

**Field course**

# Economic and Social Policy



WIRTSCHAFTS  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WIEN VIENNA  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ECONOMICS  
AND BUSINESS

Sophie Guthmuller,  
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# Objectives of the course

- **This course introduces to theory and methods of program evaluation:**
  - present a comprehensive framework to **evaluate programs** (economic and social policies)
  - introduce key concepts and **quantitative methods for evidence-based analyses** of policies: measuring the causal effects
  - develop **critical appraisal** skills

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in  
Economic Sciences in Memory  
of Alfred Nobel 2019

Abhijit Banerjee  
Esther Duflo  
Michael Kremer

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You will learn and apply  
how to measure causal  
effects based on :  
**Field experiments or  
Randomized control  
trials (RCT)**

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**Abhijit Banerjee**

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**Esther Duflo**

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**Michael Kremer**

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Alfred Nobel 2021

David Card  
Joshua D. Angrist  
Guido W. Imbens

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You will learn and apply  
how to measure causal  
effects based on :  
**Natural experiments**

- Difference-in-differences (DD)
- Matching
- Regression discontinuity design (RDD)

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# Objectives of the course

## After this course , you will be:

- aware of the importance of the **program theory** to understand how and why a program works or fails to work,
- familiar with the components of an **evaluation plan**,
- aware of the importance of the **social context** of program evaluation,
- familiar with the **causality concept** in impact evaluation and its prerequisites,
- familiar with different econometric approaches to **identify** program effects,
- familiar with different approaches how to relate program **benefits** to its **costs** and draw conclusions about **efficiency**,
- able to **critically reflect** on different methods of impact and economic evaluation in terms of their **limitations** and **benefits**.

# Structure of the course

- **Mondays : 14:00 - 17:00**
- **The course is divided in two parts:**
  1. Lectures
  2. Practical sessions

# 1. Lectures

- **Module 1: Preparing for Evaluation**
  - Typologies of program evaluation
  - Describing and eliciting a Program Theory
  - The social and political context of program evaluation
- **Module 2: Quantitative methods for Impact Evaluation**
  - Randomized controlled experiment and IV
  - Quasi-experimental methods: Matching, DiD, RDD
- **Module 3: Methods for Economic Evaluation**
  - Cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, cost-utility analysis

## 2. Practical sessions

- **Reading of research papers**
- **Apply methods with statistical software**
- **Group project:**
  - By group, prepare and moderate a hands-on tutorial
  - On one of the evaluation method covered : RCT, IV, RDD, DD, Matching, Cost effective analysis



## Assessment Components (relative weights in the final grade)

- 40% (Individual) Written exam
- 50% (Group) project
- 10% (Individual) active participation

## Grade Key (point ranges)

- 1: Excellent (90-100 points)
- 2: Good (80-89 points)
- 3: Satisfactory (65-79 points)
- 4: Sufficient (50-64 points)
- 5: Fail (0-49 points)

# Research expertise and Master theses

- **Dr. Sophie Guthmuller (WU Health Economics and Policy Group)**
  - Expertise in quantitative methods of programme evaluation
  - Interest in health and educational policies
  - [Sophie.Guthmuller@wu.ac.at](mailto:Sophie.Guthmuller@wu.ac.at)
  
- **Apply quantitative methods of program evaluation covered during the course to measure the causal effects of a policy.**
  - **Examples of (current) topics:**
    - Cancer screening programmes (breast, colorectal, cervical): The impact on Diagnoses and Mortality (Europe and Austria)
    - Culture and Mental Health (Europe or Austria )
    - Access to abortion services in Europe or Austria
    - Student aid and access to health care in Europe or Austria
    - Student aid and academic success in Europe or Austria
    - Access to mental health services in Austria
    - Vaccine hesitancy