

**Research Methods for International Development Policy and Practice**  
**INTL DEV 160**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Summer 2015 (Session C)**

**Instructor:** Ruth Carlitz  
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**Class Time/Location:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-3:05PM, Bunche 3211

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 10:00AM-12:00PM, Bunche 3288

**Office:** Bunche 3284

Students will learn how to conduct and critique research that informs international development policy and practice. The course will familiarize students with the conceptual and methodological challenges that arise when researchers attempt to measure political phenomena, assess changes over time, or demonstrate a causal relationship between policies and social outcomes. The study of these challenges will be grounded in practical approaches to research conducted by and for governments, aid agencies, and non-profit organizations. Students will apply what they learn to develop a research proposal that explains how they would evaluate a current international development project in a country of their choosing.

**NOTE:** Friday, August 14, 2015 (end of Week 2) is the last day to drop this course on MyUCLA and receive refunds according to the refund policy. That is also the last day to enroll in this course on MyUCLA without a \$50 late add fee.

### **Assessment**

***Class Participation (10%):*** Class attendance is not sufficient to earn a high participation grade. Students are expected to be active during class. Unexcused absences will count against your participation grade, as will tardiness (being more than 5 minutes late to class). As a means of encouraging participation and focus, this course has a strict **NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**.<sup>1</sup> You will be expected to take notes by hand and come to class prepared with printed copies of the readings and notes to facilitate discussion.

***Pop Quiz Questions (20%):*** Every Tuesday (beginning Week 2) you must prepare five pop quiz questions on the readings for that Tuesday and the previous Thursday to test your fellow students' knowledge on key concepts from the reading. Questions will be due by 9AM and must be posted on the course website.

***Pop Quizzes (10%):*** Every Tuesday at the beginning of class you will take a short quiz, composed of a selection of questions written by your fellow students and me.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes laptops, cell phones, and tablets.

***Impact Evaluation/Research Proposal (60%):*** Students may either:

- Work in groups of three to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) based on the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)'s Open Window, which accepts impact evaluation proposals of socio-economic development interventions in any sector. The proposals must be based on actual development projects, which have either not been evaluated or have not been evaluated in the manner that students are proposing.
- Work individually to develop research proposals for the Open Government Partnership (OGP). These proposals will generate ideas for assessing progress towards the OGP's ultimate outcome indicators

In addition to turning in a written proposal, students will present their proposals during our last class meeting. Detailed guidelines for the group and individual assignments have been posted on the course website, along with a number of additional useful resources.

## Academic Integrity

As a student and member of the University community, you are here to get an education and are, therefore, expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. You are evaluated on your own merits, so be proud of your accomplishments, and protect academic integrity at UCLA. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. When a student is suspected to be involved in academic dishonesty, the Academic Senate requires that the instructor report the allegation to the Dean of Students' Office. If you have any questions about this, please see me or send me an email. You may also refer to: <http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/assets/documents/StudentGuide.pdf>

## Campus Resources

- The **Undergraduate Writing Center** offers UCLA undergraduates (and non-UCLA students) one-on-one sessions on their writing. To make an appointment, go to [www.wp.ucla.edu/uwc](http://www.wp.ucla.edu/uwc)
- **College Academic Counseling** is available during to UCLA students only during the summer. See <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/contact-us.html>. For advising/counseling, non-UCLA summer students should contact the Summer Sessions office (<http://www.summer.ucla.edu/>). The Student Affairs Officer in the Summer Sessions office is Lola Green ([lgreen@summer.ucla.edu](mailto:lgreen@summer.ucla.edu)).
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** is also available to UCLA students during the summer: <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu/>
- **The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD)** is open all summer, five days a week and is available to both UCLA and non-UCLA students. Students with documented disabilities or who wish to be assessed should register with them as early as possible (Week 1 if possible). You should contact OSD ASAP if you wish to avail yourselves of its services: <http://www.osd.ucla.edu/>.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### Week 1

#### **Aug. 4: Introduction to Course**

Savedoff, W.D. (Jan. 12, 2015). The Future of Foreign Aid Is...Collective Funding of Impact Evaluations. [Blog post] Retrieved from <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/future-foreign-aid-is-collective-funding-impact-evaluations>

#### **Aug. 6: Introduction to Impact Evaluation**

Center for Global Development. (May 2006). *When Will We Ever Learn? Improving Lives through Impact Evaluation*. Executive summary.

Rogers, P.J. (March 2012). *Introduction to Impact Evaluation*. Impact Evaluation Notes No. 1.

*Decide whether you will be working individually or in a group for final project.*

### Week 2

#### **Aug. 11: Basic Principles**

King, G, Keohane, R., and Verba, S. (1994). The *Science* in Social Science. In *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

#### **Aug. 13: Research Strategies**

EGAP. (2013). *Strategies for Figuring Out if X Caused Y*. EGAP Guide #2. Retrieved from <http://egap.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Guide2.pdf>

EGAP. (2013). *10 Things You Need to Know About Statistical Power*. EGAP Guide. Retrieved from <http://egap.org/resources/guides/power/>

King, G, Keohane, R., and Verba, S. (1994). Causality and causal inference. In *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

*Final project workplans due.*

### Week 3

#### **Aug. 18: Counterfactuals**

Engelman, R. (2006). What Would Have Been: Exploring Counterfactuals in Demography and Health. *Population Action International Research Commentary* 9(1): pp. 1-6.

Tetlock, Philip, and Aaron Belkin. (1996). Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics: Logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives. In *Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics: Logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives*. (pp. 3-38). Princeton University Press.

**Aug. 20: Bias**

Geddes, B. (2003). How the cases you choose affect the answers you get. In *Paradigms and Sandcastles*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

**Week 4**

**Aug. 25: Randomized Controlled Trials**

Banerjee, A.V. and Duflo, E. (November 2008). The Experimental Approach to Development Economics. NBER Working Paper 14467.

Ravallion, M. (February, 2009). Should the Randomistas Rule? *Economists' Voice*. Pp. 1-5.

*Midterm progress reports due.*

**Aug. 27: Mixed Methods**

Bamberger, M. (August 2012). *Introduction to Mixed Methods in Impact Evaluation*. Impact Evaluation Notes No. 3.

**Week 5**

**Sept. 1: Ethics and Positionality**

Hopkins, P. E. (2007). Positionalities and knowledge: Negotiating ethics in practice. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 386-394.

Ravallion, M. (March 17, 2014). Taking Ethical Validity Seriously. [Blog Post.] Retrieved from the World Bank website: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/taking-ethical-validity-seriously>

*Rough drafts due.*

**Sept. 3: Putting Impact Evaluations to Use**

Bonbright, D. (November 2012). *Use of Impact Evaluation Results*. Impact Evaluation Notes No. 4.

Legovini, A., Di Maro, V. and Piza, C. (January 2015). *Impact Evaluation Helps Deliver Development Projects*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7157

## Week 6

### **Sept. 8: Replication and Open Data**

Miguel, E., Camerer, C., Casey, K., Cohen, J., Esterling, K. M., Gerber, A., ... & Van der Laan, M. (2014). Promoting transparency in social science research. *Science*, 343(6166), p. 1-6.

Puniewska, M. (Dec. 15, 2014). Scientists Have a Sharing Problem. *The Atlantic*.

Achenbach, J. (Jan. 27, 2015). The new scientific revolution: Reproducibility at last. *The Washington Post*

### **Sept. 10: Final Presentations/Final Proposals Due**

## **Optional Reading**

Believe it or not, the first draft of this syllabus contained **twice** as much reading. There is just a lot of interesting stuff out there on impact evaluation – way more than we can possibly cover in 6 weeks. Consider the required reading listed above to be the “highlights.” If you want to dig in to some of the topics presented above in greater detail, consider the below:

### Basic Principles

Geddes, B. (2003). Research design and the accumulation of knowledge. In *Paradigms and Sandcastles*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Friedman, M. The methodology of positive economics. In Martin, M. and McIntyre, L.C. (Eds.) *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Khandker, S.R., Koolwal, G.B., Samad, H.A. (2010). Basic Issues of Evaluation. In *Handbook on Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Methods and Practices* (pp. 7-32). Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

### Counterfactuals

Copstake, J., & Weston, P. (2000). Pitfalls of debt reduction: a counterfactual case study of Zambia during the early 1990s. *Journal of International Development*, 12(4), 585-600.

Fearon, J.D. “Causes and Counterfactuals in Social Science: Exploring an analogy between cellular automata and historical processes.” In Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 39-67.

### Bias

Collier, D., Mahoney, J., and Seawright, J. (2004). Claiming too much: Warnings about selection bias. In Brady, H.E., and Collier, D. (Eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

King, G, Keohane, R., and Verba, S. (1994). Determining what to observe. In *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

### Randomized Controlled Trials

Bruhn, M. and McKenzie, D. (2009). In Pursuit of Balance: Randomization in Practice in Development Field Experiments. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(4), 200-232.

Deaton, A. (January 2009). Instruments of Development: Randomization in the tropics, and the search for the elusive keys to economic development. NBER Working Paper 14690.

Karlan, D. (June 2009). Cairo Evaluation Clinic: Thoughts on Randomized Trials For Evaluation of Development. Yale Economics Department Working Paper No. 65/Economic Growth Center Discussion Paper No. 973. Pp. 1-9.

Nelson, J.L. (2007). Are We Ready for RCTs? International Rescue Committee.

### Mixed Methods

Alcántara, A.M. and Woolcock, M.(December 2014). Integrating Qualitative Methods into Investment Climate Impact Evaluations. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7145

Ananthpur, K., Malik, K, and Rao V. The Anatomy of Failure: An Ethnography of a Randomized Trial to Deepen Democracy in Rural India. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 6958

Garbarino, S. and Holland, J. (March 2009). *Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Impact Evaluation and Measuring Results*, GSDRC Issues Paper Sabine March 2009

Munck, G.L. Tools for qualitative research. In Brady, H.E., and Collier, D. (Eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Goldberg, J. (March 5, 2014). The R-Word Is Not Dirty. [Blog Post.] Retrieved from the Center for Global Development website: <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/r-word-not-dirty>

Mulligan, C.B. (March 5, 2014). The Economics of Randomized Experiments. *The New York Times*.

#### Ethics/Positionality

Australian Council for International Development. (June 26, 2013). *Principles for Ethical Research in Evaluation and Development*. Pp. 1-8.

Bourke, L., Butcher, S., Chisonga, N., Clarke, J., Davies, F., & Thorn, J. (2009). Fieldwork stories: Negotiating positionality, power and purpose. *Feminist Africa 13 Gendered Body Politics and Crafting Citizenship*.

Crocker, D. A. (2008). Selection in *Ethics of global development : agency, capability, and deliberative democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Peters, R. (2013). A reflection on positionality and knowledge processes in transdisciplinary research. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*,9(2).

Sumner, A. (2008). Selection in *International development studies : theories and methods in research and practice*. Los Angeles: Sage.

<http://rachelstrohm.com/2015/04/05/why-im-not-doing-fieldwork/>

#### Replication and Open Data

Combating bad science: Metaphysicians. (March 15, 2014). *The Economist*.

Ioannidis J.P.A. (2005). Why Most Published Research Findings Are False. *PLoS Med* 2(8): e124. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124