

**PPOL5120/SOSC5790 Research Methods in Public Policy  
Spring 2022**

**Course Description**

The purposes of the course are to introduce to students key concepts in research methods, and to help them develop skills in the design of empirical research used in the analysis of policy problems. Specific emphasis will be on the use of quasi-experimental designs in policy research, as well as on their potentials and limitations.

Upon completion of the course, students should 1) understand the logic of policy research on causal relationship; 2) have a working knowledge on key research designs for generalized causal inference, with a good understanding of their potentials and limitations; 3) be able to put together a research proposal on a given research topic in their chosen fields; and 4) gain practical experience in conducting policy research.

**Required Textbooks**

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D. and D. T. Campbell. (2001). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

**Assessment and Grading Criteria**

Details for each assignment will be provided in class:

	Due date	Weight
Assignment #1	(Week 6)	15%
Assignment #2	(Week 10)	15%
Assignment #2	(Week 12)	15%
Research Proposal	(Week 13)	35%
Class Discussion		20%

**Course Outline and Readings**

*Please note that this outline may be subject to change to adapt to students' needs along the way.*

**Week 1 (February 10): Fundamental Concepts in Policy Research**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapters 1

Barbbie, Earl (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*.

- Chapter 2. Inquiry, Theory and Paradigms (pp. 44-61)
- Chapter 4. Research Designs

Kathy Charmaz (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. SAGE Publications. 2006. Chapter 1

## **Week 2 (February 17): Theoretical and Practical Impacts of Policy Research**

Glover, David (2002). What Makes a Good “Policy Paper”? Ten Examples. EEPSEA.

Whetten, D. A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 490-495.

Davis, Murray S. 1971. “That’s Interesting: Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and Sociology of Phenomenology.” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (December): 309-344.

Locke, K., & Golden-Biddle, K. (1997). Constructing opportunities for contribution: Structuring intertextual coherence and “problematizing” in organizational studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40 (5), 1023-1062.

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating Research Questions through Problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36, 247-271.

## **Week 3 and 4 (February 24 and March 3) Dimensions of Rigor in Research (1)**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapters 2.

Morris, M. W. and P.C. Moore (2000). The lessons we (don’t) learn: Counterfactual thinking and organizational accountability after a close call. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45 (4), 737-765.

Garcia-Perez, M. A. (2012). Statistical conclusion validity: Some common threats and simple remedies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, 325.

## **Week 5 (March 10): Dimensions of Rigor in Research (2)**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapters 3.

Tan, J. P., J. Lane and G. Lassibille (1999). Student outcomes in Philippines elementary schools: An evaluation of four experiments, *The World Bank Economic Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 493-508.

Scandura, T., & Williams, E.A. (2000). Research methodology in management: Current practices, trends, and implications for future research. *Academy of Management Journal* 43, 1248-1264.

The Transfer Project (2020). Beyond internal validity: Towards a broader understanding of credibility in development policy research. *World Development*, 127.

## **Week 6 (March 17): Experimental Designs**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapter 8, 9, 10.

King, G. et al (2007). A politically robust experimental design for public policy evaluation, with application to the Mexican Universal Health Insurance program, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26 (3), 479-506.

Paul Resnick, P. R. Zeckhauser, J. Swanson, K. Lockwood (2006), The value of reputation on eBay: A controlled experiment. *Experimental Economics*, June 2006, Volume 9, Issue 2, pp. 79-101

Davide Cantoni & David Y Yang & Noam Yuchtman & Y Jane Zhang, 2019. "Protests as Strategic Games: Experimental Evidence from Hong Kong's Antiauthoritarian Movement," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Oxford University Press, vol. 134(2), pages 1021-1077.

### **Week 7 (March 24): Quasi-Experimental Designs (1)**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapter 5.

Card, D. and A. Krueger. (1994). Minimum wages and employment: A case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, *American Economic Review*, 84(4).

Coleman, B. E. (1999). The impact of group lending in Northeast Thailand, *Journal of Development Economics*, 60, pp.105-141.

He, G., Fan, M. & Zhou, M (2016). The effect of air pollution on mortality in China: Evidence from the 2008 Beijing Olympic games. *Journal Environmental Economics and Management* 79, 18–39.

### **Week 8 (March 31): Quasi-Experimental Designs (2)**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapters 6 and 7

Michael S. Lewis-Beck, M. S., and J. R. Alford. (1980) Can Government Regulate Safety? The Coal Mine Example, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74, No. 3, pp. 745-756.

Keys, B., T. Mukherjee, A. Seru, and V. Vig, Did Securitization Lead to Lax Screening? Evidence from Subprime Loans," December 2008

Park, A., Xinzheng, S., Xuenhi, An., Hsieh C. (2015). Magnet High Schools and Academic Performance in China: A Regression Discontinuity Design. *Journal of Comparative Economics*. 43(4): 825-843.

### **Week 9 (April 7): Non-Experimental Designs**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapter 4

Butcher, K. F., and A. M. Piehl (1998) Cross-city evidence on the relationship between immigration and crime, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17 (3), pp. 457-493

Lori Snyder Benneer, L. S. (2007) Are management-based regulations effective? Evidence from state pollution prevention programs, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26 (2), 327-348.

He, J., Ratigan, K., and Qian, J. (2020). Attitudinal feedback towards sub-national social policy: a comparison of popular support for social health insurance in China. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*

### **Week 10 (April 14) Qualitative Research Designs (1)**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapter 4

Yin, Robert (2018). *Case Study Research and Application: Design and Methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sage Publications.

Rubin, H. J. and I. S. Rubin (2005) second edition, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*

De Graaf, G. and L. W. J. C. Huberts (2008) “Portraying the Nature of Corruption Using an Explorative Case Study Design”, *Public Administration Review*, July/August pp. 640-653.

Wu, Xun, and Nepomuceno A. Malaluan. A Tale of Two Concessionaires: A Natural Experiment of Water Privatization in Metro Manila, *Urban Studies*, 45(1), 2008

### **Week 11 (April 21) Qualitative Research Designs (2)**

Ragin, Charles C (2014). *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. University of California Press.

Malatesta, Deanna, and Julia L. Carboni (2014). The Public–Private Distinction: Insights for Public Administration from the State Action Doctrine, *Public Administration Review*, 75(1).

Ho, Selina, Qian, Neng and Yan, Yifei (2019) The role of ideas in the China-India water dispute. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 12 (2). 263 - 294. ISSN 1750-8916

### **Week 12 (April 28) Big Data and Data Analytics for Policy Research**

Olshannikova, E., Olsson, T., Huhtamäki, J., & Kärkkäinen, H. (2017). Conceptualizing Big Social Data. *Journal of Big Data*, 4(1).

Daniel, B.K. (2018) Reimagining Research Methodology as Data Science. *Big Data and Cognitive Computing*, 2, 4.

George, G., Osinga, E., Lavie, D., & Scott, B. 2016. Big data and data science methods for management research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59: 1493–1507.

C. Fredriksson, F. Mubarak, and M. Tuohimaa (2017). Big Data in the Public Sector: A Systematic Literature Review. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 39–61, 2017.

### **Week 13 (May 5) Generalized Causal Inference**

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14

LaLonde, Robert, Evaluating the Econometric Evaluations of Training Programs with Experimental Data," *American Economic Review*, 1986, 76, 604-620.

Evan J. Ringquist, E. J. (2005) Assessing evidence of environmental inequities: A meta-analysis, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 24 (2), 223-247

David H. Greenberg, D.H., C. Michalopoulos, & P. K. Robin (2006) Do experimental and nonexperimental evaluations give different answers about the effectiveness of government-funded training programs? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 25 (3), 523-552

Whittington, Dale, Mark Radin, Mark Jeuland. Evidence-based policy analysis? The strange case of the randomized controlled trials of community-led total sanitation. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Volume 36, Issue 1, Spring 2020, Pages 191–221

### **May 12: Presentations**

During this session, students will present their research proposals