

# Syllabus

## *Course Description*

<b>Course Title</b>	Impact Evaluation
<b>Course Code</b>	27507
<b>Course Title Additional</b>	
<b>Scientific-Disciplinary Sector</b>	ECON-03/A
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Degree Course</b>	Master in Data Analytics for Economics and Management
<b>Other Degree Courses (Loaned)</b>	Loaned by Master in Public Policy and Innovative Governance (LM-63) - course 27612
<b>Lecturers</b>	Prof. Dr. Alexander Moradi, Alexander.Moradi@unibz.it <a href="https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/39937">https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/39937</a>
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	
<b>Semester</b>	First semester
<b>Course Year/s</b>	1
<b>CP</b>	6
<b>Teaching Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 24 hours of in-person lectures</li> <li>- 12 hours of video lectures (counted as 24 hours to account for re-watching)</li> </ul>
<b>Lab Hours</b>	6
<b>Individual Study Hours</b>	-
<b>Planned Office Hours</b>	18
<b>Contents Summary</b>	<p>The course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) explores how impact evaluation answers the question “what works?” in public policy, introducing Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) as the gold standard approach;</li> <li>b) covers additional quantitative techniques for causal analysis, training students to design, implement and analyse evaluations with statistical software;</li> <li>c) develops skills for critically appraising evidence and translating empirical insights into clear, actionable recommendations for</li> </ul>

	governments, public administrations, NGOs and international agencies.
<b>Course Topics</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Experimental Ideal: Causal Effects and the Selection Problem</li> <li>2) Randomized Control Trials, ethical and practical challenges, communication and policy consulting</li> <li>3) Natural experiments (discovering, analyzing, evaluating)</li> <li>4) Panel, Difference-in-Differences, Instrumental Variables</li> <li>5) Regression Discontinuity Designs</li> <li>6) Synthetic Control</li> </ol>
<b>Keywords</b>	Policy Evaluation, Causal Inference, Data Analysis
<b>Recommended Prerequisites</b>	
<b>Propaedeutic Courses</b>	
<b>Teaching Format</b>	<p>Lectures, pre-recorded videos, and laboratory sessions.</p> <p>The course adopts a blended, student-centred approach that emphasises problem-based learning and active engagement. A portion of the lecture content is made available online in advance, allowing students to explore key concepts independently and at their own pace before attending class. This preparatory work enables inperson sessions to focus on the application of knowledge through real-world problems, collaborative activities, and guided discussions - fostering critical thinking and deeper learning. The course is fully aligned with the principles of the Italian Universities Digital Hub (EDUNEXT) initiative (<a href="https://edunext.eu">https://edunext.eu</a>), which promotes the integration of digital resources and active learning strategies within university teaching.</p>
<b>Mandatory Attendance</b>	Attendance is recommended, but not mandatory.
<b>Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)</p> <p>ILO 1 Knowledge and understanding:</p> <p>ILO 1.1</p> <p>Students will develop specialised knowledge within the economic and business domains, tailored to their areas of interest and essential for addressing decision-making and managerial challenges in both public and private organisations. This learning outcome emphasises an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving and organisational analysis.</p> <p>ILO 1.2</p>

Within the Data Analytics for Economics track, students will acquire advanced knowledge in economic theory, economic analysis, and econometrics through the study of microeconomics and macroeconomics, decision theory under uncertainty, time-series analysis and forecasting techniques, and methods for causal inference using both administrative and experimental data. Additionally, students will develop competencies in data analysis, applying quantitative and computational approaches to address complex economic problems.

ILO 2 Applying knowledge and understanding:

ILO 2.1

Students will demonstrate the ability to utilise and apply models designed for market analysis and for the formulation of economic policies. This outcome emphasises the integration of theoretical and empirical approaches to support evidence-based policy development and strategic decision-making.

ILO 3 Making judgements:

ILO 3.1 The student acquires the ability to apply acquired knowledge to interpret data in order to make directional and operational decisions in a business context.

ILO 3.2 The student acquires the ability to apply acquired knowledge to support processes related to production, management and risk promotion activities and investment choices through the organisation, analysis and interpretation of complex databases.

ILO4 Communication skills:

ILO 4.1 The student acquires the ability to communicate effectively in oral and written form the specialised content of the individual disciplines, using different registers, depending on the recipients and the communicative and didactic purposes, and to evaluate the formative effects of his/her communication.

ILO 5 Learning skills:

ILO 5.1 The student acquires knowledge of scientific research tools. He/she will also be able to make autonomous use of information technology to carry out bibliographic research and investigations both for his/her own training and for further

	<p>education. Furthermore, through the curricular teaching and the activities related to the preparation of the final thesis, she will be able to acquire the ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to identify thematic connections and to establish relationships between methods of analysis and application contexts;</li> <li>- to frame a new problem in a systematic manner and to implement appropriate analysis solutions;</li> <li>- to formulate general statistical-econometric models from the phenomena studied.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)</b></p>	
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>For Attending and Non-Attending Students:  Project Development: Students will choose a topic relevant to the course and develop either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an evaluation plan for a public policy of their choice, which includes a comprehensive methodology section detailing the proposed data collection and analysis methods using R, or</li> <li>(b) a replication of an existing public policy evaluation, including a critical reflection on the original study's methodology, findings, and implications.</li> </ul> <p>For Attending Students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentation: Students must present their project plans or replication studies to the class. The presentation should succinctly summarize the project's purpose, methodology, expected outcomes (for evaluation plans), or main findings and critique (for replications). This will account for 30% of the final grade and will be evaluated on clarity, engagement with the audience, and the depth of understanding demonstrated (ILO 1.1, ILO 1.2, ILO 2.1, ILO 3.1, ILO 3.2, ILO 4.1).</li> <li>2. Project Report: A 1,500-word report must be submitted, documenting the project in detail. For evaluation plans, this should include background, methodology, expected results, and potential impact. For replications, it should discuss the methodology, analysis in R, findings, and a critical reflection. The report counts for 70% of the final grade and will be assessed for thoroughness,</li> </ol>

	<p>insightfulness, and the ability to convey complex information effectively (ILO 1.1, ILO 1.2, ILO 2.1, ILO 3.1, ILO 3.2, ILO 4.1, ILO 5.1).</p> <p>For Non-attending Students:</p> <p>2. Extended Project Assignment: Non-attending students will submit a longer project report of 2,500 words that covers the same criteria as above but should also include a more detailed literature review to contextualize their project within the current research landscape. This report will count for 100% of the final grade.</p> <p>Initial Contact: Non-attending students must contact the lecturer within the first four weeks of the course to discuss their project topic and receive guidance (ILO 1.1, ILO 1.2, ILO 2.1, ILO 3.1, ILO 3.2, ILO 4.1, ILO 5.1).</p> <p>Project work and classroom presentations are valid for 1 academic year and cannot be carried over beyond that time-frame.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation Criteria</b></p>	<p>Presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarity of Presentation (20%): The student must present content in a manner that is both clear and comprehensible. Complex concepts should be articulated in a way that is accessible to all audience members.</li> <li>2. Quality of Argumentation (20%): Arguments should be presented in a logical and persuasive manner, with adequate support from empirical data or scholarly literature.</li> <li>3. Mastery of Technical Terminology (20%): Usage of technical terminology should be precise and contextually appropriate.</li> <li>4. Interactive Communication Skills (20%): The student's ability to engage with the audience through responsive Q&amp;A, as well as the effective use of visual aids, will be evaluated.</li> <li>5. Structure and Organization (20%): The presentation should have a coherent structure with a clear narrative thread throughout.</li> </ol> <p>Project Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct Application of Methods (25%): The report should demonstrate that Impact Evaluation methods have been accurately applied and thoroughly described.</li> <li>2. Depth of Analysis (25%): The report must reflect a comprehensive analysis and profound understanding of the chosen subject matter.</li> </ol>

	<p>3. Critical Thinking (25%): The report should critically examine the methods employed and the results achieved, showcasing analytical depth.</p> <p>4. Accuracy and Completeness (25%): The report must be meticulous in considering and presenting all relevant aspects of the project with precision.</p>
<b>Required Readings</b>	Cunningham, S. (2025), <a href="#">Causal Inference. The Mixtape</a> .
<b>Supplementary Readings</b>	<p>Dunning, T. (2012). <i>Natural Experiments in Social Sciences</i>, Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Gertler, Paul J.; Martinez, Sebastian; Premand, Patrick; Rawlings, Laura B.; Vermeersch, Christel M. J.. 2016. <a href="#">Impact Evaluation in Practice</a>, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank.</p> <p>Further supplementary reading material will be published regularly on OLE.</p>
<b>Further Information</b>	
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	No poverty, Partnerships for the goals, Good health and well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Clean water and sanitation, Affordable and clean energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible consumption and production, Climate action, Life below water, Life on land, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Zero hunger