NOTE: DRAFT SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

ECON 490
Development Policy and Program Evaluation

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Course Overview and Learning Objectives

This course covers the fundamentals of policy analysis and program evaluation for development economics, by applying economic tools to real-world cases. This is a hands-on class that is intended to prepare you for conducting policy analysis and program evaluation for government, NGOs, and international organizations. As such, we will be conducting research for an actual client: in previous years, clients have included the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the UBC SEEDS program. Part of these objectives include learning to communicate effectively and operate in a professional context.

Learning Objectives:

• Introduce standard tools of policy analysis, program evaluation, and risk assessment
• Design and conduct research projects for real clients
• Engage with clients and stakeholders, and present findings in a professional context using various forms of communication

Prerequisites: In this class, you must be a declared BA major in the Vancouver School of Economics with 4th year standing (or equivalent in a similar program). You also need ECON 325, 326 and ECON 301, 302 or 304, 305. I assume complete familiarity with basic econometrics, including multiple regression and statistics. I also assume you have mastered the basic economic models associated with intermediate microeconomics and macroeconomics.

TENTATIVE Course Format and Grading

Class sessions will be conducted as workshops. The typical class will have both a lecture component as well as an in-class activity. In-class activities include group discussions, worksheets, and presentations. Readings should be completed prior to class and no late work is accepted without prior approval. Be prepared to participate! In-class participation in lectures, class assignments and group activities is essential to success in this course.

Grading:

• Assignments (30%): In-class and take-home assignments
• Final Project (70%): Research report

The main component of this course is an experiential learning activity structured around team-based projects that aim to answer genuine questions that arise at development organizations in or outside UBC. Our UBC-based clients submit requests for students’ consulting help on a wide range of projects, through the SEEDS Sustainability Program. Our external clients have projects that differ every year. The course will create a structure and an opportunity for you to answer the questions posed by these organizations, and have a direct impact on real policy-making. You will acquire and analyze relevant data, apply economic principles, generate a report, and make a presentation to the organization requesting help. It provides an opportunity to get hands-on economic consulting experience, which will let you see how our economic tools are used in practice.

The goal is to produce a professional quality research report for the client. Students will be required to work independently, just like a real policy consulting project. In addition to evaluating the quality of the writing and the analysis, you will be graded on your ability to work well with your classmates in classroom activities and engage with your clients in a professional manner.
Required Software: We will use STATA for our applied work in class; you are required to have access to STATA for this course. STATA is available in the Arts Computer Labs, or you may purchase a license at a discounted student price (1 year license is $89 and a 1 semester license is $45). If you can independently use R, you may use it instead, as long as you understand that the class activities and labs will be conducted in STATA.

Required texts:
- *Analyzing Policy* by Michael Munger (2002) *Note that there is another book with the same title, so make sure you choose the one by Michael Munger.*

Supplementary texts (depending on what kind of project you are doing):
- *Population-Based Survey Experiments* by Diana Mutz (2011)

**Course Policies**

**Academic Accommodations.** All individual academic accommodations must be requested through Arts Advising (http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising). Accommodations are already included in the course policies (see, e.g. two automatic excused assignments, 24-hour grace period for submitting the policy report, etc.) and no further accommodations for missed classes, late work, or other concerns will be granted by either the TA or instructor. That being said, your success in this class is important to me. We all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Access and Diversity.** The university accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Access and Diversity Unit. Students must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions. For more information, please refer to the following guide: http://students.ubc.ca/about/access.

**Religious Accommodation.** The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. However, you must notify the TA in the first week of class if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. For more information, please refer to the UBC Policy on Religious Holidays.

**Children in the Classroom.** UBC does not have an official policy, but in this class we will work together to create a welcoming environment for all students, including those with children. Nursing babies and those not old enough to attend daycare are welcome in class as necessary. For older babies and children, sometimes unforeseen disruptions in childcare will place parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home. In these cases, you are welcome to bring your child to class to cover unexpected gaps in childcare, but please remember that this policy is only intended for childcare emergencies and is not meant to be a long term solution.

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this course are expected to comply with UBC’s policy on academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources
of information or ideas. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including a guide to the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar.

**TENTATIVE Course Schedule and Readings**

**Week 1: What is development policy**
- Introducing the clients
- Benchmarks, Alternatives, and Trade-offs
- Readings:
  - Bardach, part I
  - *Analyzing Policy*, chapters 1-3

**Week 2: Assessing Policy Interventions**
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Pitfalls and Limitations
- Readings:
  - *Analyzing Policy*, chapter 11

**Week 3: Risk Assessment**
- Risk analysis and categories of risk
- Application to development policy
- Readings:
  - *Problem Driven Political Economy Analysis*, chapter 1 and chapter 8

**Week 4: Introduction to Evaluation**
- How can we tell if a policy intervention is working?
- Measurement issues and unintended consequences
- Readings:

**Week 5: Data Collection**
- Case studies and field research
- Surveys and survey methodology
- Readings:
  - Optional: Bardach, part II

**Week 6: Field Experiments**
- Field experiment design, pre-analysis plan, and randomization
- Experimental threats and non-compliance
- Readings:

**Week 7: STATA Lab**
- Working with data
Basic analysis
Readings:
  – STATA introductory guide

**Week 8: Writing up your results**
  Communicating findings for a policy audience
  Knowledge dissemination
  No readings this week
  – Work on your group projects

**Week 9: STATA Lab**
  Data visualization
  Readings:
  – STATA introductory guide

**Week 10: Client Check-In**
  • Client presentations

**Weeks 11-12: Research Reports**
  • Work on your projects