15.838 Research Seminar in Marketing, Spring 2015


The portion taught by me is primarily general examination preparation for Xinyu Cao and Xiang Song\(^1\). Other students are welcome to attend. The portions taught by Profs. Prelec and Zhang will be more traditional.

Location and schedule are to be arranged. We will not be following the posted schedule for the overall seminar. We will move at the pace necessary to cover the material in preparation for the general examination.

**Goal of the Seminar**

I am experimenting with a new format this year for 15.838. The seminar combines the usual general examination reading list with a series of focused meetings to cover the material. As such, the list of readings is longer than would normally be expected. My goal is to prepare you for the general examination. Questions in a general examination are often more general than those that are focused on a single paper. We will cover as much of this material as is feasible in the time allotted, perhaps spending less time on the two books and on the material we covered in Spring 2014.

In addition to the papers listed below, we may also cover the reading lists provided by Profs. Little and Zhang, when they are available.

Except for the two books, I have put all of these readings in a Dropbox folder. I have ordered copies of the Payne, but you are expected to obtain the Shadish, Cook, and Campbell.

**Mechanics of the Seminar**

Xinyu and Xiang, and anyone else who wants to participate, are responsible for discussing all of the material in each of the sections. All of this material is fair game for the general examination. Except for the books, which can be read quickly, this is less than two papers per week for the semester. It should be feasible.

For each paper (and the two books), I will choose by coin flip a primary, secondary, and, if there is interest, a tertiary presenter. (The commentaries for structural models and for the limits of attraction are considered to be part of the respective papers.) The primary presenter will present the following bulleted items. The secondary presenter will augment these topics with any material he/she prepared but was not covered by the primary presenter.

---

\(^1\) I’ve listed Xinyu and Xiang alphabetically by last name.
• quick summary of the paper
• key lessons that are learned from reading the paper
• implications of the paper for one style of research (after first articulating the style)
• a question to ask another student based on concepts used in the paper (as if in a general examination)

There may also be additional assignments. For example, for “Design of Research,” pick a potential research topic and (1) write a short (less than one page) questionnaire to measure a key construct to test the theory and (2) design a quasi-experiment to test the theory. For the latter, simply assume you could get the data you need.

You will also need to write a review of the Liu, Montgomery, and Srinivasan paper – the only unpublished paper in the list. This will be practice for the general examination. The due date is to be decided.

To get more practice reviewing and to get started for Part II of the general examination, you will each write a five-page proposal for Part II research and write a review of the other person’s five-page proposal. We may augment this review writing exercise if necessary.

We will cover the following topics in order, unless otherwise indicated.

**Design of Research**

   • Chapter 1. Experiments and Generalized Causal Inference
   • Chapter 2. Statistical Conclusion Validity and Internal Validity
   • Chapter 3. Construct Validity and External Validity
   • Chapter 4. Quasi-Experimental Designs That Either Lack a Control Group or Lack Pretest Observations on the Outcome
   • Chapter 5. Quasi-Experimental Designs That Use Both Control Groups and Pretests
Developing Measures (Classic ideas that are still accepted conceptually, although the formal statistical analysis methods have improved. Well-known in marketing.)


Constructive Preferences (Review of material discussed in Spring 2014)


Structural Models


Structural Models from the Perspective of Economists – A Debate


Some Older Personal Favorites/Behavioral (but only if we have time)


Standards

In keeping with MIT Sloan policy we will adhere to Values at MIT Sloan. See [https://mysloan.mit.edu/offices/deans/values/Pages/default.aspx](https://mysloan.mit.edu/offices/deans/values/Pages/default.aspx).