



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2019

7,358: Empirical Analysis of International Human Rights Law

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Group examination paper with presentation (all given the same grades) (40%)

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (60%)

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[7,358,1.00 Empirical Analysis of International Human Rights Law](#) -- Englisch -- [Altwicker Tilmann](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

No formal prerequisites. Students are expected to have a strong interest in international law/international human rights law. Though the course does not require any prior statistical training, it is expected that students are willing to familiarize themselves with basic statistical methods and their implementation in the programming language R during the course.

Course content

Can we "measure" international human rights? Why are some states better human rights compliers? Are all human rights equal? Can decisions by international human rights courts be predicted? This course has two major aims: First, the course analyses questions of international human rights law from an empirical perspective. To this end, it provides an overview on basic concepts and institutions of international human rights law, and influential studies dealing with questions of evidence-based international human rights law will be evaluated. Second, the course provides an introduction to the innovative, emerging field of empirical legal studies. It aims to demonstrate how basic statistical methods (descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, linear regression, logistic regression and text mining) can be gainfully applied to international human rights law.

Learning Objectives

The course follows a rigorous integrated, hands-on, interdisciplinary approach. All students will participate (in groups) in hands-on problem solving using basic statistical methods in R. At the successful completion of the course, students should:

- have acquired / deepened their knowledge and understanding of key concepts and institutions of international human rights law;
- have learned about a range of quantitative methods and their application in the field of empirical legal studies;
- be able to read and to critically evaluate research articles dealing with empirical approaches to international human rights law;
- be able to employ simple quantitative methods in the human rights field using the appropriate software, to assess the validity of their results and the limitations of empirical approaches to human rights law.

Course structure

The course consists of six 4-hour sessions. The first session consists of an introduction to the course and 45-minute lecture on international human rights law and a 45-minute lecture on empirical legal studies. Each of the following sessions start with a lecture introducing a topic of international human rights law, statistical methods and their implementation in R. The lecture is followed by individual presentations of students (max. 15 minutes) and an in-class discussion.



Course literature

Textbook used for the **law-part** of the lectures:

- Moeckli, D./Shah, S./Sivakumaran, S. (eds), International Human Rights Law, 3rd ed., OUP 2018.

Textbook used for **empirical legal studies-part** of the lectures:

- Epstein, L./Martin, A.D., An Introduction to Empirical Legal Research, OUP 2014 .

Textbook used for the **statistics-/ R-part** of the lectures:

- Monogan, J.E., Political Analysis Using R, Springer 2015,
- Field, A./Miles, J./Field, Z., Discovering Statistics Using R, Sage 2012 (particularly suitable for students with no prior statistical training),
- Silge, J./Robinson, D., Text Mining with R, O'Reilly 2017.

A list of the required readings as well as additional reading will be available on Canvas before the beginning of the course.

In addition, it is required for all participants to download R and R Studio before the course begins. The download procedure (including download links) is described here: <https://www.rstudio.com/online-learning/#DataScience>. For a video on the installation see <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheLearnR/featured>. If you want to practice R before the course starts, the following websites (among others) provide online tutorials:<https://www.statmethods.net/r-tutorial/index.html> or <http://www.sthda.com/english/wiki/what-is-r-and-why-learning-r-programming>. If you are an absolute beginner in the field of statistics, the following book is a good read: Wheelan, C., Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data, Norton, 2014. Though not a requirement, students are encouraged to bring their own notebook (with R/R Studio ready) to each session.

Additional course information

Tilmann Altwicker holds a SNSF-Professorship for Public Law, International Law, Legal Philosophy and Empirical Legal Research at the University of Zurich, Law Faculty. In the fall semester 2019, he is a Guest Professor for Political Science at the School of Economics and Political Science of St. Gallen University. In addition to his qualifications in law, he holds a Diploma in Advanced Studies in Applied Statistics from ETH Zurich. A current SNSF-funded project deals with the empirical analysis of legal decision-making at the European Court of Human Rights.

For more information, please visit his website at <https://www.ivr.uzh.ch/en/institutsmitglieder/altwicker.html>.

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Group examination paper with presentation (all given the same grades) (40%)

Remark

Theory-guided, quantitative analysis (3'000 w.)

Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the precepts of the applicable quotation standard, while



informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2017), Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (12th ed., Cornelsen Schweiz).

- For any work written at the HSG, the indication of the page numbers both according to the MLA and the APA standard is never optional.
- Where there are no page numbers in sources, precise references must be provided in a different way: titles of chapters or sections, section numbers, acts, scenes, verses, etc.
- For papers in law, the legal standard is recommended (by way of example, cf. FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R. et SCHINDLER B. (2018, Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (6. Auflage), Zürich: Schulthess, or the recommendations of the Law School).

Supplementary aids

No examination-aid rule is necessary for such examination types. The rules and regulations of the University of St. Gallen apply in a subsidiary fashion.

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (60%)

Remark

Analysis empirical journal article (3'000 w.)

Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the precepts of the applicable quotation standard, while informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2017), Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (12th ed., Cornelsen Schweiz).
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Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

Apart from their active participation in class, students are expected to make the following contributions:

1. **Examination sub part (1/2):** a) Each group (consisting of 4-5 students) prepares a short **paper** (max. 3'000 words incl. footnotes) on an empirical legal research question in the context of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which can be answered using simple statistical methods in R. All papers need to adopt the following structure:



"Introduction", "Data and Methods", "Results" und "Discussion". The "Introduction" and/or the "Discussion" should engage with the legal issues of the research question. Alternatively, some papers will answer specific questions through data-driven and basic legal research. Some groups will collect their own data. In cases of more complex research questions, the data will be provided. The paper must be submitted to the lecturer on or before Monday, 9 December 2019 (midnight) by email as pdf attachment. b) **Presentation** of the paper in class (15 min.), c) Preparation of a **handout** (max. 2 pages) to be distributed via Canvas on Friday before the presentation.

2. **Examination sub part (2/2):** a) Each student submits an analysis paper on a journal article (dealing with the empirical analysis of international human rights law) (max. 3'000 words incl. footnotes). The papers need to provide a summary of the article and should contain a critical examination of the data, methods used, results and discussion. The due dates (usually a week before each session) will be provided on Canvas before the course starts. b) **Presentation** of the article in class (15 min.), c) Preparation of a **handout** (max. 2 pages) to be distributed via Canvas on Friday before the presentation.

Examination relevant literature

Slides and empirical journal articles presented by students (all distributed viaCanvas, in part at the beginning and in part during the course of the semester).

Please note

Please note that this fact sheet alone is binding and has priority over any other information such as StudyNet (Canvas), personal databases or faculty members' websites and information provided in their lectures, etc.

Any possible references and links within the fact sheet to information provided by third parties are merely supplementary and informative in nature and are outside the University of St.Gallen's scope of responsibility and guarantee.

Documents and materials that have been submitted no later than the end of term time (CW51) are relevant to central examinations.

Binding nature of the fact sheet:

- Information about courses and examination time (central/decentral) and examination type starting from the beginning of the bidding on 22 August 2019
- Information about examinations (examination aid regulations, examination content, examination-relevant literature) for decentral examinations after the 4th semester week on 14 October 2019
- Information about examinations (examination aid regulations, examination content, examination-relevant literature) for central examinations as from the starting date for examination registration on 4 November 2019

Please consult the fact sheet again after these deadlines have expired.