Overview

Why do countries go to war? Does international trade harm the environment? Why do some countries attract more foreign investments than others? How we undertake our research to answer these questions, and other important questions about the world, determines the quality of our answers. This module provides an introduction to the methods of inquiry that are appropriate to the study of global issues. The material introduces fundamental topics in research design and choice of methods that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative research. This module also provides an introduction to basic data analysis. At the successful completion of the module, students will be able to explain fundamental concepts of social science research methods; articulate principles of statistical analysis; conduct a basic quantitative analysis; critically evaluate the research design aspect of existing scholarly works; and develop their own research design on a topic of their interests.

Requirements and Evaluation

* Participation (20%): Students are expected to attend class, read all assigned readings, and contribute to the class discussion. We will utilize a variety set of participation tools in lectures, and active participation is expected in both lectures and tutorials.

* Book Review Paper (25%): Students are expected to read one book from the following list and critically review the research design aspect of the book. The paper should not exceed 1,500 words. Students should submit their assignments in hard copy to the professor’s mailbox (AS1 - 4th floor) as well as in soft copy to the IVLE by 5pm on February 28 (Tuesday). There will be a penalty for late submission (one half grade for every 24 hours). Assignments submitted after March 3, 5pm will be considered as no submission. For a guideline, please see the IVLE folder Guideline.

  – Thomas Janoski. 2010. The Ironies of Citizenship: Naturalization and Integration in Industrialized Countries. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Read Chapters 1 and 2 as well as two chapters of your choice from Chapters 3-7.)
  – Alexander B. Downes. 2008. Targeting Civilians in War. New York: Cornell University Press. (Read the introductory chapter, Chapter 1, and two chapters of your choice from Chapters 3-7).
  – Mark S. Copelovitch. 2010. The International Monetary Fund in the Global Economy: Banks, Bonds, and Bailouts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Read Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5).
  – Min Ye. 2014. Diasporas and Foreign Direct Investment in China and India. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Read Chapters 1 and 2 as well as one empirical section of your choice among Part II, Part III, or Part IV.)

* Data Analysis (25%): There will be three data analysis assignments that will require students to analyze some quantitative data using R, which is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics. Students will learn how to analyze data using R through video clips to be provided (and during lectures and tutorials, if necessary).

* Final Research Design Paper (30%): The research design paper should state their own research question; suggest their own argument along with competing arguments; and suggest a research method that will be used to test various arguments and justify their choice of method. The paper should not exceed 2,000 words. The assignment is due by 5pm on April 24.
Course Schedule

Week 1. Overview


Week 2. Causality


Tutorial 1. Formulating Research Questions and Hypotheses

- Formulating Research Questions and Hypotheses
  Students are required to develop their own research question and causal hypothesis on a topic of their interest before the tutorial. Please submit your research question and hypothesis to IVLE at least 12 hours before the beginning of your tutorial session. If you want to get feedbacks, please upload it at least 24 hours in advance.

- Mini-Presentation
  There will be 5-minute mini-presentations where students explain why their research question is academically and practically important and why their posited hypotheses are theoretically plausible. Students will be divided into two groups. One group will present in the first tutorial, while the other group will present in the second one.

Week 3. Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement


Week 4. Comparative Case Study


Tutorial 2. Formulating Research Questions and Hypotheses (Continued)

- Mini-Presentation
  There will be 5-minute mini-presentations where students explain why their research question is academically and practically important and why their posited hypotheses are theoretically plausible.

Week 5. Case Selection


Week 6. Congruence Method and Process Tracing


Recess Week
Book Review Assignment Submission Due by 5pm on February 28

Tutorial 3. Data Analysis with R

- Visualizing Data with R: It is strongly recommended to download and install both R and R-Studio before the tutorial. R can be downloaded at http://cran.stat.nus.edu.sg/; R-Studio can be downloaded at https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/. It is also recommended to complete a short, 4 hour online course (Datacamp’s Free Introduction to R available at https://www.datacamp.com/courses/free-introduction-to-r) in order to grasp the basics and mechanics of this programming language.

Week 7. Introduction to Quantitative Analysis

Week 8. Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing


Tutorials 4. Data Analysis in R

- *Data Analysis in R*: We will learn how to statistically describe the data in R.

Week 9. Regression


Week 10. Regression II


Tutorials 5. Regression Analysis in R

- *Regression Analysis in R*: We will learn how to estimate a regression model in R.

Week 11. Natural Experiments


Week 12. Analysis of Textual Data


Week 13. Individual Consultation

- There will be a 20-minute mandatory one-on-one individual consultation to discuss each student’s research design paper. Students can ask any questions related to their final projects.

*Final Research Design Submission Paper Due by 5pm on April 24*