

**Syllabus**  
**40995 METHODS FOR POLICY EVALUATION**

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**Office hours:** by appointment

**Aim of the course:** introducing the main tools used for data analysis and applied empirical research with a focus on the estimation of causal relationships. The methods covered will allow students to address questions that are relevant from a social, economic, and political perspective. The course is inherently applied. By the end of the course, students should be able to go through the multiple stages of empirical research: searching for interesting questions, devising an appropriate research design, collecting the data, and implementing the analysis.

**Exam:** Class presentation of research projects (100%). Detailed instructions will be given in class.

All the relevant material is covered in the slides, which will be posted on the course's platform.

**General references**

Angrist and Pischke (2009) *Mostly Harmless Econometrics*. Princeton University Press

Cunningham (2021) *Causal Inference*. Yale University Press

Gerber and Green (2012) *Field Experiments*. W.W. Norton & Company

**Topics**

**1. Introduction. Directed Acyclic Graphs**

**Angrist and Pischke (2010).** "The credibility revolution in empirical economics: How better research design is taking the con out of econometrics" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*

**Cunningham (2021)**, chapter 3

**2. Causal inference and experimentation**

**Angrist and Pischke (2009)**, chapter 2

**Carlana, M., La Ferrara, E. & P. Pinotti (2022).** "Goals and gaps: The Educational Careers of Immigrant Children" *Econometrica*

**Galasso, Morelli, Nannicini, and Stanig (2022)** "Fighting Populism on Its Own Turf: Experimental Evidence" CEPR

**Gerber and Green (2012)**, chapters 2, 5, and 6

**3. Naturally occurring experiments**

**Gagliarducci, Onorato, Sobbrino, and Tabellini (2020)** "War of the Waves: Radio and Resistance During World War II" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

**Drago, Galbiati, and Vertova (2009)** "The Deterrent Effects of Prison: Evidence from a Natural Experiment" *Journal of Political Economy*

**Hall, Huff, Kuriwaki (2019)** "Wealth, Slaveownership, and Fighting for the Confederacy: An Empirical Study of the American Civil War" *American Political Science Review*

#### **4. Survey experiments**

**Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva (2023)** "Immigration and Redistribution" *The Review of Economic Studies*

**Alesina, Stantcheva, and Teso (2018)** "Intergenerational Mobility and Support for Redistribution" *American Economic Review*

**Stantcheva (2022)** "How to Run Surveys: A guide to creating your identifying variation and revealing the invisible" *Annual Review of Economics*

#### **5. Instrumental variables**

**Angrist and Pischke (2009)**, chapter 4

**Cunningham (2021)**, chapter 7

#### **6. Natural experiment of history**

**Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2001)** "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation" *American Economic Review*

**Dittmar (2011)** "Information Technology and Economic Change: The Impact of the Printing Press" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

**Giorcelli (2019)** "The Long-Term Effects of Management and Technology Transfers" *American Economic Review*

**Lowes, Nunn, Robinson, and Weigel (2017)** "The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom" *Econometrica*

**Voth (2021)** "Persistence—myth and mystery." *The handbook of historical economics*. Academic Press

#### **7. Regression discontinuity designs**

**Angrist and Pischke (2009)**, chapter 6

**Cattaneo and Titiunik (2022)** "Regression Discontinuity Designs" *Annual Review of Economics*

**Dell (2010)** "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining Mita" *Econometrica*

**Gagliarducci and Nannicini (2013)** "Do Better Paid Politicians Perform Better? Disentangling Incentives from Selection" *Journal of the European Economic Association*

**Eggers, Freier, Grembi and Nannicini (2017)** "Regression Discontinuity Designs Based on Population Thresholds: Pitfalls and Solutions" *American Journal of Political Science*

**Lee and Lemieux (2010)** « Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics" *Journal of Economic Literature*

#### **8. Difference-in-Differences**

**Angrist and Pischke (2009)**, chapter 5

**Cunningham (2021)**, chapter 9

**de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (2020)** "Two-Way Fixed Effects Estimators with Heterogeneous Treatment Effects" *American Economic Review*

**de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (forthcoming)** "Two-Way Fixed Effects and Differences-in-Differences with Heterogeneous Treatment Effects: A Survey" *Econometrics Journal*