

POLS 8500: CAUSAL INFERENCE

Spring 2023

Professor: Joe Ornstein

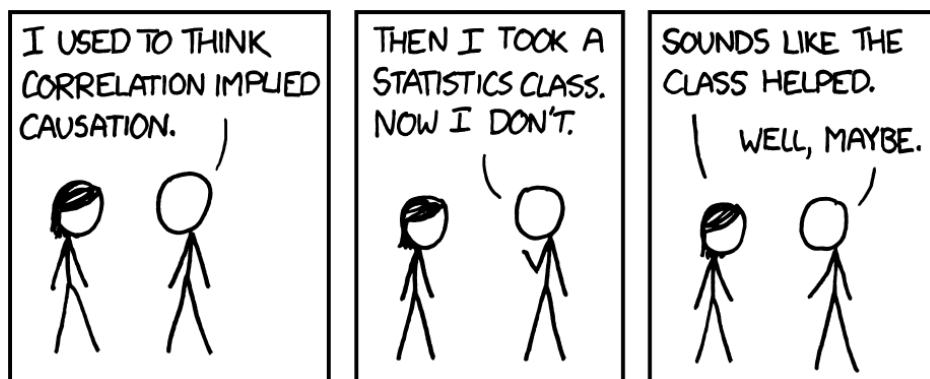
Email: jornstein@uga.edu

Website: joeornstein.github.io/causal-inference/

Time: Th 3:55pm – 6:40pm

Place: 101B Baldwin Hall

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Requirements

Your course grade will be based on three components.

- **Readings and Annotations (25%):** Each week, read the assigned chapters/articles and annotate through [Perusall](#).
- **Replications ($2 \times 25\%$):** Choose two of *Optional Bonus Fun* papers on the syllabus below. Using their posted replication materials, recreate each paper's key results in a Quarto report. You will present your findings in a Mock Conference Presentation during class.
- **Final Paper (25%):** Write a final paper using one or more of the designs we introduced in class. This could be either an original research project or a re-analysis and extension of one of the papers you replicated.

Course Outline

Here is the rough plan of action for our semester together. Readings abbreviated "NHK" denote our primary textbook, Nick Huntington-Klein's *The Effect*, available in hard copy or [free online](#).

Week 1: Credibility, Causal Salads, and the Seven Deadly Sins

Required Reading:

- Angrist, Joshua D, and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2010. "The Credibility Revolution in Empirical Economics: How Better Research Design Is Taking the Con out of Econometrics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24(2): 3–30.

- McElreath, Richard. 2021. *Regression, Fire, and Dangerous Things*.
- Schrodtt, Philip A. 2014. “Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis.” *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 287–300.

Weeks 2-3: D’ya Like DAGs?

Required Reading:

- NHK Chapters X-Y

Optional Bonus Fun:

-

Week 3: Experiments (Both Natural and Unnatural)

- NHK Chapters X-Y

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Week X: Omniscience + Linearity (Regression)

- Sensitivity Analysis Paper

Week X: Omniscience without Linearity (Matching)

- Hainmueller, Jens. 2012. “Entropy Balancing for Causal Effects: A Multivariate Reweighting Method to Produce Balanced Samples in Observational Studies.” *Political Analysis* 20(1): 25–46.

Week X-Y: Regression Discontinuity

Required Readings:

- Cattaneo, Matias D, Nicolas Idrobo, and Rocío Titiunik. 2018. “A Practical Introduction to Regression Discontinuity Designs: Volume I.”
- Marshall, John. 2022. “Can Close Election Regression Discontinuity Designs Identify Effects of Winning Politician Characteristics?” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Ornstein, Joseph T. & Duck-Mayr, JBrandon. 2022. “Gaussian Process Regression Discontinuity”. *Working Paper*.

Optional Bonus Fun:

- Klačnja, Marko, and Rocío Titiunik. 2017. “The Incumbency Curse: Weak Parties, Term Limits, and Unfulfilled Accountability.” *The American Political Science Review* 111(1): 129–48.
- Keele, Luke J., and Rocío Titiunik. 2015. “Geographic Boundaries as Regression Discontinuities.” *Political Analysis* 23(1): 127–55.