

Syllabus EC428/528 Fall 2018

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 through a partnership with the City of Portland. 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 survey data in a university setting, and to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement which gives us access to some data that we will use in this class.

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

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 breaking out laptops for a tutorial on running regressions in R.

Key Dates

Contact Information

Communication will be handled through slack <https://PSUEC428Fall19.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:

- My office is in CH 241-O.
- Drop in office hours are Tuesday 2:30-3:30pm through the last week of class. There is no need to make an appointment for these hours – just come.
- If you can't attend regular office hours, please check my calendar <https://woodsj.youcanbook.me/>. I will make a limited number of 15 minute slots available each week.

Textbook and Other Resources

The main text for the course is McDavid, James C., et al. Program evaluation and performance measurement. Sage, 2012. ISBN-10: 1412978319. You can find the official online version of the text at (<https://www.vitalsource.com/referral?term=9781452289595>)

This text will be supplemented with journal articles available electronically through the library.

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
- Interview Report

- Survey Question Critique
- Wrangling and Presenting Data
- Draft Report
- Final Report
- Survey Data Analysis

Most of these assignments are connected. Some can not be skipped. If you miss the deadline, you are still responsible for doing the work at some level of competence but will receive no credit for that work.

Please note that this can easily cascade. If you miss the deadline for the interview guide, you can't interview the program implementers. If you don't interview the program implementers you can't produce an interview report. It is very possible to leave yourself on the hook for a lot of make-up work without the possibility of a passing grade. **Please strive to turn in all assignments in good order, with good effort, on time.**

Attendance

This is one of those courses where grading is loose and I refuse to incent every action students could take to further their understanding of the material. I simply expect you to have done the reading. I also expect you to be in class.

The rule is simple. Show up. Don't miss more than four class sessions. If you do, I won't record any grades after that point.

This is enough leeway to allow you to have a short illness or transportation difficulty, but not enough to allow you to sabotage your education.

- If you miss class five times, please drop the class and avoid having the bad grade on your transcript.
- If you have an extended illness or other difficulty that makes it very difficult to come to class, file a deadline appeal to have the course removed from your record and get your tuition returned. Note that deadline appeals require documentation.
- Do not attempt to use the allowed absences strategically, you may have a serious need later in the term.
- I will not adjudicate the worthiness of absences.

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.

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 McDavid
- 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.
- Introduction to key concepts
 - Ch 1 McDavid
- Program Logic Models
 - Ch 2 McDavid
 - Meadows, Donella. “Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System.” The Academy for Systems Change, 1999, donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/.
- Research Designs and Measurement
 - Ch 3-4 McDavid
 - 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>
- Causality
 - 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>

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.

- Begging for grades will result in an immediate lowering of your course grade by a full letter grade.
- When completing online quizzes or other assignments, you may use your book, wiki, calculator, spreadsheets, notes, or other resources as long as it is not another student or person. *The work must be authentically and genuinely your own. In other words, if you are copying answers you found online, it is not your work.*
- Go to office hours at the first sign of trouble – not as a last resort.
- 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.