



Empirical International Relations: Approaches and Methods

April – June 2021

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Fabio Franchino

Teachers: Dr. Matteo C.M. Casiraghi, Dr. Valerio Vignoli

N. hours: 20 (90 minutes classes)

N. maximum participants: 5

N. ECTS : 3 ECTS for “laboratories, internships and other activities”

Final evaluation: final paper, and attendance (at least **80%**)

Eligible participants: second-year students of the B.A. in International Politics, Law and Economics (**IPLE**), curriculum **IPE**, with a basic knowledge of statistics and quantitative methods.

Goals of the course: In this course, we provide students **fundamental tools** to study contemporary International Relations (IR). In particular, we aim to highlight the peculiarities of conducting research in this field, by employing a rigorous empirical perspective. We show students how to structure an effective **research article** in IR, and we acquaint them with **state-of-the-art quantitative methods** to reach this aim. The skills provided in the course are also very helpful for students for their **future careers** in NGOs, International organizations, Think tanks, and the private sector.

Content of the course: The course consists of four parts. The introduction presents the main differences between IR and Political Science, highlighting the main questions that contemporary IR addresses and the importance of quantitative methods inside and outside academia. The second section focuses on research design, showing how to structure a solid research plan, from the research question to case selection, and from the theoretical framework to data analysis. Then, the third section offers an overview of the most effective and up-to-date quantitative methods in IR, from text-analysis to natural experiments. Finally, the last section is devoted to an open debate, where students are asked to present a brief research proposal to be discussed together.

Course structure:

1. 14/04/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Methods are the masters of masters: Introduction to empirical IR*
2. 21/04/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Why did Mr. Smith wage war? Interesting research questions in IR*
3. 28/04/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Do audience costs exist? An effective research design in IR*
4. 05/05/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Why do states fight with one another? Dyadic analysis and conflict versus cooperation*
5. 12/05/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Why do states experience internal war? Sub-national data and the analysis of civil war*
6. 19/05/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Do states cooperate addressing global challenges? Scaling methods and climate change*
7. 26/05/2021, 09.30-11.30. *How are allies treated in the assessment of HRs violations? Topic models and states' ties with the US*
8. 09/06/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Under what conditions does state-building fail? Process tracing and the logic of violence*
9. 16/06/2021, 09.30-11.30. *Does a “moving border” change citizens' positions on nationalism? Experiments and political attitudes*
10. 23/06/2021, 09.30-11.30: *Like an academic conference: The discussion of your research projects*

Registration: Participants should send an email to Matteo Casiraghi (matteo.casiraghi@unimi.it) to register for the course (**before April 9, 2021**), or to ask for information.