

PPOL 5160 Evidence in Public Policy

Spring 2023

SYLLABUS

Time and Venue

Group 1: Monday 9:00AM-11:50AM @ Lee Shau Kee Building (LSK) 1010

Group 2: Friday 1:30PM-4:20PM @ Cheng Yu Tung Building (CYT) G009B

Instructor

[Associate Professor HE Jingwei Alex](#), Division of Public Policy

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Office hour: Wednesday 2:30PM-4:30PM @Room4616A

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Teaching Assistants

Group 1: Miss Mengyuan NIU, PhD Candidate; E-mail: mniu@connect.ust.hk

Group 2: Mr Xuan ZENG, PhD Candidate; E-mail: xzengao@connect.ust.hk

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

This core course seeks 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;
- 4) enable students to conduct evaluation for a particular policy or program.

Textbook

O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge.

Assessment

Class participation	10%	Continuous
Quantitative policy analysis	30%	Due on April 5 (Group 1)/April 2 (Group 2)
Qualitative policy analysis	30%	Due on April 26 (Group 1)/April 23 (Group 2)
Impact assessment	20%	Due on May 17 (Group 1)/May 7 (Group 2)
Peer evaluation	10%	Due on May 22

Class #1 Introduction to Policy Research

Group 1: February 6; Group 2: February 3

Readings:

- Etzioni, A. (1971). Policy research. *The American Sociologist*, Volume 6, pp. 8-12.
- Garrett, J.L., and Islam, Y. (1998). Policy research and the policy process: do the twain ever meet? Gatekeeper Series, No. 74, International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Productivity Commission, Australian Government (2010). *Strengthening Evidence-based Policy in the Australian Federation*. Background Paper, Volume 2. Chapter 1: Evidence-based policy.

Class #2 Preparing for Conducting Policy Research

Group 1: February 13; Group 2: February 10

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 1: Beginning a research project.
- Babbie, E. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th edition). Wadsworth: Cengage Learning. Chapter 1: Human inquiry and science; Chapter 2: Paradigms, theory, and social research; Chapter 4: Research design.
- O'Leary, Z. (2010). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. Sage: London. Chapter 6: Reviewing literature.

Class #3 Designing Policy Research (I): Experimental Designs

Group 1: February 20; Group 2: February 17

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 3: Design for explanation (pp.94-104).
- Tan, J.P., Lane, J., and Lassibille, G. (1999). Student outcomes in Philippines elementary schools: an evaluation of four experiments. *World Bank Economic Review*, 13(3), 493-508.
- 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.

Class #4 Designing Policy Research (II): Quasi-Experimental Designs

Group 1: February 27; Group 2: February 24

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 3: Design for explanation (pp.104-115).
- Card, D., and Krueger, A. (1994). Minimum wages and employment: a case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, *American Economic Review*, 84(4), 772-793.

Class #5 Designing Policy Research (III): Non-Experimental Designs

Group 1: March 6; Group 2: March 3

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 2: Design for description.
- Butcher, K.F., and Piehl, A.M. (1998). Cross-city evidence on the relationship between immigration and crime. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17(3), 467-493.
- He, J.A., Ratigan, K., and Qian, J. (2021). Attitudinal feedback towards subnational social policy: a comparison of popular support for social health insurance in urban China. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 23(3), 350-371.

Class #6 Quantitative Methods: Data Collection

Group 1: March 13; Group 2: March 10

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 4: Measuring variables; Chapter 5: Sampling; Chapter 7: Collecting data with questions and questionnaires; Chapter 10: Combining indicators and constructing indices.
- He, J.A. (2017). Introducing voluntary private health insurance in a mixed medical economy: are Hong Kong citizens willing to subscribe? *BMC Health Services Research*, 17:603.

Class #7 Quantitative Methods: Data Analysis (I)

March 17 1:30PM-4:20PM (two groups combined @LT-B)

To be delivered by Dr Zhuoni Zhang, HKUST (Guangzhou) via Zoom

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 13: Examining relationships between and among variables.
- Miller, G., and Yang, K. (eds) (2007). *Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*. London: CRC Press. Chapter 28: Multiple regression analysis (by E.A. Graddy and L. Wang); Chapter 29: Multivariate techniques for dichotomous dependent variables: an application to public policy (by M.C.Shelley).
- Zeng, D., Wu, X., and Zhang, Z. (2022). Residential and industrial enclaves and labor market outcomes among migrant workers in Shenzhen, China. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(2), 750-772 (about OLS, Logit, and MLogit).

Class #8 Quantitative Methods: Data Analysis (II)

March 24 1:30PM-4:20PM (two groups combined @LT-B)

To be delivered by Dr Zhuoni Zhang, HKUST (Guangzhou) via Zoom

Readings:

- Miller, G., and Yang, K. (eds) (2007). *Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*. London: CRC Press. Chapter 32: Introduction to panel data analysis: concepts and practices (by T.H.Eom, S.H.Lee, and H.Xu);
- Zhang, Z., and Wu, X. (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 #9 Qualitative Methods: Data Collection

Group 1: April 3; Group 2: March 31

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 6: Contacting and talking to subjects.
- Darlington, Y., and Scott, D. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Stories from the Field*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin. Chapter 3: In-depth interviewing.
- Mack, N., et al. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International. Chapter 2: Qualitative research methods overview; Chapter 3: Participant observation; Chapter 4: In-depth interviews.

Assignment #1 (quantitative analysis) due.

Class #10 Qualitative Methods: Data Analysis

Group 1: April 17; Group 2: April 14 (April 7 Public holiday)

Readings:

- Yin, R. (2018). *Case Study Research and Application: Design and Methods* (6th edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapter 5: Analysing case study evidence.
- Miller, G., and Yang, K. (eds) (2007). *Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*. London: CRC Press. Chapter 35: Content analysis (by C.C.Bowen and M.M.Bowen).
- He, J.A., Liu, P., Fan, Y., and Liu, H. (2023). Sending professors to the field: does faculty-practitioner exchange narrow the theory-practice gap in China's MPA programs? *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 16(1), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17516234.2022.2031091>.
- He, J.A., and Ma, L. (2020). Corporate policy entrepreneurship and cross-boundary strategies: how a private corporation champions mobile healthcare payment innovation in China? *Public Administration and Development*, 40(1), 76-86.

Class #11 Impact Assessment (I)

Group 1: April 24 (May 1 Public holiday); Group 2: April 21

Readings:

- Ravallion, M. (2001). The mystery of the vanishing benefits: an introduction to impact evaluation. *World Bank Economic Review*, 15(1), 115-140.
- Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, M.W., and Henry, G.T. (2019). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (8th edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapter 5: Measuring and monitoring program outcomes; Chapter 6: Impact evaluation: isolating the effects of social programs in the real world.

Assignment #2 (qualitative analysis) due.

Class #12 Impact Assessment (II)

Group 1: May 8; Group 2: April 28

Readings:

- Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, M.W., and Henry, G.T. (2019). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (8th edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapter 7: Impact evaluation: comparison group designs; Chapter 8: Impact evaluation: designs with strict control on program access; Chapter 9: Detecting, interpreting, and exploring program effects.
- Liu, K., Zhang, Q., and He, J.A. (2021). The impacts of multiple healthcare reforms on catastrophic health spending for poor households in China. *Social Science and Medicine*, 285, 114271.

Class #13 Ethics and Communication in Policy Research

Group 1: May 15; Group 2: May 5

Readings:

- O'Sullivan E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., and Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (6th edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 8: Protection of human research subjects and other ethical issues; Chapter 15: Completing the project and communicating findings.
- Miller, G., and Yang, K. (eds) (2007). *Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*. London: CRC Press. Chapter 42: Presenting Quantitative Research Results (by J.E.Miller).

Assignment #3 (impact assessment) due.