

COURSE SYLLABUS

22MO0169, Econometrics for Policy Analysts: Cases (S)

Fall 2024

University of Zurich

Professor	Classroom	Office
David Yanagizawa-Drott	SOF-G-21	SOF-F-02

Email: david.yanagizawa-drott@econ.uzh.ch

Teaching Fellow: Lorenzo Maria Casale, lorenzo.casale@econ.uzh.ch

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do you form policy recommendations based on existing evidence? How do you aggregate different pieces of evidence that might first seem at odds? How to evaluate whether a study rests on reasonable assumptions in a specific policy context?

This seminar is based on, and extends, Econometrics for Policy Analysts (22MO0168), which primarily deals with understanding modern econometric methods, drawing conclusions based on evidence produced with these methods and translating the conclusions into a language that is understandable to policymakers. As such, the main goal is to *apply your analytical skills verbally*.

In contrast, in this seminar we will focus on narrow, specific policy questions and specific papers. It will be similar to the Case Studies in the course, but more in depth. The papers to read, and the accompanying slides will be provided to you for the first meeting. Your task as presenter will be to interpret the evidence and effectively communicate your conclusions based on your reading of the suggested literature.

In the second meeting, you'll be working on a group presentation based on a possible real-world application. You will have to provide your own slides and discuss the application as if the professor is the client of your research and you're convincing him to evaluate positively your idea.

Last meeting involves the final project presentation. We remember that it is a mandatory part of the lecture Econometrics for Policy Analysts (22MO0168), but ties into the seminar. In the lecture final project, you will be asked to write a policy memo that synthesizes existing evidence from several research papers that will be provided to you to study in detail. The goal of preparing policy memos is to learn which evidence to prioritize and which to put less emphasis on, in a realistic setting where policymakers' time and attention are scarce. As is often the case in similar settings, you will be working in a group. What is special about the seminar is that you will have to present your analysis. It will be done as if the policy maker is present. The professor will take the role of the policy maker. In other words, we will simulate what a professional environment could be like, for using evidence to guide policy.

PREREQUISITE

Enrolment in *Econometrics for Policy Analysts* (MOEC0434) is required.

MATERIALS

While no additional reading is required, consulting the material from the main course (*Econometrics for Policy Analysts*) will be useful. All instructions and materials will be uploaded on OLAT.

GRADING

Grading will be based on your presentation performance (60%) as well as your participation as a discussant (40%). Presentations will be prepared in a group, but each presenter will be considered individually.

Note that the final memo overlaps with the assignment for the main course. Seminar participants can only form a group with other seminar participants for the final project memo (a policy memo). In the seminar you will present your policy memo verbally.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

I strongly believe that student participation can substantially enrich the learning experience for both the students and the instructor. In this spirit, class participation is encouraged. Effective class participation requires that you read any assigned readings *before* coming to class, it is essential for this seminar. You are encouraged to ask questions, to share relevant insights you have from previous experiences, and to treat your classmates' participation with courtesy. I only ask that questions and comments be brief and related to the topic at hand. Given that there is heterogeneity in the classroom with respect to the prior skill sets, and pace of learning, I will sometimes need to defer questions to a future class or for discussion outside lecture time.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	TOPIC
Fri 25.Oct.2024	9:30-12:30	Presenting a Paper
Fri 22.Nov.2024	9:30-12:30	Working on Presenting your Ideas
Fri 13.Dec.2024	9:30-12:30	Final Exercise (Policy Memo)