

Research Methods in IR
Fall 2013
Instructor: Didac Queralt

I. Introduction

This course offers the main guidelines to produce a high-quality piece of scientific research in IR. To that end, we will cover the basic elements of scientific research in the discipline: formulating a research question, producing valuable literature reviews, drawing hypotheses and causal mechanisms, and selecting the most suitable research method to test for them depending on the data constraints. The student will be exposed to basic notions of statistical hypothesis testing and regression analysis. By the end of the course the student should be able to recognize when claims are causal or descriptive, and identify the main contribution and flaws of a particular piece of research in IR.

II. Contact and Meeting Information

Didac Queralt
E-mail: TBD
Office Hours: TBD

Class meetings
Tuesdays 11:00-14:00, except the first day of class: Wednesday September 4, 12:30-14:00.

III. Required Readings

[abbreviation in brackets]

- Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds. 2012, seventh edition. *Political Science Research Methods*. London: Sage CQ Press. [**JB**]
- Moore, David S. 2010, fifth edition. *The Basic Practice of Statistics*, New York: W.H. Freeman and Co. [**Moore**]
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, [**KKV**]
- Hancké, Bob. 2009. *Intelligent Research Design: A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [**Hancké**]

IV. Useful online resources

- Political Science Research Methods 7th ed. Website
<http://college.cqpress.com/sites/psrm/home.aspx>
- Moore Student website:
<http://bcs.whfreeman.com/bps5e/default.asp?s=&n=&i=&v=&o=&ns=0&uid=0&rau=0>

V. Evaluation

1. Participation 10%
2. Homework 30%
3. Midterm examination: 15%
4. Final examination: 15%
5. Final project 30%

The final project is a research *proposal* consisting of a research question, a brief literature review, a research hypothesis, a causal mechanism, the ideal data to test for it, and a list of potential causality issues, if any. All these elements will be covered throughout the course. This proposal will be 8-10 pages in length (standard formatting). Students must get approval on the topic from Professor Didac Queralt by Tuesday November 19. Research proposals are due by Friday, December 13.

In order to write the final project, it is hardly recommended to read the guidelines in Appendix C in Robert Hancké (2009) *Intelligent Research Design, A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press.

All the work you do in this course must be your own. Citation is perfectly fine, but you should properly cite the sources. For further details, see <http://plagiarism.org/citing-sources/overview/>

VI. Weekly Schedule

Session 0. Introduction

What are research methods and what are they for.

Material

1. JB ch.3
2. KKV ch.2
3. Hancké p.27-33
4. Jeffrey A. Frieden and David A. Lake, "International Relations as a Social Science: Rigor and Relevance", *Annals of the American Academy*, 600, July 2005

Session 1. Theory

Part 1. Main elements of a theory. What makes a good theory?

Part 2. Practice: Doing Literature Review.

Material:

1. KKV Sections 1.2.1, 1.2.2 + 3.5
2. Knopf, J (2006), "Doing a Literature Review", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 127-132.
3. Hancké 2009, Appendix B.

Session 2. Causality.

Association vs. Causation. Spurious relations. Confounding factors. Randomization.
Selection

Material

1. JB ch.6
2. KKV 4.3 + 5.2

Session 3. Experimental Method.

Causality in action. Treatment and control. Placebo. Types of experiments.

Material

1. JB ch.6
2. Morton, Rebecca and Kenneth Williams (2010). *From Nature to the Lab: The Methodology of Experimental Science and the Study of Causality*. Ch. 2
3. Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Direct Mail, and Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653–63.

Session 4. Comparative Method

Most similar and most different system design.

Material

1. JB 196-190
2. Hancké ch.3
3. S. Kalyvas, "Comittment Problems in Emerging Democracies: The Case of Religious Parties", *Comparative Politics* 32 (2000).

Session 5. Qualitative Research: Case Studies.

What is the qualitative approach? What are case studies and what are they good for?

Material

1. JB 196-7.
2. KKV 1.1.3 + pp. 42-3 + p.85.
3. Chandra, Kanchan (20996), "Mechanisms vs. Outcomes", *Qualitative Methods APSA newsletter*, 6-13
4. Gerring, John (2004) "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?", *American Political Science Review* 98(2), 341-354

Session 6 and 7. Formal Methods

Strategic behavior, preference, payoff, nash equilibrium, coordination, collective action
problem

Material

1. JB 207-212
2. Osborne (2004), *An Introduction to Game Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press. ch.2
3. Shepsle and Bonchek (1997), *Analyzing Politics. Rationality, Behavior and Institutions*. New York: Norton. ch. 9

Session 8. Midterm Examination and introduction to Data.

First half of the session: Midterm Exam

Second half of the session: Intro to Data

Session 9. Making sense of data I

Part 1. What is a data matrix, and what are its elements? Making sense of variables: measures of central tendency and dispersion measures

Part 2. Practice Data Management

Material

1. JB p.144-149
2. KKV Section 1.2.3
3. JB 354 – 379

Session 10. Statistical inference I

Samples and statistical inference. Expected Value. Standard Error of a Distribution. Sampling distribution

Material

1. JB 222-229, 240-250
2. Moore Ch.14

Sessions 11 and 12. Statistical inference II

Hypothesis testing and confidence intervals.

Material

1. JB. Ch. 12 + p.463-473
2. Moore Ch.17

Session 13. Relationship between two variables

Correlation between two variables and introductory notions of linear regression analysis: regression coefficient and inference for regression parameters.

Material

1. JB: 490-521
2. Moore Ch. 5 and Ch.23

Session 14. Recapitulation

What have we learned?

Session 15. Final examination