Course Instructor:
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Course Description:
This advanced-level course explores the counterfactual approach to causality within social sciences and aims to introduce graduate students the foundational premises of how to construct valid, historically-grounded arguments in their research projects. In a nutshell, a counterfactual logic of causal inference refers to employing “what if?” questions to the hypotheses we are testing in an endeavor to reach a better causal explanation of the social phenomena we seek to understand. In this respect, in this course, we will first focus on establishing the ties between the more familiar research methods of comparative historical analysis, case study and process tracing with the less familiar counterfactual theories of causation. Second, we will investigate whether such a counterfactual thinking in social sciences generates any pitfalls, or not. Third, we will examine each participant’s research proposal through the lenses of counterfactual manner of thinking, and help them how they can improve their research projects. After completing this course, it is aimed that, the students will i) acquire the relevant skills to get engaged with the social scientific literature that endeavors to construct casual explanations; and ii) design an explanatory framework that asks both “why?” and “why not?” questions for what they seek to understand and explain, alongside with how to cope with possible causal inferential problems they may encounter in their research projects.

Course Format and Schedule:
This is a five-day long, intensive and highly interactive advanced-level course. From Monday to Friday, we will have four-hour long meetings, each divided into morning and afternoon sessions. For the first four days, the instructor will deliver lectures in the mornings, while the class discussion over assigned readings will take place in the afternoons. Friday sessions are organized as workshop meetings, in which the research projects of those students who would like to get a detailed feedback on their work will be thoroughly discussed.

1st Day (Monday):
- “Facts” and Counterfactuals | Preliminary Premises and Foundational Principles of Counterfactual Thinking
  o Counterfactual Logic of Causal Inference
  o Its Strengths and Pitfalls

2nd Day (Tuesday):
- Counterfactual Analysis in Case Study Methods
3rd Day (Wednesday):
- Counterfactual Analysis in Process-Tracing Methods

4th Day (Thursday):
- Counterfactual Analysis in (Comparative) Historical Methods

5th Day (Friday):
- Workshop for Student Projects

Readings:
Below is a selected short list of recommended readings students are highly encouraged to get done before taking this course:


