

Seminar “Topics in Policy Evaluation”

Summer semester 2024

Focus: Evaluation of Educational Policies

Outline

In the summer semester 2024, the seminar will focus on the evaluation of educational policies. The course provides an introduction to educational policy issues with an emphasis on their rigorous quantitative evaluation. The design of education policies is a much debated topic on the political agenda. Therefore, assessing their causal effects is crucial for evidence-based policymaking.

The goal of this course is to discuss the existing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of selected educational interventions. On the other hand, students will be introduced to common analytical tools for policy evaluation in general (e.g., randomized control trials, difference-in-differences approach, instrumental variables). Along the way, we will discuss the challenges of proper study design so that by the end of the course, students will be able to judge the quality of quantitative research.

The course consists of five sections:

- I. Conceptual framework (signaling vs. human capital theory, technology of skill production)
- II. Effects of early-childhood interventions
- III. Monetary and non-monetary effects of school policies
- IV. Returns to college and adult education
- V. Returns to school resources and classroom environment

Within each section, we will study seminal economic papers, with an emphasis on the methods used to best evaluate policies.

Instructor

Prof. Dr. Kamila Cygan-Rehm
Office hours: Tue, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, HÜL 308

Modules

MA-WW-ERG-3803, D-WW-ERG-3803: Topics in Policy Evaluation

Requirements

Basic understanding of microeconomics and statistics. Knowledge of causal inference methods is not required, but will be helpful. For a refresher, see the textbook "Causal Inference. The Mixtape" by Scott Cunningham (available online at <https://mixtape.scunning.com/>).

Schedule

Introductory session: April 25, 2024, 6:30-8:00 pm, room HÜL S390.

Seminar presentations: in the first half of July (time and room to be announced via email).

Deadline for the submission of seminar papers: July 26, 2024 (hard copy and pdf via email).

Application

Please apply by email to wiji-econometrics@tu-dresden.de (secretary) between April 1 - 24, 2024. The application must include your name, matriculation number, degree program, and up to three topic choices (in order of preference). Participation is limited to 15 students.

The list of available topics is provided in a separate document in the respective course in OPAL. Students should familiarize themselves with the papers before applying. The final assignment of topics will take place during the introductory session. The instructor will send an email to registered students confirming the final topic assignment shortly after the first session.

You can still attend the seminar if you missed the introductory session. Please email the instructor to see if there are still topics available. All participants must register for the seminar in HISQIS within the applicable registration period.

Exam

(a) Presentation and Discussion (pass/failed):

The presentation should provide a summary and a brief critical discussion of the seminar paper. It should not exceed 20 minutes, followed by a general discussion of about 10 minutes. All participants are expected to contribute constructively to the discussion of each paper presented.

(b) Seminar paper (will be graded)

The seminar paper must provide an informative summary and a critical review of the empirical literature on the assigned topic. Specifically:

- Present the content of the assigned paper with an emphasis on the evaluation method used
- Provide a broader literature review of approximately 4-7 (earlier and later) empirical papers on the topic
- Position the assigned paper within this broader literature, compare the studies, and critically discuss the quality of the available research on the topic
- Critically discuss the contribution of the assigned paper to the literature
- Draw general conclusions and policy recommendations (What do we generally learn about the effectiveness of the specific policy from the available empirical evidence?)

The maximum length of the seminar paper (text w/o references, tables, figures, etc.) should be 15 pages, for group work 20 pages in Times New Roman, 12pt font, and 1.5-line spacing. Please check out the Faculty's internal "Guidelines for Scientific Writing" available [here](#).

The seminar paper must be submitted as a hard copy and as a pdf file by e-mail to the secretary of the chair (Cornelia Raeuber, HÜL 317, office hours: Wed, 09:00 - 11:00 a.m. and by arrangement, email: wiji-econometrics@tu-dresden.de).

The language of both examinations is English.