**IDAS/DPA at NCCU**

**2014**

**Program Evaluation**

Professor: Dr. Hsiang-Kai (Dennis) Dong

Semester: 103 – 2nd

Time: Monday 567 (2pm-5pm)

Email: hkdong@nccu.edu.tw

Office hours: by appointment

**Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to provide in-depth views of some key areas of program evaluation with a particular emphasis on statistics analyses, cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and quasi-experimentation designs. It is the objective of the instructor to enable the student to be familiar with these topics and to utilize the techniques associated with them to the greatest extent possible. Knowledge of these techniques will help the students to directly measure the effectiveness of government programs and/or policies. Specifically, this course has two broad aims: 1) to give students training in program evaluation concepts and methods, and 2) to provide students with the tools needed to apply quantitative techniques to the assessment of policy decisions *ex post*.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to enhance students’ scientific reasoning capacities and to familiarize students with important analytical concepts and skills. To that end, the structure of the course is combined with lecture, group discussions, and simulated academic forums. This class is practice oriented, so students will be required to become familiar with primary data processing and analyzing tools such as Excel, SPSS, and/or STATA as well as important online survey tools. Students are also expected to become familiar with important public policy research topics based on students’ research interests.

By the end of this course students should:

1. Understand key methodological and conceptual debates in the field of program evaluation.
2. Understand the core principles of program evaluation and the implications of those frameworks in order to assess the impacts of public policies.
3. Be able to critically read and evaluate policy analysis and program evaluation articles published in the academic journals.
4. Understand the principles of cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis and be able to apply those principles to evaluate specific program implementations.

**Organization of the Course:**

Class meetings will be primarily lecture, discussion, and practice. Class attendance is required. Prior experience suggests that active participation usually leads to better performance and, of course, better grades.

**Textbooks & References**

**Required:**

Posavac, E. J. (2014). *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies, 8th edition* (Pearson new international edition). England: Pearson Education.

**Additional readings (provided by the professor)**

Bertrand, M., Duflo, E., & Mullainathan, S. (2002). How much should we trust differences-in-differences estimates? (No. w8841). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Farrar, S., Yi, D., Sutton, M., Chalkley, M., Sussex, J., & Scott, A. (2009). Has payment by results affected the way that English hospitals provide care? Difference-in-differences analysis. BMj, 339.

Li, H., Yi, J., & Zhang, J. (2011). Estimating the effect of the one-child policy on the sex ratio imbalance in China: identification based on the difference-in-differences. *Demography*, 48(4), 1535-1557.

Ravallion, M. (2001). The mystery of the vanishing benefits: An introduction to impact evaluation. *World Bank Economic Review*, 15(1), 115-140.

Royse, D., Thyer, B., & Padgett, D. (2009). *Program evaluation: An introduction*. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Wholey, J. S., Hatry, H. P., & Newcomer, K. E. (2010). *Handbook of practical program evaluation (3rd Ed)*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Other readings and/or case studies will be delivered when necessary.

**Course Requirements & Grade Construction**

1. Participation 15 points

2. Assignment 1 10 points

3. Assignment 2 10 points

4. Leading Discussion(s) 20 points

5. Seminar Paper

(1) Proposal 10 points

(2) Proposal Presentation 5 points

(3) Final Seminar Paper 15 points

(4) Final Seminar Paper Presentation 5 points

(5) Discussant 10 points

**1. Participation:**

Program evaluation and relative methods are unforgiving topics when it comes to falling behind. Because of this, you should come to class having read the materials from the textbook and any other weekly readings. Some of the classes involve opportunities for you to participate in discussions. You should be prepared to incorporate readings into discussions. Prior experience suggests that active participation usually leads to better performance.

**2. & 3. Assignments:**

There are a total of 2 assignments. All of them are designed to build upon practical features of the course work. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class as designated. You are expected to submit the assignments on time. Late assignments will receive a zero (0).

**4. Leading Discussion(s):**

Every member of the class has shared responsibilities to contribute to the interchange of knowledge during this semester. Accordingly, each student will play the role of the **discussion leader**. The responsibilities of the discussion leader include summarizing/reviewing the course coverage, offering thoughts, asking questions to stimulate discussion, and helping to integrate ideas of the class. To ensure the development of a quality discussion, topics will be identified well in advance for each student.

**5. Seminar Paper:**

You will have to develop your own project and outline your research designs based on the themes you choose. Your grades of the seminar paper is constructed by the following portions:

1. ***Proposal***

You will need to address the following questions on your proposal: (1) What is your topic? What kind of program/policy are you evaluating? (2) Why it is important? (3) What does previous research say about this topic? (4) What makes your study different from others? (5) How do you plan to conduct your research (your complete research design)? (6) What potential contribution does your research provide?

1. ***Final Seminar Paper***

You will need to provide a publishable paper, including a clear topic, well-addressed research question(s), complete literature review, data collection, data analyses & findings, conclusions, and policy implications.

For standard paper style, you will have to follow the guidelines of *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* as if you were submitting a manuscript to the journal for peer review. The only exception is that your seminar paper **CANNOT** be longer than 30 pages, including all tables, figures and references.

1. ***Presentation***

Everyone is expected to prepare a 20-minute presentation followed by a 15-minute Q&A session for both your proposal and final seminar paper

1. ***Discussant***

You will need to play the role of a “discussant” for one of your colleague’s seminar paper. The discussant is expected to prepare a 5-minute comment on the paper assigned. You should provide constructive suggestions for your colleague to improve the quality of his/her paper.

* **Simulated Forums:**

The forums are designed to duplicate panels in real academic conferences. The goal is to provide you a chance to familiarize yourself with academic research presentations and get feedback from your colleagues. Everyone is expected to prepare a 20-minute presentation followed by a 15-minute Q&A session. You will also need to “discuss” one of your colleague’s paper. The discussant is expected to prepare a 5-minute comment on the paper assigned. You should provide constructive suggestions for your colleague to improve the quality of his/her paper.

**Absence Policy:**

Although your participation is expected, as a mature and responsible human being, you should not come to class if you are sick and contagious. However, you should always inform me (by email) before the class if you will be absent. If you have a health or family emergency, you should inform me (by email) within 24 hours of your absence.

**Disabilities:**

If you have any disabilities that may impede your performance in this class, please speak with me and we will plan appropriate adjustments.

**Ethics and Plagiarism**

I insist on a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. It is expected that you are familiar with NCCU’s policies for academic integrity. All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

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| **Weekly Reading, Assignments, and Schedule** |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** |
| 03/02/15 | **Introduction: An Overview of Program Evaluation** | Posavac: Ch. 1Royse: Ch. 1 |
| 03/09/15 | **Research Designs, Causality, and Conceptual Mapping** | Posavac: Ch. 2Wholey: Ch. 1 & 5 |
| 03/16/15 | **The Assessment of Need** | Posavac: Ch. 6Royse: Ch. 3 |
| 03/23/15 | **Measurements in Program Evaluation** | Posavac: Ch. 4Royse: Ch. 11 |
| 03/30/15 | **Sampling & Basic Statistics*** **Assignment 1: Due 04/20**
 | Royse: Ch. 8 |
| 04/06/15 | **No Class – Tomb Sweeping Festival** |  |
| 04/13/15 | **Quantitative Research Methods & Data Analysis: Part 1** | Royse: Ch. 14Wholey: Ch 20 |
| 04/20/15 | **Surveys & Writing Evaluation Proposals*** **Assignment 1 due:** please submit a copy of your assignment at the beginning of the class
 | Royse: Ch. 15Wholey: Ch. 12 |
| 04/27/15 | **Cost-Benefit Analysis & Cost-Effective Analysis: Part 1** | Posavac: Ch. 12Royse: Ch. 10Wholey: Ch. 21 |
| 05/04/15 | **Simulated Forums – Proposal Presentation*** **Proposal Due 05/02 (Saturday) by 5pm**

Email to: **me** at hkdong@nccu.edu.tw and **your discussant** (Word or PDF format only) |  |
| 05/11/15 | **Quantitative Research Methods & Data Analysis: Part 2** | Royse: Ch. 14Wholey: Ch 20 |
| 05/18/15 | **Cost-Benefit Analysis & Cost-Effective Analysis: Part 2*** **Assignment 2: Due 06/08**
 | Posavac: Ch. 12Royse: Ch. 10Wholey: Ch. 21 |
| 05/25/15 | **Experimental Research Designs & Qualitative Research Methods** | Posavac: Ch 8, 10, 11Royse: Ch 4Wholey: Ch. 19 |
| 06/01/15 | **Difference-in-Differences Estimation** | Li (2011)Farrar (2009)Bertrand (2002) |
| 06/08/15 | **Ethical and Pragmatic Issues in Program Evaluations*** **Assignment 2 due:** please submit a copy of your assignment at the beginning of the class
 | Posavac: Ch. 5Royse: Ch. 2 & 13 |
| 06/15/15 | **Impact Evaluation** | Posavac: Ch. 10Ravallion (2001) |
| 06/22/15 | **Simulated Forums – Final Paper Presentation*** **Seminar Paper Due 06/20 (Saturday) by 5pm**

Email to: **me** at hkdong@nccu.edu.tw and **your discussant** (Word or PDF format only) |  |
| 06/29/15 | * **Revised Seminar Paper Due (by 5pm)**

Email to hkdong@nccu.edu.tw (Word or PDF format only) |  |

*NOTE: The above schedule is a general plan for the course; changes may be required as the semester progresses to accommodate speed of learning or student interest. Changes will be announced well in advance by the professor.*