



Experimental Methodology

PART I of a two part seminar

Second Term Seminar 2015-2016

Organised by Klarita Gërxhani

Please register [online](#)

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Seminar Description and Objectives

Laboratory and field experiments have become common tools in social science research. Following a long tradition in psychology, experimental subdisciplines have developed in economics, political science, cultural anthropology and sociology. The control offered by an experimental environment allows the researcher to isolate social phenomena and study their causes, development and effects. For example, both the dynamics of institutions and the effect of institutions on individual and group behavior can be and have been studied in laboratory experiments. Important concepts such as trust, reciprocity, cooperation, solidarity, exploitation, and power have all been studied in experimental research. The main objective of this seminar is to teach the researcher how to design and analyze an experiment aimed at answering a self-developed research question. In addition, it gives an overview of some recent trends in experimental research in social sciences as a whole. In the first part, the focus will be more on socially relevant phenomena, whereas in the second part on more (socio- and political-)economically oriented topics. The second part of the seminar will be merged with the course *Topics in Experimental Economics*, taught jointly with prof. Arthur Schram¹. Towards the end of the seminar, a special focus will be given to experimental designs developed by the researchers themselves. Each researcher is expected to actively participate in classes by presenting and discussing papers selected by the instructor and to develop an experimental design either alone or in collaboration with one other student of the seminar.

¹ See <http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/Economics/Courses/AdvancedCourses2015-2016-1st&2ndyearstudents.aspx>

Teaching Methods/Learning Formats

Weekly two-hour class meetings, weekly active participation, and presentations.

Schedule

This is the first part of a two part seminar: it will be held by Professor Gërxhani and will take place on **Mondays at 11.00-13.00** in Seminar Room 3, at the Badia Fiesolana.

The list of seminar sessions is the following:

PART I

Monday	11	January	Seminar Room 3	at 11.00-13.00	
Monday	18	January	Seminar Room 3	at 11.00-13.00	
Monday	25	January	Seminar Room 3	at 11.00-13.00	
Monday	1	February	Seminar Room 3	at 11.00-13.00	
Monday	8	February	Seminar Room 3	at 11.00-13.00	Guest Speaker: Valentina Di Stasio

PART II

“Topics in Experimental Economics”, held by Professor Arthur Schram and Professor Klarita Gërxhani, will start on 22 February. It will take place on Mondays at 15.00-17.00 in Seminar Room 3, with the exception of the session on the 29th of February which will be held in Sala del Capitolo, To view, please follow this [link](#).

Teaching Criteria

The seminar as a whole (Part I and Part II) is worth 20 credits.

SPS researchers who wish to receive credit must attend at least eight out of ten sessions.

N.B. Researchers who only attend the first five sessions (i.e. Part I), will not receive credit.

ECO researchers have the option of attending the first five sessions, but must attend the last five sessions in order to receive half-credit.

Researchers who choose to take this seminar for credit are required to meet Departmental attendance, *participate actively*, and complete the *seminar requirements*.

For information about the second part of the seminar on “Topics in Experimental Economics”, please see the syllabus on the ECO website following this [link](#).

In detail:

1. Researchers are required to *participate actively*. This implies that they are required to read the designated literature before each meeting and participate actively in class discussions.

2. *Presentations:* For each paper one researcher will be pre-selected to present it in 25 minutes.² The following structure *must* be used in the presentation of a paper.
 - Start with a 60 second “elevator pitch”. Here, you explain the paper’s research question, how they do it, and what they find. We will time this and stop you after 60 seconds. This is meant as a training in convincing people (usually big shots) in a minimum time span that they should be interested in your work.
 - Present the paper in 15 minutes. This includes questions. Again, we will time you and cut you short after exactly 15 minutes. When preparing your presentation, you will need to reserve time for questions. During the presentation, you will need to efficiently deal with questions.
 - If the paper presents an experiment (most do), the presentation must pay *specific attention to the experimental design and its appropriateness for the problem at hand*.
 - 5 minutes for presentation and discussion of two one-line propositions about the paper, developed by you. These propositions must be sent to us no later than 9 am on the day of the class.
 - 4 minutes for additional questions and answers.

3. *Term paper:* Researchers have the option of writing a term paper for this seminar as part of their general term paper requirements. Should they wish to do so, they must discuss their proposed topic with Professor Gërkhani well before the Department’s deadline for term papers. Researchers who chose to submit a term paper are required to make significant use of the selected literature and provide an application to their research topic. The term paper must be submitted via email to Professor Gërkhani with the administrative assistant in copy (Jennifer.Dari@eui.eu). Please see the 2015-16 Researchers’ Guide for more information regarding the term paper and the deadlines for submission.

Credit is only given to researchers who meet the tasks outlined here above. Moreover, researchers are required to take part in the meetings. Taking part in a meeting implies timely presence, good preparation, and active participation in-group discussions.

Should a researcher decide to submit a term paper for this seminar, it must be handed in by the deadline indicated in the 2015-16 Researchers’ Guide. A term paper which is handed in late will not be considered.

Feedback

Researchers can expect to receive brief individual and collective feedback at the end of each presentation.

Readings

In the first half of the seminar, there will be five meetings. In four of these meetings, specific topics will be addressed through researchers’ presentation and class discussions.

What follows is a list of background literature and possible readings to choose from. You may, however, *suggest an alternative paper* on the topic for the session concerned. If the

² There will be a maximum of three papers per meeting. If the number of students is too large, we will introduce dual presentations. Some (typically longer) papers will then be presented by two students.

session is not yet fully booked, we will consider whether it is suitable. To be so, it must be published in a good journal and, obviously, be related to the topic of that session. Suggestions must reach us no later than January 4.

Background literature

Webster, M. Jr. and Sell, J. (eds.) (2014). *Laboratory Experiments in the Social Sciences*. 2nd edition. New York: Elsevier.

Morton, R. B., and Williams, K. C (2010). *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Davis, D. and Holt, C. (1993). *Experimental Economics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Session 1: Introduction

Jackson, M. and Cox, D. R. (2013). "Principles of Experimental Design and their Application in Sociology", *Annual Review of Sociology* 39: 27-49.

Hertwig, R. and Ortmann, A. (2008). "Deception in Experiments: Revisiting The Arguments In Its Defense", *Ethics and Behavior* 18(1): 59-82.

Camerer, C. (2015). "The Promise and Success of Lab-Field Generalizability in Experimental Economics: A Critical Reply to Levitt and List", *Handbook of Experimental Economic Methodology*, Fréchette, G.R. and Schotter, A. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press (see: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Papers.cfm?abstract_id=1977749).

Fehr, E. and Gintis, H. (2007). "Human Motivation and Social Cooperation: Experimental and Analytical Foundations". *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 43-64.

Henrich, J., Boyd, R., Bowles, S., Camerer, C., Fehr, E., Gintis, H. and McElreath, R (2001). "In Search of Homo Economicus: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small Scale Societies". *American Economic Review* 91(2): 73-78.

Session 2: Social Dilemma's

Marwell, G., and Ames, R. (1979). "Experiments on the provision of public goods. I: Resources, interest, group size, and the free rider problem". *American Journal of Sociology* 84: 1335-1360.

Ostrom, E., and Walker, J. M. (1991). "Communication in a commons: cooperation without external enforcement". In T. R. Palfrey (Ed.) *Laboratory Research in Political Economy* (pp. 287–322). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Yamagishi, T. (1988). "The provision of a sanctioning system in the United States and Japan" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 51 (3): 265–271.

Fehr, E. and Gächter, S. (2000). "Cooperation and Punishment in Public Goods Experiments". *American Economic Review* 90: 980-94.

Fehr, E. and Fischbacher, U. (2003). „The Nature of Human Altruism". *Nature* 425: 785-791.

Habyarimana, J., Humpherys, M., Posner, D. N., and Weinstein, J. M., (2007). "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 709-725.

Session 3: Tax compliance

Alm, J., McClelland, G. H., Schulze, W. D. (1992). "Why do people pay taxes?" *Journal of Public Economics* 48: 21-38.

Kirchler, E., Maciejovsky, B. et al. (2003). "Everyday representations of tax avoidance, tax evasion, and tax flight: Do legal differences matter?" *Journal of Economic Psychology* 24(4): 535-553.

Feld, L. P., and Tyran, J. (2002). "Tax evasion and voting: an experimental analysis". *Kyklos* 55(2): 197–222.

Guth, W., Levati, V. M., and Sausgruber, R. (2005). "Tax morale and (de-)centralization—an experimental study". *Public Choice* 125(1): 171-188.

Gërçhani, K., and Schram, A. (2006). "Tax Evasion and Income Source: A Comparative Experimental Study". *Journal of Economic Psychology* 27(3): 402-422.

Barr, A. and Serra D. (2010). "Corruption and Culture: An experimental analysis". *Journal of Public Economics* 94(11-12): 862-869.

Session 4: Trust & reciprocity

Kollock, P. (1994). "The emergence of exchange structures: an experimental study of uncertainty, commitment, and trust". *The American Journal of Sociology* 100 (2): 313–345.

Berg, J., Dickhaut, J., and McCabe, K. (1995). "Trust, Reciprocity, and Social History". *Games and Economic Behavior* 10(1): 122-142.

Molm, L.D., Takahashi, N., Peterson, G. (2000). "Risk and trust in social exchange: an experimental test of a classical proposition". *American Journal of Sociology* 105: 1396–1427.

Ule, A., Schram, A., Riedl, A., and Cason, T. (2009). "Indirect punishment and generosity towards strangers". *Science* 326: 1701–1703.

Seinen, I., and Schram, A. (2006). "Social status and group norms: indirect reciprocity in a repeated helping experiment". *European Economic Review* 50: 581–602.

Kiyonari, T., Yamagishi, T., Cook, K. S., and Cheshire, C. (2006). "Does Trust Beget Trustworthiness? Trust and Trustworthiness in Two Games and Two Cultures: A Research Note". *Social Psychology Quarterly* 69(3): 270-283.

Session 5: Vignette experiments (guest lecturer : Valentina di Stasio)

Wallander, L. (2009). "25 years of factorial surveys in sociology: A review." *Social Science Research* 38(3): 505-520.

Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., and Teppei Y. (2015). "Validating vignette and conjoint survey experiments against real-world behavior." *PNAS* 112(8): 2395–2400.

Auspurg, K., Hinz, T., and Liebig, S. (2009). "Complexity, learning effects, and plausibility of vignettes in factorial surveys." *Working paper* available at: <http://kops.uni-konstanz.de/bitstream/handle/123456789/15080/Hinz%20etal.pdf?sequence=2>.

Di Stasio, V., and Gërkhani, K. (2010). "Employers' social contacts and their hiring behavior in a factorial survey." *Social Science Research* 51: 93-107.

Correll, S. J., Benard, S., and Paik, I. (2007). "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?." *American Journal of Sociology* 112(5): 1297-1339.

Abraham, M., Auspurg, K., and Hinz, T. (2010). "Migration Decisions Within Dual-Earner Partnerships: A Test of Bargaining Theory." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72(4): 876-892.

Blommaert, L., Coenders, M., and van Tubergen, F. (2014). "Ethnic discrimination in recruitment and decision makers' features: Evidence from laboratory experiment and survey data using a student sample." *Social Indicators Research* 116(3): 731-754.