Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Impact Evaluation
Course Code	27612
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	SECS-P/02
Language	English
Degree Course	Master in Public Policy and Innovative Governance
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	27507 Methods for Public Policies Evaluation (LM-DATA)
Lecturers	Prof. Dr. Alexander Moradi, Alexander.Moradi@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/39937
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	2
CP	6
Teaching Hours	36
Lab Hours	6
Individual Study Hours	
Planned Office Hours	18
Contents Summary	The course: a) explores how impact evaluation answers the question "what works?" in public policy, introducing Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) as the gold standard approach; b) covers additional quantitative techniques for causal analysis, training students to design, implement and analyse evaluations with statistical software; c) develops skills for critically appraising evidence and translating empirical insights into clear, actionable recommendations for governments, public administrations, NGOs and international agencies.
Course Topics	1) The Experimental Ideal: Causal Effects and the Selection

	Problem 2) Randomized Control Trials, ethical and practical challenges, communication and policy consulting 3) Natural experiments (discovering, analyzing, evaluating) 4) Panel, Difference-in-Differences, Instrumental Variables 5) Regression Discontinuity Designs 6) Synthetic Control
Keywords	Policy Evaluation, Causal Inference, Data Analysis
Recommended Prerequisites	
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	lectures, labs, projects.
Mandatory Attendance	Attendance is recommended, but not mandatory.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	Knowledge and understanding The student will acquire knowledge of organisational models, the business factors involved in the organisation of public enterprises operating in different sectors (international organisations, central government, local authorities, health, public enterprises) and the consequences for the community. The student will also acquire knowledge necessary for developing, managing and evaluating the impact of public projects, and knowledge useful for analysing organisational innovation processes and interpreting current tools and trends relating to personnel management in public companies. The student will acquire the knowledge of economic theory needed to understand and analyse economic and business phenomena in the public sector in order to support decision-making processes. Knowledge of public policy and the tools necessary for the design of sustainable policies will be consolidated. The student will acquire knowledge related to the labour market, education and health will also be deepened, functional to the development of public policy analysis and evaluation skills. Ability to apply knowledge and understanding The student will acquire the ability to: - interpret market trends through the application of appropriate economic models and implement economic analysis tools, also

	using data; - apply economic models to describe the behaviour of economic agents and develop sustainable economic policies in various application domains of interest to businesses and public bodies. Autonomy of judgement The student will acquire the ability to: - apply acquired knowledge to interpret economic and business phenomena in order to make managerial and operational decisions in the context of public administration; - select data and use appropriate information to describe a problem concerning the design, implementation and evaluation of public sector projects and policies, aiming at innovation and improvement of processes, products and results; - relate models and empirical evidence in the study of public policy phenomena. Communication skills The student will acquire the ability to communicate effectively in oral and written form the specialised content of the individual disciplines, using different registers according to recipients and communicative and didactic purposes, and to evaluate the formative effects of his/her communication. Learning skills The student will acquire the ability to: - use information technology autonomously to carry out bibliographical research and investigations and for one's own training and further education; - identify thematic links and establish relationships between different cases and contexts of analysis; - frame a new problem systematically and generate appropriate taxonomies; - develop general models from the phenomena studied.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	

Assessment	For Attending and Non-Attending Students: Project Development: Students will choose a topic relevant to the course and develop either: (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 (b) a replication of an existing public policy evaluation, including a critical reflection on the original study's methodology, findings, and implications. For Attending Students: 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. 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, insightfulness, and the ability to convey complex information effectively. For Non-attending Students: 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. 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. Project work and classroom presentations are valid for 1 academic

	year and cannot be carried over beyond that time-frame.
Evaluation Criteria	Presentation: 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. 2. Quality of Argumentation (20%): Arguments should be presented in a logical and persuasive manner, with adequate support from empirical data or scholarly literature. 3. Mastery of Technical Terminology (20%): Usage of technical terminology should be precise and contextually appropriate. 4. Interactive Communication Skills (20%): The student's ability to engage with the audience through responsive Q&A, as well as the effective use of visual aids, will be evaluated. 5. Structure and Organization (20%): The presentation should have a coherent structure with a clear narrative thread throughout. Project Report: 1. Correct Application of Methods (25%): The report should demonstrate that Impact Evaluation methods have been accurately applied and thoroughly described. 2. Depth of Analysis (25%): The report must reflect a comprehensive analysis and profound understanding of the chosen subject matter. 3. Critical Thinking (25%): The report should critically examine the methods employed and the results achieved, showcasing analytical depth. 4. Accuracy and Completeness (25%): The report must be meticulous in considering and presenting all relevant aspects of the project with precision.
Required Readings	Cunningham, S. (2025), Causal Inference. The Mixtape.
Supplementary Readings	Dunning, T. (2012). *Natural Experiments in Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press. Gertler, Paul J.; Martinez, Sebastian; Premand, Patrick; Rawlings, Laura B.; Vermeersch, Christel M. J.. 2016. Impact Evaluation in Practice, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Inter-American

	Development Bank and World Bank. Further supplementary reading material will be published regularly on OLE.
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	No poverty, Partnerships fot 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