Hands-on advanced research design

Prof. Fabrizio Bernardi and Prof. Diego Gambetta

First Term Seminar – Fall 2012
Tuesdays 17:00-19:00 – Seminar room 2

Please register with adele.battistini@eui.eu

Description
The course is for **second year researchers** who wish to refine their research design, while learning about other types of design. It is suitable for those who have developed **causal** hypotheses in their proposal and want to make sure that they are employing the best feasible way to put them to the test. The course will touch on a series of designs, some of which will be used by one or other researcher. Actual researchers’ designs will provide the input around which the properties of the main design strategies will be considered.

The reference text for the seminar is


Many of the topics discussed in the seminar are also in:


Here is a list of classes and topics:
- Week 1: practical arrangements & some history of cause-seeking designs
- Week 2: causes, mechanisms and reasons
- Week 3: STUDY WEEK
- Week 4: natural experiments/difference-in-difference
- Week 5: instrumental variables
- Week 6: discontinuity study
- Week 7: panel 1 [John Ermisch leads the class]
- Week 8: panel 2
- Week 9: twins and siblings
- Week 10: lab and field experiments
- Week 11: to be decided
In order to obtain the credits participants are required:
1) to present their research design clearly and convincingly to the class in one of the sessions;

2) to prepare brief comments on at least two of the recommended empirical readings for each session. These comments should contain participants’ suggestions for (i) alternative research designs to test the causal hypotheses addressed in the reading and/or (ii) further applications of a similar research design as that used in the reading to a different research question. These comments should be posted on the course website before 8.00 p.m. the night before the class.

**Week 1: practical arrangements & some history of cause-seeking designs**


Week 2: Causes, Mechanisms and Reasons


Morton, Rebecca B., and Kenneth C. Williams. 2010. Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [sections 1.3.2 and 1.5; and chapter 2]

Other readings


Week 3: STUDY WEEK, NO CLASS
Week 4: Natural experiments, difference-in-difference


Other readings


Sekhon, J. and Tituunik, R. 2012. When natural experiments are neither natural nor Experiments, American Political Science Review.
Week 5: Instrumental variables


Not to forget a cartoon: 
http://www.manucartoons.com/manucartoons/%22Irrational_agents%22_series/Pages/Genesis_of_War,_Part_I_%28HeloMag.,_February_2010%29.html#26


*Other readings*


Week 6: Regression discontinuity


Other readings


Week 7: Panel studies, fixed and random effects – John Ermisch to lead the class
Readings to be assigned
Week 8: Panel studies/ Fixed effects:


Other readings

Week 9: Siblings, twins and genetics models

For an overview: Firembaugh, G. 131-145


Other readings


Freese, J. 2008. Genetics and the social science explanation of individual outcomes, American Journal of Sociology. 114: S1-S35

Week 10: Lab and Field Experiments


Other readings


