PPHA 35595: Program Evaluation for International Development

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Office Hours: Appointment via e-mail to set-up Zoom
Class Hours: Tuesday class is asynchronous. Pre-recorded lecture will be uploaded Tuesdays for next Tuesday class. The

Course Description

This course is an introduction the program evaluation and evidence-based policy making in the area of development. This course provides students with a broad understanding of tools available to evaluate development programs. As would be practitioners in the field of international development, students will learn about the experimental and the quasi-experimental methods used to evaluate various development programs. At the end of this course, students will be proficient in reading, understanding, and critically engaging with the evaluation research.

Required Materials


• Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2014). Mastering’metrics: The path from cause to effect. Princeton University Press. (You can buy the book from wherever you seem fit. Or you can borrow it from the library.)
• Weiss, C. H. (1998). Evaluation: Methods for studying programs and policies. Pearson College Division. (Relevant Chapters will be uploaded to the class Canvas site.)

• Applied papers for each method will be uploaded to the class Canvas site.

Prerequisites

Students are expected to have a basic knowledge of basic statistics and regression analysis.

Course Structure

Class Structure

The class will be asynchronous and synchronous. Taking various constraints you might have into consideration, I will upload pre-recorded lectures to the class Canvas site previous Tuesday for every Tuesday class. For example, the lecture for January 19 will be uploaded to the Canvas site on January 12. We will have discussion sections on Thursdays for the applied papers, which will not be recorded. Class participation is an important part of your grade, so you are required to attend the discussion sections.

Assessments

• Evaluation Plan (%60): At the end of the class each of you will write a proposal for a program evaluation. This assignment will be divided into 4 parts, which is %15 percent each.
  
  – Defining the problem and describing the intervention: Due Date: January 29, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – Development of outcome variables Due Date: February 12, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – Process evaluation Due Date: February 26, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – Summative evaluation Due Date: March 12, 2020 5:00 pm

• Assignments (20%): You will receive 4 problem sets, each 5%
  
  – 1st assignment due date: Due Date: January 22, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – 2nd assignment Due Date: February 5, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – 3rd assignment Due Date: February 19, 2020 5:00 pm
  
  – 4th assignment Due Date: March 5, 2020 5:00 pm

• The remaining 20% is class participation.
Evaluation Plan

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has a rigorous road map for evaluation plans for public health programs. This part of the syllabus borrows from their road map and apply it to the study of international development where necessary.

- Defining the problem and describing the intervention
  - You will learn how to present a project or a program to an audience with evaluation in mind.
  - The word limit for this assignment is 750 words. You will cover
    1. Background on the development problem you are interested in.
    2. Objectives of the (public) policy program/intervention you are proposing
    3. Description of the intervention intended to achieve the objectives
    4. Design a conceptual framework that shows how the public policy program/intervention achieve the goals you have in mind.
  - Tips:
    * When you are working for an international development organization, you will be expected to provide the stakeholders of the project an in-depth analysis of the problem. The first part of the assignment – background on the development problem you are interested in – is a pet project in that. For example, you are proposing a program that will increase the vaccination in Sierra Leone. Then, you can give the reader a brief description of the importance of childhood immunization on childhood mortality, particularly in Sierra Leone. Provide the reader with related literature on the problem you identified.
    * What is the objective of your proposed intervention? To increase childhood immunization is Sierra Leone.
    * Description of intervention provides the reader with the activities you propose to achieve your objectives. For example, Professor Karing uses bracelets to induce a behavioral change in parents so that the program would succeed in increasing the childhood immunization.
    * Your conceptual framework is the theory building part. You should describe the mechanism through which the intervention you propose ends in the objectives you set for your program.

- Development indicators

\(^1\)Dr. Anne Karing, an economist at Princeton University studies that problem. You can find her paper [here](#).
The word limit for this assignment is 1000 words. You will

1. Re-write conceptual framework, if you’ve received a feedback that asked you to do so in the previous homework.

2. Submit your conceptual framework - original or re-written.

3. List dependent and independent variables.

Tips:

* You are studying the effect of a program on childhood immunization. First thing you would like measure is the level of immunization among the population treated with your program. You, then, need to think about various other outcomes you would like to test. For example, if you run the program long enough, educational attainment of the children, maybe educational attainment of their siblings.

* You also need to think about variables that can affect both your dependent and independent variables, also known as the control variables. For example, the educational attainment of the parents, the ruggedness of the terrain in the neighborhood, the ability to travel to the immunization center, etc.

* If the name of the variable does not suggest what it is and how it is measured, such as age, gender, dwelling type, etc, you have to explain how to operationalize your variable.

* You are not required to give the direction and causal link between the variables you have described in this part of the homework.

Process Evaluation

The limit for this assignment is 3000 words. You will

1. Define your proposed program
   * Purpose
   * Theory (your conceptual framework paraphrased, concisely)
   * Objectives of your program
   * Implementation Strategy
   * Expected outcomes (your hypotheses)

2. Consider program resources (your budget, field operators needed, time)

3. Design
   * When and how to collect data
* Data sources

* Tools or measures

* Data collection procedures

* Data Analysis/synthesis

• Summative Evaluation

  – This part is your conclusion. You will write a conclusion to your proposed program evaluation. Rewrite the previous parts according to the feedback you receive and submit the final version of your program evaluation proposal.
Course Policies

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity: Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Accommodations

University Policy on the accommodations for disabilities can be found at: Disability Accommodations. If your status change during the course of the quarter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the staff at Student Disability Services. If you prefer to talk with me, please set up a time for meeting.

Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or University of Chicago policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or University of Chicago policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited.

Please feel free to alert the professor about your preferred pronouns. It is also okay to change your preferred pronouns throughout the quarter. The professors preferred pronouns are she/her/hers.

This is a trying time for all of us. If you ever feel like you are getting overwhelmed with everything, please let me know and we will find a way to accommodate your needs.
Schedule and weekly learning goals

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

I . Introduction

Week 01, 01/11 - 01/15: Introduction to the Class & What is Program Evaluation & Why It is Important

• Class 1, 01/12: Asynchronous Lecture I: In this class, we will learn about impact evaluation, its importance. Pre-program activities and needs assessment.
  – Gertler et al (2016) Impact Evaluation in Practice Chapters 1, 2, & 11
  – Weiss Chapters 1, &2

• Class 2, 01/14: In this class, I will answer your questions about the overall class, the first lecture, and whatever else question you may also have. We will also discuss the following pieces

Week 02, 01/18 - 01/22:

• Class 1, 01/19: Asynchronous Lecture II: Program Theory & Process Evaluation
  – Weiss Chapter 3

• Class 2, 01/21: The readings for this week’s discussion are:

Week 03, 01/25 - 01/29: Introduction to Impact Evaluation and Causal Inference

• Class 1, 01/26 Asynchronous Lecture II I
  – Angrist & Pischke (2015) Mastering ’Metrics Introduction & Chapter 1

• Class 2, 01/28: The readings for this week’s discussion are:

II . Quasi-Experimental Methods
**Week 04, 02/01 - 02/05:** Regression

- Class 1, 02/2: Asynchronous Lecture III:

- Class 2, 02/4: The reading for this week’s discussion is

**Week 05, 02/08 - 02/12:** Regression Discontinuity Design

- Class 1, 02/09: Asynchronous Lecture IV
  - Angrist & Pischke (2015) *Mastering 'Metrics* Chapter 4

- Class 2, 02/11
  - Check also the brief summary here about as an example of program evaluation report.

**Week 06, 02/15 - 02/19:** Differences-in-Differences

- Class 1, 02/16: Asynchronous Lecture V

- Class 2, 02/18

**Week 07, 02/22 - 02/26:** Instrumental Variables

- Class 1, 02/23: Asynchronous Lecture VI

- Class 2, 02/25

**III. Further Topics**
Week 08, 03/01 - 03/05: How to Get Data

- Class 1 03/02
- Class 2 03/04 No discussion class

Week 09, 03/08 - 03/12: How To Implement an Impact Evaluation

- Class 1, 03/09: No asynchronous lecture
- Class 2, 03/11 We will discuss the logistics of impact evaluation