**INTR 5058 Research Design and Methods in IR 2**

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### Course Seminars

**Group 1:** Friday, 11:00-12:40 (N13 301)

**Group 2:** Friday, 13:30-15:10 (N13 301)

### Course Description and Aims

This course is the second part of the Research Design and Methods sequence that introduces the fundamentals of social science research design and familiarizes students with several approaches to social analysis and their respective methods. It begins by extending the overview of basic concepts and methodological techniques that are being currently used in the disciplines of International Relations and Political Science. Its first part continues to run on two parallel tracks, which could be conditionally labelled as ‘positivist’ and ‘interpretivist’ approaches to social research.

The positivist part includes i) reading of the latest scholarship from publications in major journals as examples and ii) hands-on practical sessions whereby students will acquire basic skills in Excel and/or R, an open-source programming language widely used in social sciences for statistical analysis. The interpretivist part offers i) focused readings of exemplary interpretivist and critical research projects and ii) in-class exercises and home assignments which encourage students to probe their own interpretive skills and draw on concrete examples of relevant methods.

Both tracks are mandatory for all MA students. They aim to develop students’ abilities to read and evaluate existing research projects across different social scientific paradigms, invite students to select their niche, and equip them with knowledge necessary to craft their own projects that could be turned into high-quality MA theses and publications.

The final part of this course consists of a series of interactive workshops, where students will have a chance to present the drafts of their research proposals and receive feedback from instructors and peers.
Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing the course, students should be able to:

- understand how to design a qualified MA-level research project,
- read and evaluate existing IR scholarship,
- orient themselves within the IR academic community and participate meaningfully in the ongoing debates,
- understand the basics of the most common statistical methods used in IR,
- comprehend interpretivist and critical social research projects and acquire basic interpretive analytical skills

Teaching Method

The course will consist of interactive lectures, discussions and in-class exercises. Students will be asked to apply new skills and evaluate methodological approaches and data treatment in published articles. In addition, each student will need to submit a few assignments and present at one of the final workshops. The final assignment for this course is an extensive research proposal with a specific focus on methodology. The weight of each individual grade is given in the Assessment Method section below. All the readings and other files relevant for in-class sessions will be posted on the CEU E-learning site. For making in-class discussions constructive and interesting, it is essential that all the required readings are completed before the class.

Note on Plagiarism

Academic honesty and integrity is taken very seriously. The information on what will be considered as plagiarism and how it will be handled can be found in CEU’s Policy of Plagiarism: https://documents.ceu.edu/documents/p-1405-1. All submitted assignments are processed through the Turnitin software, which checks the originality of students’ work.

Assessment Method

Attendance, pre-class activities, and active participation (10% of the final grade):

Given the cumulative nature of the material, attendance at the seminars is essential. If you are unable to attend a seminar, please, inform both instructors in advance via email. More than two unexcused absences result in a reduction of the participation grade and more than three unexcused absences results in failure of the course.

Assignments:

- Note on data selection (15%) – should be submitted to Anatoly:
Whether positivist or interpretivist, each MA project must include a great deal of data analysis. News articles, speeches, interview transcripts, archival sources and other texts, as well as economic and political indicators, images, and databases constitute data that can be used in social research. Collecting and selecting data, ensuring their representativeness and validity is one of the most challenging tasks for every MA project. In this assignment, we invite students to describe and reflect upon the data they plan to analyse for their theses, to explain what they are going to look at to find answer(s) to their research question(s), how they are going to look at it, and how they will ensure that the chosen data are representative. Ideally, this short essay (400-600 words) should later be incorporated into the methodological section of the MA thesis (or policy paper) and into the longer final assignment for this course. Detailed instructions about structural and thematic content of this essay will be circulated later in the semester. This assignment is due on February 28th, Wednesday (23:59).

- **Empirical exercise using R (15%) – should be submitted to Andrew:**
  After the R session in Week 8, you will be given a problem set and a dataset in Excel format. You will be asked to import the data into R, carry out some analyses in R and provide answers to the problems based on the results. This assignment is due on March 16th, Friday.

- **Workshop presentation of research plan and methodological approach for MA thesis (20%):**
  This should be a brief presentation that states your research aim and question, summarizes the methodological approach that will be used, and states what information or data you will need to conduct the research project. You will present at one of the workshop sessions on March 9 or another date that the March 16 session will be rescheduled to and will provide and receive peer feedback on the proposed research plans and methodological approaches. Prior to the workshop, a one page summary of the presentation should be provided (this summary will not be graded).

- **Written summary of research plan and methodological approach for MA thesis or policy paper (40%):**
  This is a written statement (1500-2500 words) that summarizes your research aim and question, (briefly) justifies why you do it, and summarizes the methodological approach that will be used. Depending on the research approach, the methodological section will have different requirements, but you should clarify what evidence, information, or data you will need to conduct the research project. More details about the content will be provided. This must be submitted on the E-learning site by March 24 (23:59). You are also encouraged to send a copy to your MA thesis supervisor.

All the assignments should be submitted either on the CEU E-learning website or via email on time and in the format specified. Late submission of written assignments will result in downgrading by one grade for every second day late (i.e. if students submit their assignments one or two days late, their assignments will be downgraded by one third of a letter grade, for example from a B+ to a B; if the assignment is submitted on the third or fourth day it will be downgraded by two thirds of a letter grade, for example from a B+ to a B-, etc.)
Seminar Breakdown

1. January 12 – Writing policy papers (Anatoly)

Required:


2. January 19 – Comparative Case Study and Case Selection (guest lecture by Wen Zha)

Required:


Additional:


3. January 26 – Content analysis in interpretivist research (Anatoly)

Required:


- Forum of responses to A. Bennet:

Additional:

4. February 2 – Bivariate regression models (Andrew)

**Required:**


5. February 9 – Working with visuals (this session will consist of two parts. During the first part, Anatoly will give a short lecture followed by a class discussion and exercises. After that Yoav Galai will give a guest presentation of his work in progress on Visual IR. The presentation will be followed by Q&A and discussion).

**Required:**

- Galai, Yoav, *Untitled paper*.

**Additional:**


6. February 16 – Multiple regression (Andrew)

**Required:**
7. February 23 – Genealogy and conceptual history in IR (Anatoly)

**Required:**


**Additional:**


8. March 2 – Introduction to data analysis using R (Andrew)

**Required:**

  (You should bring your laptop to class on this day, with fully charged batteries and Microsoft Excel and R installed.)

9. March 9 – WORKSHOP 1

10. March 16 – TO BE RESCHEDULED DUE TO NATIONAL HOLIDAY – WORKSHOP 2

11. March 23 – Writing up (Anatoly and Andrew)

**Required:**


12. March 30 – NO CLASS (National Holiday)