint experiments
 - Natural experiments and quasi-experiments in surveys

Day 3: Designing, implementing and analyzing survey experiments effectively

- Design
 - Pre-registration
 - Ethics & deception
 - Precision
 - Realism, pre-treatment
 - Attention & Satisficing
 - Manipulation checks
- Implementation
 - Sampling and weighting
 - Power
 - Assessing randomization
- Analysis
 - Analysis
 - Reporting
 - Testing for heterogeneous effects

Sessions

Session 1

- Lecture on experiments and causal identification

- Hands-on analysis of experimental data: estimating treatment effects

Session 2

- Lecture on survey experiments: types and uses
- Hypotheses and experimental design development

Session 3

- Lecture on survey experiments: treatment & questionnaire design
- Questionnaire development

Session 4

- Lecture on survey experiments: implementation and analysis
- Analysis of experimental data: Power, randomization checks, treatment effects and heterogeneous effects

Methodology

During the sessions we will combine lectures on the background concepts with in-class activities based on the active learning methods.

The students are expected to bring their laptops with R and/or Stata installed. The students will develop a draft of an experimental design, and will receive feedback. These small groups will be in place for the in-class activities as well as the assignments.

References

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- Kuhn, Patrick M and Nick Vivyan. 2021. "The misreporting trade-off between list experiments and direct questions in practice: Partition validation evidence from two countries." *Political Analysis* .
- Leeper, Thomas J, Sara B Hobolt and James Tilley. 2020. "Measuring subgroup preferences in conjoint experiments." *Political Analysis* 28(2):207–221.
- Muñoz, Jordi, Albert Falcó-Gimeno and Enrique Hernández. 2020. "Unexpected event during survey design: Promise and pitfalls for causal inference." *Political Analysis* 28(2):186–206.
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- Rimbau, Guillem and Kai Ostwald. 2021. "Placebo statements in list experiments: Evidence from a face-to-face survey in Singapore." *Political Science Research and Methods* 9(1):172–179.
- Sniderman, Paul M and JN Druckman. 2011. "The logic and design of the survey experiment." *Cambridge handbook of experimental political science* p. 102.