

**Experimental Methods in Political Science**  
**Government 385L**  
**Tuesday 9:30-12:30**  
**BAT 1.104**

## **Contact**

Bethany Albertson, Office BAT 4.124, [balberts@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:balberts@austin.utexas.edu), office hours: Tuesday 1-4.

Mike Findley, Office BAT 3.108, 512.232.7208, [mikefindley@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:mikefindley@austin.utexas.edu), office hours: Thursday 9:30-12:00.

## **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.

## **Requirements**

Your course grade is based on the following components:

Seminar Participation:	25%
Written Assignments:	15%
Class Presentation:	10%
Final Paper:	50%

**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 your own papers.

**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 50% 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. Two of those are listed in the September 17th reading and will be posted to Blackboard.

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.

### **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](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency).

## Tentative Topics and Readings

September 3:  
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 September 9th at noon.

September 10:  
Research Design II

1. Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, Lupia: Experimentation in Political Science. In Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science.
2. Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, Lupia: Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts. In Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science.
3. Babbie: The Practice of Social Research, Chp 2
4. Findley, Nielson, Sharman: Causes of Compliance with International Law. Unpublished Manuscript.
5. Albertson. 2011. Religious Appeals and Implicit Attitudes. Political Psychology.

September 17:  
Workshop experiment designs for the whole class

- Nisbett: The Anticreativity Letters: [Link here](#)
- Varian: How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time: [Link here](#)

-Loehle: A Guide to Increased Creativity in Research: [Link here](#)

-Brigham et al: Aversion to Learning (Example of experiment that came out of semester course)

-Matthias et al: NGO Opportunism (Example of experiment that came out of semester course)

September 24:

Workshop designs continued; Res design presentation; turn in design proposal

-Belmont Report: [Link here](#)

-The Common Rule: [Link here](#)

-Readings may be assigned later depending on design discussions.

October 1:

Lab Experiments I

**Assignment:** Convert research design and IRB documents into a preregistration document. See [www.e-gap.org](http://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 October 7 at noon.

-IRB apps due to the IRB by Oct 1

1. Bargh - Automaticity of Social Behavior, JPSP 1996.

2. Adreoni & Vesterlund- Which is the Fair Sex? Gender Differences in Altruism.

3. 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

October 8:

Lab Experiments II

1. Tomz: Audience costs in IR

2. Harris and Findley: Is Ethnicity Identifiable (Lab in field experiment)

3. Grossman: Lab-in-field experiments (from APSA comparative newsletter)

4. Rothstein and Eek: Political Corruption and Social Trust

5. Karpowitz & Mendelberg: Experimental Approach to Citizen Deliberation

([http://www.princeton.edu/~talim/An%20Experimental%20Approach%20to%20Citizen%20Deliberation%20-%20Karpowitz\\_and\\_Mendelberg.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~talim/An%20Experimental%20Approach%20to%20Citizen%20Deliberation%20-%20Karpowitz_and_Mendelberg.pdf) - or pieces from the book)

October 15:  
Survey Experiments I

1. Mutz. Population Based Survey Experiments. 2011. Selected chapters.
2. Gilens, Martin. "Random Assignments: An Anatomy of Survey-Based Experiments." *Navigating Public Opinion: Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy*, Jeff Manza, Fay Lomax Cook, and Benjamin Page, eds.
3. Berinsky et al. 2011. Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals. *Political Behavior*. 2011.

October 22:  
Survey Experiments II

1. DeSante, Christopher. 2013. Working Twice as Hard to Get Half as Far: Race, Work Ethic, and America's Deserving Poor. *AJPS*.
2. Berinsky, Huber and Lenz "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk" *Political Analysis*
3. Barabas and Jerit: Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid
4. Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined. *Political Analysis*, 15(1): 1-20.

October 29: Field Experiments I

1. Baumeister, et al: Psychology as the science of self-reports and finger movements: [Link here](#)
2. Bertrand and Mullanaithan: Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Jamal and Lakisha
3. Wantchekon: Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin
4. Humphreys and Weinstein: Field Experiments in the Pol Economy of Development
5. Gerber, Green, Larimer: Social Pressure and Voter Turnout
6. Butler, Daniel M. & D. W. Nickerson. 2011. Can Learning Constituency Opinion Affect How Legislators Vote: Evidence from a Field Experiment. *QJPS*. Vol. 6, 55-83.

November 5: Field Experiments II

1. Butler and Brookman: Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents
2. Dupas: Do Teenagers Respond to HIV Risk Information?
3. Paluck: Experiments and Qualitative
4. Page: Accepting the Gay Person
5. Olken: Monitoring Corruption
6. Duflo and Hanna: Incentives Work
7. Cohen and Dupas: Free Distribution or Cost Sharing

November 12: Natural

1. Dunning: Chapters TBA
2. Hyde: The Observer Effect in Int'l Politics
3. Posner: The Political Salience of Cultural Difference
4. Blattman: From Violence to Voting
5. Hill and Barton: Red Enhances....
6. Healy & Malhotra: Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance

November 19: Miscellaneous topics

1. Arcenaux, Gerber, Green: Comparing Experimental and Matching Methods (Matching)
2. Nielsen: Matching for case selection (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)

November 26: TBA

December 3: Final Presentations