2013 Essex/Nuffield CESS Experimental Summer School

Last update: June 25, 2013

Course Objectives
The course covers the design, implementation, and analytic tools necessary for conducting social science experiments. In the first week, the focus will be on laboratory experiments. After an introduction in experimental designs and a review of recent topics in experimental social sciences, the reminder of the first week will be hands-on lab experiments. Participants will learn how to program experiments with z-Tree, work with the subject recruitment software, analyse experimental data and run a lab experiment at the Nuffield Centre for Experimental Social Sciences (CESS). In the first half of the second week, the course will cover field and online experiments. Moreover, in two afternoon sessions, participants will have the opportunity to present their own experimental research and receive feedback from an experienced team of instructors. The reminder of the second week will cover topics of causal inference and experimental approaches to data analysis. Upon completion of the course participants should be able to (1) formulate research questions that can be addressed using experiments, (2) design and carry out experiments, and (3) analyse and interpret results from social sciences experiments.

The course is appropriate for participants from any discipline who expect to include experimental social research as part of their research agenda. It is also appropriate for participants who want to become informed consumers of experimental research scholarship.

Course Prerequisites
Participants should have a basic background in research design and statistics. For example, with respect to research design, they should understand basic concepts such as exogeneity, control group, and confounding effects. With respect to basic statistics, they should understand the principals of ordinary least squares regression; how to calculate simple measures of association; and have some familiarity with a statistical software package. The hands-on experimental data analysis lab sessions will use Stata. Participants not familiar with Stata are strongly advised to attend the Introduction in Stata, Monday afternoon of the fist week.

Course Location
The Experimental Summer School will be held at Nuffield College, CESS and the Social Science Department at University of Oxford. CESS has a fully-equipped experimental laboratory which will be an integral part of the Summer School instruction (http://cess-wb.nuff.ox.ac.uk/). Course lectures will be held in Nuffield College and lab sessions will be held at the Social Science Department. Accommodation is available from Oxford Colleges and also from Oxford area hotels and hostals. The CESS website has an extensive listing of these accommodation options. It is highly recommended that students book their accommodation as early as possible since College accommodation is in high demand during the summer period.
**Course Schedule**

Because of the high demand for this course in previous years, the course will be held twice in a row. The first two-week course (5E) takes place 24 June – 5 July and the second two-week course (5F) takes place 8 – 19 July. The course content and schedule is the same for the two blocks and is summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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**Week 2**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>09:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Field experiments</td>
<td>cd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Participants’ presentations II</td>
<td>t.b.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>09:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Online experiments</td>
<td>rd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Programming online experiments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16:00 - 18:00</td>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Introduction to R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>09:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Experimental approaches to data analysis I</td>
<td>sj</td>
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<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Analysing experimental data II</td>
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<td>17:00 - 18:30</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Guest lecture</td>
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<td>19:00</td>
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<td>Joint dinner</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>09:00 - 12:30</td>
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<td>Experimental approaches to data analysis II</td>
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<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
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<td>Analysing experimental data III</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>09:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Experimental approaches to data analysis III</td>
<td>sj</td>
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NC: Nuffield College; MR: Manor Road Building

cd: Chris Dawes; rd: Ray Duch; sj: Simon Jackman; am: Aki Matsuo; wp: Wojtek Przepiorka; hs: Hector Solaz; swl: Sarah Wilkins Laflamme

**Instructors**

Chris Dawes
Assistant Professor of Politics, New York University
Research interests: Political behavior with an emphasis on voter turnout, genopolitics,
experimental methods

Raymond Duch
Official Fellow of Nuffield College, Professor of Quantitative Political Science and Director of CESS
Research interests: Comparative political economy, political behaviour, methods

Simon Jackman
Professor of Political Science, Stanford University
Research interests: American electoral politics, public opinion, democratic representation, survey research

Aki Matsuo
Research Officer at Nuffield College CESS
Research interests: Legislative politics, party politics, quantitative methods

Wojtek Przepiorka
Research Fellow at Nuffield College and the Department of Sociology at University of Oxford
Research interests: Evolution of cooperation, behavioural game theory, experimental methods

Hector Solaz
Research Fellow at CESS and the Department of Economics at University of Oxford
Research interests: Experimental social science, behavioural economics, public economics, industrial organisation

Sarah Wilkins Laflamme
DPhil candidate at Nuffield College and the Department of Sociology at University of Oxford
Research interests: Sociology of religion, quantitative methods

Reading lists

Causal inference and experimental designs


Topics in experimental social sciences


Analysing experimental data I & II


Implementing and conducting lab experiments


Programming zTree I, II & III


- z-Tree home page: http://www.iew.uzh.ch/ztree/index.php

- z-Tree tutorials: http://www2.dse.unibo.it/bigoni/courses/ztree/index.html
Field experiments

Online experiments
- Gabriele Paolacci. “Handle with Care: Opportunities and Threats of Amazon Mechanical Turk Experimentation.” Manuscript.

Experimental approaches to data analysis I, II & III


