Arts & Sciences Spring 2020 Instructor Report for SP2020.L32.Pol Sci.5024.01 - Causal Inference (Patrick Cunha Silva)

Project Title: **WashU Spring 2020 Course Evaluations**

Courses Audience: **16**
Responses Received: **5**
Response Ratio: **31.25%**

Report Comments

Welcome to your Instructor Report for WashU Course Evaluations. Below you will find response data from the specified course section. Responses to personalized questions appear at the bottom of the report.

The intention of this report is to provide feedback, and also to prompt improvement in areas that may be lacking. This report is accessible to appropriate department level and school level users, as determined by your school. We appreciate your dedication to our learning community at Washington University.

If you have questions about this report, please contact evals@wustl.edu

Creation Date: **Thursday, May 21, 2020**

Technology powered by BLUE

Thinking about this course before spring break, what three words would you use to describe it to another student?

Comments
Informative, well–organized, interactive.
challenging, useful, and valuable.
Solid, challenging, helpful
Rigorous, Comprehensive, Applicable

Thinking about this course before spring break, describe at least one thing about this course that helped you learn.

Comments
I thought Chris Lucas was prepared for lecture—both his slides and his discussion of the course content were clear and informative.
the Pset and the TA were extremely helpful in my learning
Psets
The problem sets were instrumental in my learning. They helped to connect the dots between theoretical concepts and ways that they could be concretely applied to research questions.

Thinking about this course before spring break, describe at least one thing that could be changed about this course to help you learn.

Comments
I did not find the Hernan and Robins book very helpful. I think it sometimes made things less clear, so I did not really read it after the first few weeks.
More time to cover concepts in lecture could be beneficial
Review concepts in lab
I think that it may have been helpful to supplement the book chapters with additional applied papers to better understand strengths and limitations of various approaches and to get a sense of ways they could be adapted to different contexts

Thinking about the differences in the course before and after spring break, describe at least one change that helped you learn better in the remote version.

Comments
I think the two versions of the lecture portion of the course were quite similar (which was good).
The TA office hours were really helpful
None
The code–sharing in lab was very helpful, and I felt that the participation in lab worked better in the virtual format

Thinking about the differences in the course before and after spring break, describe at least one change that made learning more challenging in the remote version.

Comments
It was not as easy to get in touch with Chris Lucas, Patrick Silva, or other students to discuss the problem sets. But that couldn't really have been helped. The instructor and TA did do everything in their power to make themselves available—just harder to schedule a meeting than walk to their offices.
Being at home and doing remote learning for a methods course was quite challenging.
Harder to focus
It was harder to ask questions and, in some sense, even recognize what questions I had when learning virtually as I felt things proceeded more quickly in the remote setting

Are there any features of the remote course you would encourage your instructor to retain when the course returns to in person format, and why?

Comments
N/A
None that I can think of.
No
The code–sharing in lab, because it gave students more of an opportunity to participate and because (for questions we may have gotten wrong) we could see a concrete solution in code format to reuse later on

Are there any features of other remote courses that you have experienced that you think would have worked particularly well for this course?

Comments
No.
No
No
Not that I can think of

Do you have any other feedback for your instructor(s)?

Comments
In addition to the high–quality lecture, I thought the problem sets were generally well–designed. They were challenging, but not too challenging as to become a huge burden. They illustrated the core concepts of the class well. I felt like they really helped me learn and understand the material.
It would be really useful if the lab time was used for instruction on how to apply the methods after lecture. Though the current lab format was also useful.
Engaging lectures
It was an excellent course, and I learned a lot

Do you have any feedback for your AI?

Comments
Patrick was great. He was always available to meet and assist students. He did a good job in office hours of not giving away the answer but guiding us to it. I actually though the Lab sessions were a bit more engaging in the second half of the semester for two reasons. First, I think it was nice to prompt us to interact with Patrick and give our coding answers. Second, seeing Patrick's code on our computer (rather than the projector) on Zoom made it easier to see and follow along. Perhaps in the future, even in person, Patrick (or the future AI) could encourage us to download the code on our own computers at the start of class so we could follow along more easily.
Patrick was such a great AI. He was very patient, gracious with his time, and knowledgeable. He did an excellent job of reviewing concepts in a way that could be understood by all students.
Patrick was a stellar TA. He made himself available during office hours and graded homework in a timely fashion.
I really appreciated your helpful feedback and providing suggestions of coding tips and tricks to apply to our own research

Did the instructor(s) promote an inclusive learning environment with regard to the diversity of student personal backgrounds and identities? Please explain your answer to the above, giving specific examples.

Comments
The class was a mix of political science and social work students, so I think in that regard, Chris Lucas did a good job incorporating examples from both disciplines in his lecture and ensuring everyone learned and understood the material regardless of their previous department's methods training.
To the extent that it was relevant to the course, Dr. Lucas was responsive to student's backgrounds and identities. For example, he acknowledged the diversity of student disciplines and was attentive to how this might impact real–world application of the methods we were learning
Yes
Yes. Every effort was made to provide workable examples in different areas of research and the instructor was very approachable and accommodating (especially after the chaos of COVID)

Past research shows that the students' answers to any one question can be noisy, more prone to biases, and provide less useful data for evaluating courses and instructors. Since interpreting individual questions, including their relative highs and lows, can easily lead to inaccurate conclusions due to low reliability, individual question responses are not available in any standard report.

However, combining students' responses to several questions aimed at measuring the same underlying attribute can improve the quality of the measures. Therefore, the statistics displayed for each attribute (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) are calculated from the grouped responses to all the questions in each topical block.

All questions below use a 5-point response scale: 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree

The varied rating scale responses are statistically reliable as individual questions.