

Syllabus EC428/528 Spring 2020

James Woods

Course Description

Methodology for program evaluation from needs assessment through outcome and effectiveness evaluation. Heavy reliance on case studies. Students may participate in ongoing evaluations.

We will be working with real programs and real data on some programs run by PSU. Two key requirements for this course will be to complete PSU's Human Subjects Research and Responsible Conduct of Research training, which is required to analyse some of our data, and, possibly, to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement which clarifies Federal Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.

We will also be meeting with university administrators, program implementers, and other evaluators outside of the regular class schedule.

COVID-19

This will be a very unusual term. While this is listed as an in-person class, we will not be meeting in a classroom. We will be meeting online via zoom, which is built in to D2L, at the usual course time. Should Zoom fail us, we will switch to Google Meet. If that fails, I will sort something out until we are left standing in a circle, in a field, separated from each other by at least three meters, where we will discuss microeconomics and barter for toilet paper.

I will keep a link to our Zoom meeting space updated in D2L so there is as little confusion as possible and also post any new links in slack.

All homework will be turned in through the assignment function in D2L and the quizzes we have each class session be conducted as quizzes in D2L.

As of today, I am unclear how DRC accommodations will be managed, or if we will be meeting in-person at all this term.

Prerequisites

The undergraduate section has microeconomic theory, EC 311, or the calculus based version, EC 415, listed as prerequisites. The graduate section requires only graduate standing.

As with most economics courses, the more background you bring to the class, the more get from the class. For this class, it means bringing a background in experimental design, microeconomic theory, econometrics. Any technical skills that students are missing will be supplemented with in-class tutorials. Sometimes this will mean learning about constrained optimization or a tutorial on running regressions in R.

Key Dates

Contact Information

Communication will be handled through slack <https://PSUEC428Spring2020.slack.com>. You should have received an invitation, if not, just go to that URL and use your @pdx.edu email to sign up. There are

reasonable help documents to get you started. <https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/articles/218080037-Getting-started-for-new-users>

Slack will be used for IM, email and forum style communication. It even handles phone calls. If you have a question about course material or the course itself, ask in one of the channels. If you have a personal message that is not intended for others, send a direct message. The group has global do not disturb hours of 10pm - 8am. If you would like something different, alter your personal settings.

Please note that I am not online all the time, and when I am online I will prioritize well-phrased questions with sufficient detail. I tend to ignore general complaints, questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus or using the search bar.

Office Hours:

- There are no in-person office hours this term. We will use the same Zoom meeting function described above. There will be a link on the landing page to get you there and I will update that link if it changes. It is currently <https://pdx.zoom.us/j/282315064>.
- Drop in office hours are Tuesday 2:30-3:30pm and Thursday 8am-9am through the last week of class. I will keep a Zoom meeting up during this time. Always keep in mind you can ask questions on slack.

I will generally be up and online during regular working hours. Don't expect instant responses. I have another class, research and administration responsibilities too.

Textbook and Other Resources

The main text for the course is Rossi, Peter H., Mark W. Lipsey, and Gary T. Henry. Evaluation: A systematic approach (7th ed). Sage publications, 2004. There is a newer 8th edition of the book but this one is significantly cheaper. This is a classic in the field.

This text will be supplemented with journal articles available electronically through the library. There are also many useful online resources at the American Evaluation Association website (www.eval.org).

Assessments, Grades and Other Rules

This is a project based course that does not have exams or classic homework questions.

Here is a brief list of the assignments:

- CITI Conduct of Responsible Research Training
- Summary of Evaluation Report
- Program Theory Sample
- Interview guide for need assessment and logic model construction
- Interview Report after interviewing PSU administrators.
- Logic Models for our programs
- Wrangling and Presenting Data
- Survey Question Critique
- Design of Survey Questions and Fielding
- Summary of Survey Data
- Endogeneity and Missing Data
- Draft Outcome assessment
- Draft Report
- Final Report

Most of these assignments are connected with the evaluation of a program at PSU.

Attendance

I expect you to be on camera and on time. There will be a brief quiz on the reading at the start of each class.

Special Rules for Group Work

There are some circumstances where you will have to work with your classmates to achieve objectives – group work. Students have come to hate group work because other students are not always reliable.

Periodically, I will send each group a small survey with two questions:

- Have all group members been contributing?
- Who should be removed from the group for not contributing?

If a student is found to be not contributing to group work, they will be removed and must complete all group work on their own as a group of one. In other words, contribute to the group, or do all the work yourself.

Professionalism In Meetings

Topics and Readings

- Ethics
 - Complete the CITI Conduct of Responsible Research Training (https://www.citiprogram.org/index.cfm?pageID=154&icat=0&clear=1&_ga=2.114101767.1844545578.1551636345-123937980.1551636345). This is required to complete most course projects.
 - Ch 12 Rossi
- Overview
 - Ch 1 Rossi
- Program Logic Models
 - Ch 5 Rossi
 - Meadows, Donella. “Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System.” The Academy for Systems Change, 1999, <http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/>.
- Process Evaluation
 - Rossi Ch 6
 - SAMPLE PROCESS EVALUATION
- Outcome Evaluation
 - Rossi Ch 7
 - SAMPLE OUTCOME EVALUATION
- Methods
 - Ch 8-10 Rossi The extent depends on statistical expertise.
 - Ludwig, Jens, Jeffrey R. Kling, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2011. “Mechanism Experiments and Policy Evaluations.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25 (3): 17-38. DOI: 10.1257/jep.25.3.17 <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.25.3.17>
 - List, John, A.. 2011. “Why Economists Should Conduct Field Experiments and 14 Tips for Pulling One Off.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25 (3): 3-16. DOI: 10.1257/jep.25.3.3 <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.25.3.3>
 - Athey, Susan, and Guido W. Imbens. 2017. “The State of Applied Econometrics: Causality and Policy Evaluation.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31 (2): 3-32. DOI: 10.1257/jep.31.2.3 <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.31.2.3>
- Surveys
 - Dillman, D., Smyth, Jolene D., & Christian, Leah Melani. (2014). Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys : The tailored design method (Fourth ed.). Hoboken: Wiley. (<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/lib/psu/reader.action?docID=1762797>) Ch 3-5.
- Report Writing

- McCloskey, D. (2000). *Economical writing* (Second ed.). Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press. is an excellent read on how to write. There are 31 short, snarky chapters in 91 pages. Read a chapter a day and try to apply what you read and you will be less embarrassed at work.

University Statements

- Please be aware that federal, state, and PSU policies require faculty members to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. Similarly, PSU faculty are required to file a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom they come into contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom they come into contact has abused a child. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources (or visit <https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help>):
 - Women's Resource Center (503-725-5672)
 - Queer Resource Center (503-725-9742)
 - Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave, (503) 725-2800
 - Student Legal Services: 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, (503) 725-4556

For more information about the applicable regulations please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

- In this classroom, we support and value diversity. To do so requires that we:
 - Respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
 - Promote a culture of respect toward all individuals
 - Respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others
 - Reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind
 - Practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
 - Promote the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds, which is the lifeblood of a university

For additional information, please see the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity at <http://www.pdx.edu/diversity/affirmative-action>.

- Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, you must arrange to meet with the course instructor prior to or within the first week of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Disability Resource Center (Faculty letter).
- PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- Academic honesty is expected and required of students enrolled in this course. Suspected academic dishonesty in this course will be handled according to the procedures set out in the Student Code of Conduct.
- I am sympathetic to family emergencies but you must inform me as soon as possible. If the notice is verbal, please email me with your understanding of our agreement. All agreements have to be in writing.

Link to this syllabus <https://github.com/woodsjam/Course-Program-Evaluation>. There is a branch for each term. Be sure to choose the correct branch to see the current syllabus.