PPOL 5160 Evidence in Public Policy  
Spring 2022

Date and Time: Monday and Wednesday

9:00-10:20 AM (L1)  
https://hkust.zoom.us/j/98339529596?pwd=cXZLUnJtZlFmOCt2dBqV052RzZyZz09
Meeting ID: 983 3952 9596  
Passcode: 229842

10:30-11:50 AM (L2)  
https://hkust.zoom.us/j/96502553557?pwd=V1NCmJh5OVhnZVdzVGxhZ3d6MGcxUT09
meeting ID: 965 0255 3557  
Passcode: 892080

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Course Description:  
This course introduces students the basic concepts and methodologies in social science research and their applications in public policy research. It focuses on the development of students’ professional skills in research design, data collection techniques, data analysis, and presentation of research findings. Main topics for the course include validity of research, measurement, experiments, sampling, survey research, qualitative data collection techniques and impact assessment. Cases and examples are used to facilitate discussions in the class on the actual applications of the concepts and methodologies for policy making.

Course Objectives:  
The objectives of the course are to:  
1) familiarize students with key research methodologies commonly used in public policy research;  
2) enable students to formulate a general research strategy for a given policy problem;  
3) enable students to design and implement field work for policy research; and  
4) enable students to conduct evaluation for a particular policy or program.
Textbook

Grading
In determining course grades, the following weights will be used:

Assignments (90%):

- Review report (5%) Due on 14 March
- Analysis of quantitative data (10%) Due on 28 March
- Analysis of qualitative data (10%) Due on 11 April
- Impact assessment (15%) Due on 27 April
- Class enrichment exercise (group project) 20% Due on 16 May
- Research proposal or research paper (30%) Due on 23 May

Class participation (10%)
Course outline with readings

(Class 1) Introduction to Policy Research
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 7 February)

Readings:

(Class 2) Fundamental Concepts for Policy Research
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 9 February)

Readings:

(Class 3) Process for Conducting Policy Research
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 14 February)

Readings:

(Class 4) Literature review
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 16 February)

Readings:

(Class 5) Quality of Policy Research
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 21 February)
Readings:

(Class 6) Research Designs for Policy Research and Evaluation: Experimental Designs
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 23 February)

Readings:

(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 28 February)

Readings:

(Class 8) Research Designs for Policy Research and Evaluation: Non-experimental Designs
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 2 March)

Readings:

(Class 9) Measurement in Policy Research
(9:00-10:25 AM, Monday, 7 March)

Readings:

(Class 10) Workshop on measurement
(9:00-12:00 AM, Wednesday, 9 March)

(Class 11) Quantitative Data Collection Techniques
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 14 March)

Readings:

Review report due

(Class 12) Workshop on Survey Design
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 16 March)

(Class 13) Techniques for Analyzing Quantitative Data (1)
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 21 March)

Readings:

(Class 14) Techniques for Analyzing Quantitative Data (2)
(9:00-10:30 AM, Wednesday, 23 March)

Readings:
- Zhang, Zhuoni, & Xiaogang Wu. 2017. Occupational segregation and earnings inequality: Rural migrants and local workers in urban China. Social Science Research, 61, 57-74 (about OLS regression, decomposition, and propensity score matching)

(Class 15) Qualitative Data Collection Techniques
(9:00-10:30 AM, Monday, 28 March)
Readings:

Analysis of quantitative data due

(Class 16) Workshop on Qualitative Data Collection
(9:00-10:30 AM, Wednesday, 30 March)

(Class 17) Techniques for Analyzing Qualitative Data
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 4 April)

Readings:

(Class 18) Workshop on Qualitative Data Analysis
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 6 April)

(Class 19) Impact Assessment in Policy Evaluation (1)
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 11 April)

Readings:

Analysis of qualitative data due

(April 13-18 Mid-semester break)

(Class 20) Impact Assessment in Policy Evaluation (2)
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 20 April)

Readings:

*(Class 21) Workshop on Impact Assessment*
(9:00-10:20 AM, Monday, 25 April)

*(Class 22) Communicating Research Findings*
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 27 April)

Readings:

*Impact assessment due*

*(Class 23) Ethical Issues in Policy Research*
(9:00-10:20 AM, Wednesday, 4 May)

Readings

Group Presentations: the week of May 9

*Group project due on May 16*

*Research proposal (research paper) due on May 23*
Appendix I: List of Class Enrichment Exercises

1. Constructing Indices for Policy Research
2. Time-series analysis
3. Panel data analysis
4. Meta-analysis
5. Qualitative Data Analysis: Case Study
6. Qualitative Data Analysis: Boolean Approaches
7. Qualitative Data Analysis: Fuzzy-set Methods
8. The Use of Discrete Choice Models in Policy Research
10. Optimization Models in Policy Research
11. Decision Tree Analysis
12. Contingent valuation
13. Simulation
14. Dynamic modelling
15. Social network analysis
16. Machine learning