UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
Keough School of Global Affairs
Spring 2019

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:00-10:30 a.m., or by appointment

MGA 60204: Policy Evaluation

This course is designed to train you to become an informed consumer and producer of empirical research. Using both theory and practice, you will learn many different methods to identify the effects of policies and compare their strengths and weaknesses. These methods include randomized controlled trials, regression analysis, panel data methods, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity, and time series analysis. You will also be given the opportunity to work extensively with data, using the statistical software package Stata. Finally, you will gain experience with presenting the results of policy research to multiple audiences.

Quantitative Methods is a prerequisite for this course. You will need to be able to do basic derivatives, and be familiar with the concepts of hypothesis testing, and the properties of the expectation, variance, and covariance operators. While mathematical derivations will be presented, emphasis will be placed on gaining an intuitive understanding of the principles of econometric analysis.

Texts: 1) Wooldridge, Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach. 6th ed, 2013. Prior editions should work with only very minor adjustments.

2) Angrist and Pischke, Mastering 'Metrics. 2015.

I will also assign academic articles as we go.

Website: https://www3.nd.edu/~kbuckles/mga60204_spring19.html. The website has handouts, data sets, class notes, assignment information, and more. It should be very useful to you.

Laptop Policy: Please do not use laptops in class. I will usually write on the board for lectures, with lots of symbols and equations, so a laptop is not useful for note-taking. If you would like to request an exception to this policy, please contact me during the first week of class.

Additional Resources:

Sisi Meng (smeng@nd.edu) will be the assistant instructor for this course. She will be doing some grading, some lecturing, and she is available for help with course content and assignments. Her office hours will be Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:00, in 3114 Jenkins Nanovic Halls.

James Ng (james.ng@nd.edu) is the Economics and Business Librarian at Hesburgh Library. He has extensive experience working with data in Stata. He will hold office hours by appointment in the Center for Digital Scholarship staff cubicles, in the northeast corner of the ground floor or the Hesburgh Library.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Problem sets and assignments	40%
Project	25%
Midterm	25%
Participation	10%
Total	100%

Problem Sets and Assignments

I will assign problem sets, which will be designed to assess your understanding of the material and prepare you for the midterm exam. The problem sets will require the use of the statistical software package *Stata*, which is available on computers in the classrooms and clusters. There will also be assignments in which you will propose research or summarize it for different audiences, in writing or in other formats. I have currently scheduled four problem sets and one other assignment, but this is subject to change as I assess the pace and workload of the class.

Course Project

There will be a written project due **in class on Tuesday, April 30**. For the project, you will write a paper describing the state of current academic research on the effectiveness of a particular public policy. You will summarize several papers and their results, while critically evaluating their empirical methods. Drawing on this literature, your project should also include a cost/benefit analysis of the policy. In some cases this project will be a complement to your proposal for summer research. Further details on the nature of the project will be provided after Spring Break.

Midterm

There will be one in-class exam on **March 26**. Attendance for the exam is mandatory—*do not schedule travel or other conflicts during the exam time!* Only university-approved absences will be allowed (death in the immediate family, sickness requiring medical care), and I will require verification. Unexcused absences will earn you a zero on the exam.

Attendance and Participation

Your participation grade will be based on your contributions to group work and to in-class activities and discussions. Attendance is expected and necessary for satisfactory participation.

Honor Code Information and Group Work

In signing the university's honor code, you agreed not to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect you to adhere to this strictly, and any violations will be reported to the Associate Provost. You may be allowed to work in groups on some assignments. In those cases, each group will turn in one copy and everyone will receive the same grade. By putting your name on the group work, you are acknowledging not only that you did your fair share, but also that you understand the work that was done and how the group arrived at any answers. Thus, it is *not acceptable* to simply split the work among the group and then staple the answers together at the end.

Schedule

(*subject to change*)

Dates	Topic	Assignments
1/15	Introduction to causality, RCT as gold standard A&P Chpt. 1	
1/17, 1/22, 1/24, 1/29	Regression analysis and inference A&P Chpt. 2, Wooldridge Chpt. 2-4, 7	
1/31, 2/5, 2/7	Issues with regression analysis Wooldridge Chpt. 6, 9	Problem set 1 due 2/1
2/12	Prediction with regression analysis, poverty mapping Wooldridge Chpt. 6	
2/14, 2/19	Instrumental variables A&P Chpt. 3, Wooldridge Chpt. 15	Problem set 2 due 2/19
2/21, 2/26	Regression discontinuity A&P Chpt. 4	
2/28, 3/5, 3/7	Panel data A&P Chpt. 5, Wooldridge Chpt. 13, 14	
Spring Break		
3/19, 3/21	Time series, randomized controlled trials Wooldridge Chpt. 10-12, A&P Chpt. 1	Problem set 3 due 3/21
3/26	**Midterm, in Class**	
3/28, 4/2, 4/4, 4/9, 4/11	Cost/benefit analysis ArcGIS training in computer lab 4/4 and 4/9	Problem set 4 due 4/11
4/16, 4/18, 4/23	Presenting research to a policy audience and the public	Assignment due 4/23
4/25	In-class peer review of final projects	
4/30	Presentation of final projects	Projects due