

# Foundations of International Relations

## Research Article Workshop

### Details

Instructor: Bogdan Popescu

Program Duration: 12 Weeks (9 mentor meetings)

Structure: Nine one-on-one, remote weekly sessions for 1 hour

### Course Description

This course is an intensive, hands-on introduction to writing a research article in the social sciences, with a focus on political science, sociology, or economics. By the end of the course, students will have developed and refined a complete research paper through a series of iterative assignments and structured feedback. The course integrates methodological training, substantive readings, and practical writing skills. Course content is divided into weekly units covering both technical skills and theoretical content. This course is demanding, but it's designed to give you the tools to write your first publishable article. I am here to guide you every step of the way.

This course introduces students to the core areas of international relations through four thematic modules: IR theory, the historical evolution of the international system, the causes of war and conflict, and the political economy of globalization. Students begin by examining competing explanations of state behavior and international cooperation through Snyder, Keohane, and Schultz, then trace the emergence of the modern state system using Kennedy, Bull, and Abramson. The course then explores why wars occur and why states pursue nuclear weapons, engaging both theoretical and quantitative perspectives from Fearon, Sagan, and Hegre & Sambanis. It concludes with the study of globalization, domestic interests, and the political backlash against economic integration through Rodrik, Frieden, and Broz, Frieden & Weymouth. Throughout, students acquire foundational quantitative skills in R and apply them to cross-national data, culminating in an empirical research paper that connects international relations theory to real-world political outcomes.

Assessment will be based on the progressive development of a research project, including submission of a research question, proposal, outline, draft, and final paper, as well as in-class presentations. No prior experience with coding or statistics is required, but students should be ready to engage with challenging material in a supportive, step-by-step environment.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course the students will be able to:

- Develop a research question and transform it into a publishable paper.
- Master essential academic tools including reference managers (e.g., JabRef), markdown-based word processing, and professional presentation software.
- Write each section of a paper: abstract, introduction, argument, methods, literature review, findings, discussion, and conclusion.
- Conduct basic quantitative analysis in R, including data merging, regression modeling, and visualization.
- Understand and apply core methods in social science research, including qualitative methods, difference-in-differences (DiD), and regression discontinuity design (RDD).
- Create a personal academic website using GitHub Pages to showcase their work.

## Weekly Presentations

Students will deliver a 20-minute presentation on a topic assigned in advance. Presentations should include a clear introduction, main points, and conclusion. Use visual aids (e.g., slides) effectively, ensuring text is legible and visuals are relevant. Practice beforehand to stay within the time limit and maintain a confident, professional tone. Be prepared to answer 2-3 questions from peers or the instructor during and after the presentation. Remember to cite your sources and avoid reading verbatim from slides or notes.

In addition to summarizing the key arguments or findings, your presentation should include critical analysis of the material. Highlight what the author does not address, the limitations of their research, or potential problems in their analysis or methodology. Think about how the research could be improved, expanded, or connected to broader themes discussed in class, and incorporate these insights into your presentation.

Each week, you will give a short presentation on that week's readings. You can download the [template for the paper presentation at this link](#).

## Research Paper

The research paper should provide an extensive background on the topic and a clear contribution to the literature. The analysis should include some quantitative analysis to test hypotheses. The statistical part of the research project involves using data (collect and prepare the data to run quantitative analyses and produce graphs) and specialized software (R).

## Research Paper Template

Use the following as a starting point for writing your own research paper:

- [Research Paper Template](#) | [Replication](#)

## Research Paper Examples

This section provides two complete examples of finished research papers and presentations. These are not templates to copy, but illustrations of different research designs. Use them to see how arguments, methods, and findings can be structured and communicated in practice.

- **Quantitative Example**
  - [Research Paper \(Quantitative\)](#) | [Replication Files](#)
  - [Presentation \(Quantitative\)](#) | [Replication Files](#)
- **Qualitative Example**
  - [Research Paper \(Qualitative\)](#) | [Replication Files](#)
  - [Presentation \(Qualitative\)](#) | [Replication Files](#)

## Recommended Optional Books

### Writing Articles

Coppedge, M. 2012. Democratization and Research Methods. Cambridge University Press.

Halperin, S., & Heath, O. (2012). Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Punch, K. F. 2014. Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Van Evera, S. 1997. Guide to methods for students of political science. Cornell University Press.

## Statistics

Cunningham, Scott. 2021. Causal Inference: The Mixtape. Yale University Press. <https://mixtape.scunning.com>.

Ismay, Chester, and Albert Y. Kim. 2019. *Statistical Inference via Data Science: A Modern-Dive into R and the Tidyverse*. Chapman and Hall / CRC. <https://moderndive.com/>.

Huntington-Klein, Nick. 2021. The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality. Boca Raton, Florida: Chapman and Hall / CRC. <https://theeffectbook.net/>.

Llaudet, Elena and Imai, Kosuke. 2023 “Data Analysis for Social Science.” Princeton: Oxford University Press.

Warne, Russel T. 2018. “Statistics for the Social Sciences. A General Linear Model Approach.” London: Cambridge University Press.

## Causal Inference

Bauer, Paul C. and Dennis Cohen. 2023. *Applied Causal Analysis (with R)* <https://bookdown.org/paul/applied-causal-analysis/>.

Keyes, David, R for the Rest of Us: 2025. *A Statistics-Free Introduction* <https://book.rfortherestofus.com>. No Starch Press

## Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Lovelace, Robin, Nowosad, Jakub, and Jannes Muenchow. 2021. *Geocomputation with R*. <https://bookdown.org/robinlovelace/geocompr/>.

Mieno, Tara. 2023. *R as GIS for Economists*. <https://tmieno2.github.io/R-as-GIS-for-Economists/>.

## Week 1

- Intro to the Course - 12-12-2025

## Homework 1: Research Design and Presentation: Go over:

- [The Topic and Research Question Slides](#)
- [Quarto Presentations Slides](#)

## **Homework 2: Statistics and R Programming:** Go over:

- [Operations and Objects in R Slides](#)
- [Intro to Statistics Slides](#)

## **Week 2**

Theories of International Relations - 2025-12-20

- Snyder, Jack. 2004. "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy* 145 (November/December): 52–62.
- Keohane, Robert O. 1998. "International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?" *Foreign Policy* 110 (Spring): 82–96.
- Schultz, Kenneth A. 1999. "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War." *International Organization* 53 (2): 233–266.

## **Homework 1: Research Design and Presentation:** Go over:

- [Essential Tools for Writing a Paper Slides](#)
- [The Abstract and the Argument Slides](#)

## **Homework 2: Statistics and R Programming:** Go over:

- [Working with Data in R Slides](#)
- [Dplyr and Basic Visualization Slides](#)

## **Week 3**

Historical Evolution of the International System - 2025-12-22 - 2025-12-28

- Kennedy, Paul. 1987. The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000. New York: Random House. C1 - The Rise of the Western World and C2 - The Habsburg Bid for Mastery, 1519-1659
- Bull, Hedley. 1977. The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics. London: Macmillan. C1
- Abramson, Scott F. 2017. “The Economic Origins of the Territorial State.” International Organization 71 (1): 97–130.

**Homework 1: Research Design and Presentation:** Go over:

- [Literature Review Slides](#)
- [Writing the Research Proposal:](#) question, hypotheses literature, methods

**Homework 2: Statistics and R Programming:** Go over:

- [Visualizing Data Distributions in R Slides](#)
- [Modeling Relationships Between Variables Slides](#)

**Deadline:** Research Question – 2025-12-26

## Week 4

Security & Conflict - 2025-12-29 - 2026-01-04

- Fearon, James D. 1995. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” International Organization 49 (3): 379–414.
- Sagan, Scott D. 1996–97. “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb.” International Security 21 (3): 54–86.
- Hegre, Havard, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. “Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset.” Journal of Conflict Resolution 50 (4): 508–535.

**Homework 1: Statistics and R Programming:** Go over:

- [Interpreting Binary and Multivariate Regression Models Slides](#)
- [Differences-in-Differences Slides](#)

- [Data Visualization in R - 1 Slides](#)

**Deadline:** Research Proposal - 2026-01-02

## **Week 5**

International Political Economy - 2026-01-05 - 2026-01-11

- Rodrik, Dani. 2011. The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy. New York: W. W. Norton. C1
- Broz, J. Lawrence, Jeffrey A. Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth. 2021. “Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash.” International Organization 75(S2): 464–494.
- Frieden, Jeffrey A. 1991. “Invested Interests: The Politics of National Economic Policies in a World of Global Finance.” International Organization 45(4): 425–451.

**Homework 1: Research Design and Presentation:** Go over:

- [Methods Slides](#)
- Writing the Paper Outline

**Homework 2: Statistics and R Programming:** Go over:

- [Regression Discontinuity Design Slides](#)
- [Data Visualization in R - 2 Slides](#)
- [Data Visualization in R - 3 Slides](#)

**Deadline:** Research Paper Outline - 2026-01-09

## **Week 6**

Replication: Difference-in-Differences - 2026-01-12 - 2026-01-18

**Homework 1: Research Design and Presentation:** Go over:

- [Findings, Discussion, Intro, and Conclusion Slides](#)
- [Making a website on GitHub: username.github.io](#)

## Week 7

Replication: Regression Discontinuity Design - 2026-01-19 - 2026-01-25

**Homework:** Write:

- Work on Research Design, Data, Research Methodology

**Deadline:** Milestone - 2026-01-23

## Week 8

Paper Development - 2026-01-26 - 2026-02-01

**Homework:** Write:

- Work on Research Design, Data, Research Methodology
- Finish First Draft

## Week 9

Paper Feedback - 2026-02-02 - 2026-02-08

- Writing an academic CV and publishing on your personal website
- CV template:
  - [tex file](#) (open the tex file in quarto and compile after updating it with personal details)
  - [pdf file](#)



**Homework:** Write:

- Revise Paper: Methods
- Write academic CV and post on website

**Deadline:** Final Paper - 2026-02-06

## **Week 10**

Paper Development - 2026-02-09 - 2026-02-15

**Deadline:** Revised Final Paper - 2026-02-28