

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public Policy
with effect from Semester B 2019/20**

Part I Course Overview

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| Course Title: | Evidence-based Policy and Practice |
| Course Code: | POL6202 |
| Course Duration: | One semester |
| Credit Units: | 3 |
| Level: | P6 |
| Medium of Instruction: | English |
| Medium of Assessment: | English |
| Prerequisites: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | NIL |
| Precursors: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | NIL |
| Equivalent Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | NIL |
| Exclusive Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | POL6903A MAPPM Dissertation |

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course aims to enable students to hunt key and scientific evidence for identifying, analyzing, and evaluating contemporary and critical policy issues. Both aspects, scientific and political, of policy analysis are highlighted in the course. The course introduces evidence-based policy in public services across the policy process, from issue identification, policy analysis, policy decision making, policy implementation, to policy evaluation. This course will introduce both quantitative-based and qualitative-based evidence and demonstrate how they are employed in different public services, including education, healthcare, education, housing, welfare policy, transport, and urban policy. After taking the course, students are expected to be able to engage in debating contemporary policy issues from a more informed, analytical perspective.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

| No. | CILOs | Weighting (if applicable) | Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate) | | |
|-----|--|------------------------------|---|----|----|
| | | | A1 | A2 | A3 |
| 1. | Understanding processes of policy making, implementation, and evaluation by acquainting with different policy process models. | 20% | X | | |
| 2. | Familiar with both quantitative-based and qualitative-based evidence applied in the policy making process and can specify their advantages and limitations in various policy area such as housing and education. | 20% | X | | |
| 3. | Discovering, appraising, and synthesizing evidence arising from research into key policy issue. | 30% | X | | |
| 4. | Creating a policy memo illustrating considerations and reasoning underlying analysis and evaluation of a policy issue in Hong Kong, the mainland China, or overseas. | 30% | X | | |
| | | 100% | | | |

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

| TLA | Brief Description | CILO No. | | | | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|---------------------------|---|----------|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| Readings | Reading of assigned readings every week | X | X | X | X | |
| Lectures | These are organized thematically to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain concepts, theories, and methods in evidence-based policy-making and evaluation; • Analyse policy issues from scientific, economic, institutional, managerial, and political perspectives. | X | X | X | X | |
| Seminars | These are sessions for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise questions and make critical observations on the concepts and methods introduced in the lectures; Debate and apply knowledge and methods of evidence-based policy making and evaluation to particular policy issues. | X | X | X | X | |
| Group Presentation | Offer an opportunity for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relate abstract theories and concepts to analyse and assess real-life policy issues; ▪ Share findings of their group projects; ▪ Engage in critical assessment of policy-making, implementation and impact evaluation; ▪ Sharpen their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. | X | X | X | X | |
| Group Paper (Policy memo) | It is the final product of students' group projects (elaboration within 3,000 words, plus supplementary information). Students adopt an evidence-based approach in policy analysis and evaluation, integrating and applying political, economic, and institutional analysis to a specific policy issue. | X | X | X | X | |

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

| Assessment Tasks/Activities | CILO No. | | | | Weighting | Remarks |
|-----------------------------|----------|---|---|---|-----------|---------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| Continuous Assessment: 100% | | | | | | |
| Group Presentation | X | X | X | X | 30% | |
| Group paper (policy memo) | X | X | X | X | 30% | |
| Take-home exam | X | X | X | | 40% | |
| | | | | | 100% | |

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

| Assessment Task | Criterion | Excellent (A+, A, A-) | Good (B+, B, B-) | Fair (C+, C, C-) | Marginal (D) | Failure (F) |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Group Presentation | <p>1. Synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>2. Competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>3. Abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and</p> | <p>A strong ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>High degrees of competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>Excellent abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of</p> | <p>A good ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>Clearly competent in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>Well-developed abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of</p> | <p>Some ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>Weak competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>Basic abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social</p> | <p>Very basic ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>Minimum competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>Little ability or skill in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy or in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and</p> | <p>Fails to understand or lacks the ability to synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues.</p> <p>Lacks competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue.</p> <p>Minimal abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy or in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to</p> |

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| | analyzing policy-related data. 4. Skills in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication. | policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Very strongly developed skills in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication. | policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Generally competent in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication. | policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Research, writing, team-work, oral presentation and communication skills present, but not much higher than minimum standards. | analyzing policy-related data. Underdeveloped competence in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication. | generating and analyzing policy-related data. Inadequate competence in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication. |
| 2. Group paper (Policy Memo) | 1. Synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. 2. Competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to | A strong ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. High degrees of competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the | A good ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. Clearly competent in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of | Some ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. Weak competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related | Very basic ability to understand, synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. Minimum competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of | Fails to understand or lacks the ability to synthesize and appraise critically research-based evidence relating to key policy issues. Lacks competence in drawing upon various electronic data bases to facilitate the assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of |

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| | <p>a policy issue.</p> <p>3. Abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data.</p> <p>4. Skills in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication.</p> | <p>assessment of policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue. Excellent abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Very strongly developed skills in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication.</p> | <p>policy-related evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue. Well-developed abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Generally competent in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication.</p> | <p>evidence and in the application of the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue. Basic abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy and in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Research, writing, team-work, oral presentation and communication skills present, but not much higher than minimum standards.</p> | <p>systematic reviews to a policy issue. Little ability or skill in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy or in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Underdeveloped competence in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication.</p> | <p>the principles of systematic reviews to a policy issue. Minimal abilities in evaluating the utilization of evidence in relation to the development and implementation of policy in a selected area of public or social policy or in assessing critically inclusive or other approaches to generating and analyzing policy-related data. Inadequate competence in research, writing, team-work and in oral presentations and communication.</p> |
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| <p>3. Take-home Examination</p> | <p>1. Knowledge of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice. 2. Ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> | <p>An excellent standard of knowledge of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice and a highly developed ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> | <p>A generally good standard of knowledge of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice and a sound ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> | <p>Rudimentary standard of knowledge of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice and a basic ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> | <p>Poor knowledge of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice and a very little ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> | <p>Almost no knowledge or understanding of key theories, methods and practices entailed in the identification, evaluation and utilization of evidence for policy making and practice. No discernible ability to discuss relative strengths and limitations of different methods.</p> |
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Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Evidence-based policy-making; policy evaluation; systematic review; inclusive policy making; agenda setting; policy instruments; policy implementation; monitoring and evaluation; comparative policy; issue framing; stakeholder analysis; cost-benefit analysis; public participation; education policy; healthcare policy; industrial policy; economic policy; energy policy; environmental policy; quality of government.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

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| 1. | Online material at BetterEvaluation.org: An international collaboration to improve evaluation practice and theory by sharing and generating information about options (methods or processes) and approaches. http://betterevaluation.org/ |
| 2. | Cairney, Paul. <i>The politics of evidence-based policy making</i> . Springer, 2016. |
| 3. | Pawson, Ray, Geoff Wong, and Lesley Owen. "Known knowns, known unknowns, unknown unknowns: the predicament of evidence-based policy." <i>American Journal of Evaluation</i> 32, no. 4 (2011): 518-546. |
| 4. | Marmot, Michael G. "Evidence based policy or policy based evidence?." (2004): 906-907. |

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

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| 1. | Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Outcomes Evaluation) http://managementhelp.org/evaluation/program-evaluation-guide.htm#anchor1575679 |
| 2. | Cairney, Paul. "The UK government's imaginative use of evidence to make policy." <i>British Politics</i> 14, no. 1 (2019): 1-22. |

Newman, Joshua. "Deconstructing the debate over evidence-based policy." *Critical policy studies* 11, no. 2 (2017): 211-226.

Newman, Joshua, Adrian Cherney, and Brian W. Head. "Policy capacity and evidence-based policy in the public service." *Public Management Review* 19, no. 2 (2017): 157-174.

Sheldon, Trevor A. "Making evidence synthesis more useful for management and policy-making." (2005): 1-5.

Clarence, Emma. "Technocracy reinvented: the new evidence based policy movement." (2002): 1-11.

Pawson, Ray. "Evidence-based policy: The promise of 'realist synthesis'." *Evaluation* 8, no. 3 (2002): 340-358.

Saltelli, Andrea, and Mario Giampietro. "What is wrong with evidence based policy, and how can it be improved?." *Futures* 91 (2017): 62-71.

Baird, Brian. "To improve public policy." (2013): 432-433.

Solesbury, William. "Evidence based policy: Whence it came and where it's going." (2001).

Additional, policy-specific readings will be recommended by the lecturers concerned.

Other online Resources:

International impact evaluation initiative (3ie): an important initiative to push for impact evaluations and systematic reviews that generate high quality evidence on what works in development and why.

<http://www.3ieimpact.org/>

World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group has a website which consists of many hands-on countries' experiences and how to do guides.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTOED/EXTEVACAPDEV/0,,contentMDK:22314660~menuPK:6362030~pagePK:64829573~piPK:64829550~theSitePK:4585673,00.html>

ERC Evidence network: www.evidencenetwork.org

Policy Brief: www.Policybrief.org

The International Campbell Collaboration: www.campbellcollaboration.org

Information for Development in the 21st Century (id21): www.id21.org

Policy Hub: www.policyhub.gov.uk (tools section)