

MAEES4.2 Causal Inference and Policy Evaluation Winter 2026/27

Lehrstuhl für VWL, insb.
Empirische Mikroökonomik

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Lecture:	Thursday, 10:00-12:00, FMA/01.19 Start: October 22, 2026
Course Language:	English
Prerequisites:	Solid understanding of undergraduate econometrics; experience with Stata, R, or similar software packages will help, but is not mandatory
Assignment:	One-hour written exam
ECTS:	6 ECTS points

Brief description

This course introduces students to the most common empirical methods used for causal inference and policy evaluation. The identification of causal effects of, e.g., interventions, policy reforms or other types of treatments is of great importance for policy evaluation in economics and other social sciences. The course will cover following topics:

1. Foundations of Causality: DAGs
2. Econometrics recap (if necessary)
3. Randomized Experiments and the Potential Outcomes Framework
4. Matching and inverse probability weighting
5. Instrumental variables
6. Regression Discontinuity
7. Difference-in-differences
8. Synthetic control

Upon completions, students will be able to develop identification strategies to uncover causal effects for a given research question and in a given context, to apply modern causal inference techniques to policy-relevant questions, and critically evaluate the assumptions and limitations of various causal inference methods.

Main Textbooks:

Cunningham, Scott. (2026). *Causal Inference: The Remix*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Free online version available at <https://mixtape.scunning.com>.

Huntington-Klein, N. (2025). *The Effect: an Introduction to Research Design and Causality*, 2nd Edition. Boca Raton: CRS Press. Free online version available at <https://theeffectbook.net>.
