

SOC603 Quasi-Experimental Methods

Tue & Th 11-1 (online Webinar)

Instructor: Prof. David Pettinicchio

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:10-2:30

(please use the Calendar feature in Quercus
to sign-up ahead of time)

Course website: Quercus.

***** this course is offered online *****

Course Description

In this course, we explore the use of quasi-experimental methods in sociology (and adjacent fields) with a particular focus on audit methods. In addition to situating quasi-experimental methods alongside other qualitative and quantitative methodologies, we dive into some key issues associated with their use including establishing cause-and-effect, internal validity, randomization and control. We also examine how quasi-experimental field experiments and audit methods speak to important theoretically motivated research questions in the social sciences and how they help shed light on micro-, meso- and macro- level processes.

As a graduate seminar, we will meet synchronously via Zoom on the scheduled course meeting times.

Required Readings:

I've included these texts as required readings given that we read pretty much all or a significant majority of the chapters from these volumes.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. (referred to as ** KKV* throughout).

Gaddis, Michael (Ed). 2018. *Audit Studies: Behind the Scenes with Theory, Method, and Nuance*. Springer.

All other materials can be located online with a VPN, Tunnelblick, or through the U of T Library. Please let me know if you cannot locate a reading after trying these options.

Recommended:

<https://tessexperiments.org/info/introduction>

With TESS, Faculty and graduate students from the social sciences and related fields (such as law and public health) propose survey-based experiments (general population experiments).

In the most common experimental design in social science, different subjects are randomly assigned to groups that receive some different stimulus, and then differences between groups in some

outcome are assessed. Designs that involve within-subject experimental manipulations are also acceptable.

You might think of altering your SSHRC proposal in the future and submitting to TESS. You will also find sample designs and proposals on their website <https://tessexperiments.org/paststudies> .

Evaluation

Methods of evaluation:

A. Two memo/Discussion Leading.....40%

Memos provide an analytical take (not a summary of the readings) on the week's themes and is meant to serve as a basis for discussion during the seminar. It is useful to conclude the memo with two discussion questions to aide in this regard.

B. Mock Grant Proposal Using Quasi-Experimental/Audit Methods

Part 1: Theory/Research Question/Hypotheses (2 ds pages)..... 15%

Part 2: Why Quasi-Experimental Methods? (3 ds pages)..... 20%

Part 3: Research Design (4 ds pages)..... 20%

See course webpage for further details.

C. Active engagement.....5%

Due Dates:

Memos (based on student sign-up). Sign-up through Quercus Calendar. Memos are always due the day before the class in which you are leading discussion.

May 18: Project Part 1 due

May 25: Project Part 2 due

June 15: Project Part 3 due

Other information:

Memos: Students are required to sign up for two different weeks to lead discussion via a written memo and participation in the webinar. Failure to do this will result in a mark of 0. Students will reserve spots ahead of time using the Calendar feature in Quercus.

Memos are not summaries of the reading. The best kind of essay (and in turn, discussion leading) begins with a point or angle, and uses the assigned readings to articulate, contextualize, support or challenge that point. Begin the memo with themes, not with individual articles. Rather, use the articles to help situate your thesis. Remember that the main objective of the memo is to

serve as a backbone for in-class discussion and so it's important to tease out points from the week's theme we can address together. This course is about both the context and practice of quasi-experimental methods and so connecting the discussion to existing studies, or to your own planned study/proposal is welcome. Memo's should not be more than 3-4 double spaced pages. Memo's are due the day before class. Please also include two discussion questions at the end of your memo that we may get to during seminar.

Project: Please ensure that you are up-to-date paying close attention to the due dates for your project. The project is a **mock SSHRC grant** where you will be proposing a quasi-experimental method to investigate a research question of your choosing. You can select a topic related to your masters or dissertation project (indirectly or directly), or something entirely different. Rather than have this due in one large chunk, it is broken down into parts. When part 3 is due, you will submit revised parts 1 and 2 along with your third part. More information will be provided on the course webpage.

Lateness policy:

I do not accept memos late or cancellations of memos. Part of the success of this course involves students being present and ready with a memo on the day the selected ahead of time.

All other assignments are due on the date specified on the syllabus and close one week after that posted deadline. Unless a valid reason and/or documentation is provided, late penalties can be incurred (-1 point for each day). You will not be able to submit an assignment at all once the 7-day period passes.

Academic Integrity Clause

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.vicereprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used

solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council “Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities” at

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you.

Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more

advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at:

accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030,

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Equity and Diversity Statement

Equity and Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

Course/Reading Schedule:

May 4: Introduction/Meeting/Course expectations

May 6: What are quasi-experimental methods and what is this course about?

Mike Allen (Ed). 2017. Quasi-Experimental Design. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. Sage.

Baldassari, Delia and Maria Abascal. 2107. [Field Experiments Across the Social Sciences](#) *Annual Review of Sociology* 43:1, 41-73

Pearce LD. Mixed Methods Inquiry in Sociology. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 2012;56(6):829-848. doi:[10.1177/0002764211433798](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211433798)

May 11: Research Design: Developing a Research Question/Puzzle

KKV Ch. 1

Rubin, Donald. "For objective causal inference, design trumps analysis." *Ann. Appl. Stat.* 2 (3) 808 - 840, September 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1214/08-AOAS187>

Abbott, Andrew. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: Norton.

Chapter One EXPLANATION

Chapter 2 BASIC DEBATES AND METHODOLOGICAL PRACTICES

Delucchi, M. 2019. Using a Quasi-Experimental Design in Combination with Multivariate Analysis to Assess Student Learning *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Vol. 19, No. 2, March 2019, pp.1-15. doi: 10.14434/josotl.v19i1.24474*

May 13: Situating quasi-experimental methods in the methods landscape

- *Controlled Experiments and Simulations*

Bendick, Jr., Marc, Charles W. Jackson, Victor A. Reinoso. 1994. Measuring Employment Discrimination through Controlled Experiments. *The Review of Black Political Economy*.

Payne 2001. "Prejudice and perception: The role of automatic and controlled processes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81:181-92.

- *Content Analysis*

Dick-Mosher, Jenny. 2015. Bodies in Contempt: Gender, Class and Disability Intersections in Workplace Discrimination Claims. *Disabilities Studies Quarterly* 35(3).

Price, Joseph and Justin Wolfers. 2010. Racial Discrimination Among NBA Referees. Joseph Price Justin Wolfers Working Paper 13206
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w13206>

- *Qualitative Analyses*

Pilling, Merrick Daniel. 2012. “Invisible Identity in the Workplace: Intersectional Madness and Processes of Disclosure at Work.” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 33(1).

Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly 2001: *Interviews: Stories Employers Tell*. Russell Sage.

- *Quantitative analyses*

Tharp, Derek T. et al. 2019. “Examining the gender pay gap among financial planning professionals: A Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition.” *Financial Planning Review* 2(3-4).

Canedo, A., 2019. Labor Market Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples in Mexico: A Decomposition Analysis of Wage Differentials. *Iberoamericana – Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 48(1), pp.12–27.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.16993/iberoamericana.433>

May 18: Project Consultation I

May 20: The Basics (Independent and Dependent Variables, Hypothesis, Causality, Matching and Randomization)

KKV Ch. 3, Ch. 5

Matched Individuals. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods

Matched Groups. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods

Eliopoulos, George M., et al. 2004. **The Use and Interpretation of Quasi-Experimental Studies in Infectious Diseases.** *Clinical Infectious Diseases*

<https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/38/11/1586/285372>

Chamblis. Causation and Experimental Design

https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/23639_Chapter_5_Causation_and_Experimental_Design.pdf

May 25: “Direct Observation?”

KKV Ch. 4, Ch. 6

Cook, T. D., Shadish, W. R., & Wong, V. C. (2008). Three conditions under which experiments and observational studies produce comparable causal estimates: New findings from within-study comparisons. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 27(4), 724-750.

Stange, Kurt C., Stephen J. Zyzanski, Tracy Fedirko Smith, Robert Kelly, Doreen M. Langa, Susan A. Flocke, and Carlos R. Jaén. "How Valid Are Medical Records and Patient Questionnaires for Physician Profiling and Health Services Research?: A Comparison with Direct Observation of Patient Visits." *Medical Care* 36, no. 6 (1998): 851-67.

May 27: Reliability and Validity

Campbell and Stanley 1966 ch. 5 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research <https://www.sfu.ca/~palys/Campbell&Stanley-1959-Exptl&QuasiExptlDesignsForResearch.pdf>

Chapter 10 Experimental Research
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-research-methods/chapter/chapter-10-experimental-research/>

Research Methods in Psychology - Reliability and Validity of Measurement
<https://opentextbc.ca/researchmethods/chapter/reliability-and-validity-of-measurement/>

Handley, Margaret A. Courtney R. Lyles, Charles McCulloch, Adithya Cattamanchi. 2018. Selecting and Improving Quasi-Experimental Designs in Effectiveness and Implementation Research *Annual Review of Public Health* 39:5-25

Annual Review of Public Health 2018 39:1, 5-25

Reliability and Validity Assessment, by Edward G. Carmines and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. Paper # 17 in the Sage Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

June 1: Audit Studies

Audit Studies: Ch. 1 An Introduction to Audit Studies in the Social Sciences, S. Michael Gaddis

Audit Studies: Ch. 2 Making it Count: Discrimination Auditing and the Activist Scholar Tradition, Frances Cherry and Marc Bendick, Jr.

Audit Studies: Ch. 6 To Match or Not to Match? Statistical and Substantive Considerations in Audit Design and Analysis, Mike Vuolo, Christopher Uggen, and Sarah Lageson

Audit Studies: Ch. 9 Emerging Frontiers in Audit Study Research: Mechanisms, Generalizability, and Variation David S. Pedulla

Gaddis, S. Michael, Signaling Class: An Experiment Examining Social Class Perceptions from Names Used in Correspondence Audit Studies (March 8, 2019). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3350739> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3350739>

June 3: Project Consultation II

June 8: Audit Studies- Labour Market Discrimination

Audit Studies Ch. 7- Opportunities and Challenges in Designing and Conducting a Labor Market Resume Study William Carbonaro and Jon Schwarz

Pager, Devah and Lincoln Quillian 2005. "Walking the talk: what employers say versus what they do." *ASR* 70:355-80.

Pager, Devah. 2003. The Mark of a Criminal Record. *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-75

Dovidio JF, Gaertner SL. Aversive Racism and Selection Decisions: 1989 and 1999. *Psychological Science*. 2000;11(4):315-319. doi:[10.1111/1467-9280.00262](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00262)

Lahey, Joanna N. & Beasley, Ryan A., 2009. "[Computerizing audit studies](#)," [Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization](#), Elsevier, vol. 70(3), pages 508-514, June.

Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review* 94, no. 4 (2004): 991-1013.

June 10: You ran the quasi-experiment. Now what?

Aussems, Marie-Claire E. et al. 2009. The use of quasi-experiments in the social sciences: a content analysis, *Qual-Quant* DOI 10.1007/s11135-009-9281-4

Cook, Thomas D. and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. [Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Broockman, David E., Joshua L. Kalla and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2017. The Design of Field Experiments With Survey Outcomes: A Framework for Selecting More Efficient, Robust, and Ethical Designs. *Political Analysis* 25(4).

June 15: Conclusion/ Practical Notes: Disability Labor Market Discrimination