What Economics Tells Us about Our Life and Social Policy

Department of Economics

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Office: LSK 6007

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Lectures: MWF 1:30pm – 4:50pm (LSK 1003)

Office hour: MWF 1:00pm-1:20pm (LSK6007)

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Office hours: TBA

1. Course Overview

This course will provide with students opportunities to critically read and interpret social science literature on human capital development over the life cycle. It will also give students an opportunity to discuss, through examples, how this evidence could be applied in the real world policy design. The questions to be addressed in this course focus on human capital development such as health, education, and labor policies over the course of one's life. The examples will help students understand how to interpret available data and use it to evaluate different policy programs.

2. Course Objectives

The course has the following objectives. First, it aims at challenging students to critically think about social policies in health, education, and labour area, and draw conclusions based on empirical data. Second, the course aims at providing several examples of real-life policy designs and allow our students to understand benefits from the methodologies developed and used in economics and social sciences to evaluate social policy programs. Lastly, this course aims to discuss strengths and weaknesses of different social policies

based on supporting evidence with data.

3. Student Learning Outcomes

1) Analyze findings and perspectives on social issues of human capital development (health, education and labor) around the world. (SILO 1, 2, 3)

2) Use economic research findings to propose suitable policies to tackle real-world problems (e.g. importance of early childhood environments and investments, gender inequality, job protection program, and COVID-19 policies). (SILO 1, 2, 3)

3) To develop interpersonal skills: Communicate to a large audience by presenting and justifying ideas on public policy using the statistical evidence. (SILO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6).

4. Course Website

All course materials and announcements will be posted on CANVAS: http://canvas.ust.hk. You should visit CANVAS frequently to receive the latest announcement, obtain class material and verify your grading record.

5. Course Requirement and Grades

1) Policy recommendation papers (20%)

You will select two topics out of six topics we will cover in the course. To write policy recommendation papers, you need to select one country (for example, Hong Kong, Macau, Mainland, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, India, and others where you are originated from). You will summarize current related policies of the country you select, and discuss how to reform the policies based on the evidences we study assuming that you are a prime minister. You could find further evidence to support your arguments. You may also want to discuss how to raise fund (or collect tax) to implement your suggestions, but this is optional. Policy recommendation paper will be maximum five pages (single, font size 11, include max five tables and figures).

Submit your preference for Policy recommendation papers and Presentation: 21 Feb

The deadlines of the papers are different by topics: 14 Sep

Homework 1 deadline: 21 Sep

Homework 2 deadline: 12 Oct

Homework 3 deadline: 28 Oct

Homework 4 deadline: 4 Nov

Homework 5 deadline: 16 Nov

Homework 6 deadline: 18 Nov

- if you choose topic 2 and topic 4, you have to submit the policy recommendation papers by 22 Feb and 29 Mar.

2) Presentation (10%)

You will select <u>two</u> topics that you will potentially present in the classroom. I will then select one topic for you, and form a group of students to work together for the presentation. The presentation will be around 20 min for each team including Q&A and discussion. Presentation slides must be <u>no longer than 20</u>. I encourage you to drop by my office hour to prepare the presentation properly.

3) Exam 1 (30%) – 18 Oct (during class time), and **Exam 2 (30%) –** 29 Nov (during class time)

Exam format is not determined yet. Exam is less likely to be multiple choices questions, but more likely to be open ended questions to make your own argument. You must be able to make your argument based on scientific evidence.

4) Class participation (10%)

I will also give one point for your class participation. For example, you will receive a point for a good question or comment that you make in the classroom. In addition, I will create several discussion threads in the CANVAS (under Discussions folder). Those who significantly contribute the discussion (I recommend about 200 words) will get extra points too. You can earn a maximum of ten points over the course.

Schedule

1. Introduction

2. (19 June) TOPIC 1: Policies related to Pregnancy: Fetal Origin Hypothesis - I am pregnant. How do environmental conditions during pregnancy affect my child's life?

3. (21 June) TOPIC 2: Early Childhood Policy: I have a three-year-old son. What are the long-term effects of childhood health and education?

4. (23 June) TOPIC 3: Working Mother and a Role of Father - What are the long-term effects of working-mom on child outcomes?

5. (26 June) TOPIC 4: Friends: How important my friends are in my life?

6. (28 and 30 June) Students Presentation (Total 14 teams): 1st Homework Deadline - 30 June

7. (3 July) TOPIC 5: Determinants of a life success: What are the determinants of life success?

8. (5 July) TOPIC 6: Sex Discrimination and Parental Investment: Does Sex Discrimination still exist

9. (7 July) TOPIC 7: Policy failures: How do policy interventions fail to achieve its goals?

10. (10 and 12 July) Students Presentation (Total 14 teams): 2nd Homework Deadline - 12 July

11. EXAM (14 July: During class time)

Others

Academic Integrity Statement

Absolute integrity is expected of every HKUST student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. A HKUST student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, HKUST students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers. For further information regarding the HKUST Code of Academic Integrity (http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/regulations-1.html) Unless you have the express permission of the instructor, you should not buy or sell course materials. Such unauthorized behavior constitutes academic dishonesty.

TurnItIn.com Acknowledgment

Students agree that by taking this course that all papers submitted for the course may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires accommodation, especially additional time for exams, please let me know as early as possible in the semester so that I can make arrangements. If you have any questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact me or speak to me directly.