

CALL FOR PAPERS

WORKSHOP ON

LLMs AND THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
PARIS LODRON UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

ACADEMIC CONVENORS

Andreas Dür, Professor of International Politics

Markus Gastinger, Lise Meitner Fellow (FWF)

Martin Cortina Escudero, Postdoc “The Design of Trade Agreements and Global Supply Chains” (FWF)

Mehmet Yavuz, Postdoc “GEOTRADE” (ERC)

WORKSHOP THEME

In November 2022, GPT-3.5 (“ChatGPT”) marked a step change for generative large language models (LLMs). Suddenly, humans could “talk” to computers in plain language, turning them into helpful assistants. Not least academic research stands to be transformed by the new opportunities provided by LLMs, particularly as open-weight and open-source models alleviate concerns over replicability and begin to rival proprietary models (Le Mens and Gallego 2025; Leo et al. 2025). Still, how LLMs can be incorporated into existing research agendas in International Relations (IR), broadly conceived, remains to be fully explored.

Computational political scientists have used machine-learning techniques for decades. Nevertheless, LLMs provide unique capabilities such as larger context windows and an improved understanding of the nuances of human language even without extensive, manually labelled training data. This allows LLMs to help with a wide variety of tasks, such as information extraction, labelling, sentiment analysis, simulations, or synthetic data creation. Researchers can even ask LLMs (“computers”) to explain their decisions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that large language models have become sophisticated enough to persuade researchers to accept their coding decisions, overruling those initially made by human experts (Ornstein, Blasingame, and Truscott 2025, 272). While not without drawbacks such as biases engrained in models through training data (Motoki, Pinho Neto, and Rodrigues 2024), LLMs open exciting novel research avenues also in the field of IR (Steinert and Kazenwadel 2024; Halterman 2025).

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

The workshop aims to advance research and exchange best practices by bringing together IR scholars using LLMs. Another potential outcome of the workshop could be to submit selected papers for a special issue to an IR journal still to be agreed between the authors. Still, participation in the workshop by no means obliges anyone to join this special issue.

FORMAT AND TRAVEL

The full-day workshop takes place in Salzburg on Friday, 19 September 2025. We will arrange an evening event the day before the workshop and a small recreational program on Saturday morning. Participation on either of those two days is voluntary. Workshop participants agree to stay at the workshop the entire day and may be invited to act as a discussant for other papers. We aim to assign two discussants per paper. Accommodation for two nights at a hotel close to the workshop venue will be provided. If needed, travel costs can be, at least partially, reimbursed.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

If you would like to join the workshop, please send an **abstract of about 300 words** to Markus Gastinger (Markus.Gastinger@plus.ac.at) until **26 May 2025**. We will only select papers clearly indicating in the abstract that they use LLMs. Please indicate in your submission if you require funding to support your travel. Selected paper givers will be informed by 2 June 2025.

FULL CONTACT INFORMATION

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