
Political Science PSC 571

Quantitative Approaches to International Politics

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Harkness 337
Office Hours: Wed. 1–2
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Course Info: 4 Credits
Spring 2020
Thursday 2:00–4:40
Harkness 329

This seminar examines some of the latest quantitative research in international relations. As you all know, with the **causal inference** revolution, with some exceptions, what was once standard work is no longer deemed acceptable in the top tier journals. In this course we read some of this more recent quantitative work which uses various strategies to “identify” causal effects or any other parameters of interest. We also look at some more traditional quantitative research that is still getting published. Full disclosure: like Anderson Frey, I do not believe full identification is really possible; in the end it all comes down to the plausibility of your theoretical argument and your empirical strategy and how well these connect.

This course will have to be a collaborative effort between the students and me, since I am not yet fully versed in the new quantitative approaches. In other words, I hope we can all teach each other in this course. This of course requires a high amount of student participation. I expect each student to lead two full classes. That means at least two of the readings are **thoroughly** discussed, with a careful assessment of the theoretical argument, the empirical strategy, the link between the two and threats to inference. For the in-class presentation, I expect students to

- Download the data
- Replicate the analysis
- distribute *the day before class* a document with the code
- Discuss all of these in class. That does mean that where appropriate, I expect a full discussion of the code, perhaps even line-by-line.

Finally, each student is expected to write a short paper on a topic of their choice—picked in coordination with me—not to exceed 1500 words. This paper should briefly present an empirical strategy/design to address a question of interest. **The paper must be circulated by April 15 (the day before the penultimate class) to the other students in the class and to me via e-mail no later than 8:00 p.m..** We will discuss these papers in the last two sections. It would be a good idea, therefore, to write on topics you might want to explore on your third year paper or your dissertation.

I expect a well-written, grammatically correct final paper. To become a better writer **all students must watch:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtIzMaLkCaM>. In addition, **I strongly (!) urge students to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the writing program here at the University of Rochester.** Failure to provide a well-written, grammatically correct final paper will count heavily in the final grade.

Academic Resources

Students may have disabilities which impede their learning. This class, this department and this university are strongly committed to help provide resources to overcome any obstacles to learning. The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: <http://disability@rochester.edu>; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (<http://www.rochester.edu/living/urhere/handbook/discipline2.html#XII>). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with promptly, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty, on which I served.

Course Outline

Thursday January 16

Introduction

Thursday January 23

1. Exploration

- Scott F. Abramson. 2020. *The Economic Effects of Leaders' Economic Interests: evidence from election by lot in the Florentine Republic*. Manuscript, University of Rochester.
- Joshua D. Kertzer and Kathleen M. McGraw. 2012. Folk Realism: Testing the Microfoundations of Realism in Ordinary Citizens. *International Studies Quarterly* 56: 245–258.

Thursday January 30

2. Spatial Issues

- Hein Goemans and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2018. ‘The Politics of Territorial Disputes: A Geo-Spatial Approach applied to Africa.’ *International Organization*, Vol. 71, Winter 2017: 31–64.
- Scott F. Abramson. 2017. The Economic Origins of the Territorial State. *International Organization* 71 (Winter): 97–130.
- Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Idean Salehyan and Jlian Wucherpfennig. 2013. Transborder Ethnic Kin and Civil War. *International Organization* 69 (Spring): 389–410.

Thursday February 6

3. Micro-foundations for in Conflict

- Jason Lyall, Yang-Yang Zhou and Kosuke Imai. 2020 Can Economic Assistance Shape Combatant Support in Wartime? Experiment Evidence from Afghanistan. *American Political Science Review* 114(1): 126–143
- Luke N. Condra and Austin L. Wright. 2019. Civilians, Control, and Collaboration during Civil Conflict. *International Studies Quarterly* 63: 897-907
- Jason Lyall. 2019. Civilian Casualties, Humanitarian Aid, and Insurgent Violence in Civil Wars. *International Organization* 73 (Fall): 901–926.

Thursday February 13

PROF. GOEMANS WILL BE OUT OF TOWN.

Thursday February 20

4. **Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency**

- Daniel W. Hill, Jr. and Zachary M. Jones. 2014. An Empirical Evaluation of Explanations for State Repression. *American Political Science Review* 108(3) August: 661–687
- Luke N. Condra, James D. Long, Andrew C. Shaver and Austin L. Wright. 2018. The Logic of Insurgent Electoral Violence. *American Economic Review* 1801(11): 3199–3231.
- Jacob N. Shapiro and Nils B. Weidmann. 2015. Is the Phone Mightier Than the Sword? Cellphones and Insurgent Violence in Iraq. *International Organization* 69(2): 247–274.

Thursday February 27

5. **IPE**

- In Song Kim. 2017. Political Cleavages within Industry: Firm-Level Lobbying for Trade Liberalization. *American Political Science Review* 111(1): 1–20.
- Tara Slough and Christopher J. Fariss. 2019. *Misgovernance and Human Rights: The Case of Illegal Detention without Intent*. Manuscript, University of Michigan.

Thursday March 5

6. **Structural Equation Models**

- Casey Crisman-Cox and Michael Gibilisco. 2018. Audience Costs and the Dynamics of War. *The American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 566-580.
- Scott Abramson and Sergio Monteiro. 2020. *Learning About Growth and Democracy*. Manuscript, University of Rochester.

Thursday, March 12

SPRING RECESS

Thursday, March 19

7. **Conflict and Survey Experiments**

- Michaela Mattes and Jessica L. P. Weeks. 2018. Hawks, Doves, and Peace: An Experimental Approach. *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1) January: 53-66.
- Michael Tomz, Jessica Weeks and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2019/2020. Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies. Forthcoming, *International Organization*.
- Joshue D. Kertzer and Ryan Brutger. 2016. Decomposing Audience Costs: Bringing the Audience Back into Audience Cost Theory. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1) January: 234–249.

Thursday March 26

8. Conflict and Survey Experiments

- Hein Goemans, Michael Weintraub and Andi Zhou, 2020. *Maps to Die for?*. Manuscript, University of Rochester.
- Andi Zhou, Michael Weintraub and Hein Goemans, 2020. *Loss Aversion in Territorial Disputes?*. Manuscript, University of Rochester.
- Elaine K. Denny and Jesse Driscoll. 2019. Calling Mogadishu: How Reminders of Anarchy Bias Survey Participation. *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 6(2) Summer: 81-92

Thursday April 2

9. War and Peace

- Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman and Håvard Møkleiv Nygård. 2018. Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations, *Journal of Politics*, 81(1), 215-232
- Daina Chiba and Jesse C. Johnson. 2019. Military Coalitions and Crisis Duration. *Journal of Politics* 81(4): 1466–1479
- Zachary M. Jones and Yonatan Lupu. 2018. Is there More Violence in the Middle? *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3) July:652–667

Thursday, April 9

10. Measurement

- Melissa M. Lee and Nan Zhang. 2017. Legibility and the Informational Foundations of State Capacity, *Journal of Politics*, 79(1): 118-132.
- Robert J. Carroll and Brenton Kenkel. 2019. Prediction, Proxies, and Power. *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3) July: 577-593
- Alberto Alesina, Janina Matuszeski and William Easterly. 2011. Artificial States. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9(2) April: 246–277.

- Therese Anders, Christopher J. Fariss and Jonathan N. Markowitz. 2020. *Bread before guns or butter: Introducing Surplus Domestic Product (SDP)*. Manuscript, University of Michigan.

Thursday April 16 APRIL 15 PAPERS ARE DUE

11. Papers

- Student 1
- Student 2

Thursday April 23 - LAST DAY OF CLASS

12. Papers

- Student 3
- Student 4

Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research

1. *What is the central question?*
 - Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?
 - What is being explained (what is the dependent variable and how does it vary)?
 - How does this phenomenon present a puzzle?
2. *What is the central answer?*
 - What is doing the explaining (what are the independent variables and how do they vary)?
 - What are the hypotheses, i.e., what is the relationship between independent and dependent variables, what kind of change in the independent variable causes what kind of change in the dependent variable?
 - What are the causal mechanisms, i.e., why are the independent and dependent variables so related?
 - How do the independent variables relate to each other?
 - What assumptions does your theory make?
 - Is the theory falsifiable in concept?
 - What does this explanation add to our understanding of the question?
3. *What are the possible alternative explanations?*
 - What assumptions are you making about the direction of causality?
 - What other explanations might there be for the phenomenon of study, and to what degree do they conflict with the central answer?
 - Could the hypothesized relationships have occurred by chance?
4. *Why are the possible alternative explanations wrong?*
 - What is the logical structure of the alternative explanations (compare 2)?
 - What is the empirical evidence?
5. *What is the relationship between the theory and the evidence?*
 - What does the research design allow to vary, i.e., in this design are the explanations variables or constants?
 - What does your research design hold constant, i.e., does it help to rule out the alternative competing explanations?
 - How are the theoretical constructs represented empirically, i.e., how do you know it when you see it (measurement)?
6. *How do the empirical conclusions relate to the theory?*
 - How confident are you about the theory in light of the evidence?
 - How widely do the conclusions generalize, i.e., what might be the limitations of the study?
 - What does the provisionally accepted or revised theory say about questions of broader importance?