Designing Validity for Studies of Political Violence, Human Rights, and Conflict

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Introduction

This class will provide graduate students with an introduction to the scientific method and an overview of how to apply it to the study of politics. Students will learn the fundamentals of the scientific method and, through research design, how to improve both causal inference and the measurement of political phenomena.

Readings


   [http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/)

3. Additional articles and chapters are listed below. Copies of these readings will be provided by the instructor.

Introduction to R Material (Optional)


   [https://ase.tufts.edu/bugs/guide/assets/R%20Cookbook.pdf](https://ase.tufts.edu/bugs/guide/assets/R%20Cookbook.pdf)
Day 1: Designing Validity

*Lecture Readings:*


*Discussion/Applied Readings:*


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Day 2: Experimental Designs

*Lecture Readings:*


2. Trochim and Donnelly. Ch 7: “Experimental Design.”

*Discussion/Applied Readings:*

Day 3: Quasi-Experimental Designs: Non-Equivalent Group Designs

Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:


Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:

Day 5: Quasi-Experimental Designs: Regression Discontinuity Designs

Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:


Day 6: Quasi-Experimental Designs: Instrumental Variable Designs

Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:


Day 7: Measurement Designs: Data, Validity, and Reliability

Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:


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Day 8: Observational Data and Design Choice

Lecture Readings:


Discussion/Applied Readings:


Day 9: Case Studies, Case Selection, and Qualitative Evidence

Lecture Readings:

1. Dunning. Ch. 7: “The central role of qualitative evidence.”

Discussion/Applied Readings:


Day 10: Enhancing External Validity and Generalizability: Transparency, Replication, and Reproduction

Lecture Readings:

1. Dunning. Ch. 5: “Simplicity and Transparency: keys to quantitative analysis.”

Discussion/Applied Readings:


Additional Course Information

Resources for Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender, including violence and harassment based on sexual orientation, are a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: [www.bw.edu/resources/hr/harass/policy.pdf](http://www.bw.edu/resources/hr/harass/policy.pdf)

Language and Gender

“Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women’s experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Teachers and students should use gender-inclusive words and language whenever possible in the classroom and in writing. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, either to the class or privately to the professor, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.” For more information: [www.wstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/gender-inclusivenon-sexist-language-syllabi-statement](http://www.wstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/gender-inclusivenon-sexist-language-syllabi-statement)

Syllabus Acknowledgments

This syllabus is based on several courses that I have taken and designed over the last several years. Some of the material is based on the Research Design (PL SC 501) course that I developed at Pennsylvania State University when I began teaching there in the fall of 2013, which itself is based on similar course developed by David Lake and Mathew McCubbins at the University of California, San Diego. It is also based on material that I developed for a graduate measurement theory class (PL SC 597) and undergraduate Social Data Analysis and Design class (SO DA 308) that I also developed at Pennsylvania State University. Elements of the syllabus and other class materials created for this class are also based in part on the Bayesian Statistics class offered by Seth Hill at University of California, San Diego and the Measurement class offered by Keith Poole at UCSD and now the University of Georgia.