Policy-makers want to know which policies and practices can best achieve their goals. But research that can inform evidence-based policy often requires complex methods to distinguish causation from accidental association. This seminar is primarily devised to ensure that participants learn about the latest econometric methods to evaluate economic policies. At the same time, it covers a broad range of topics from public child care provision to health policy. Selected research papers will be presented by students and discussed in class.

**Objective**

After completion of the course students should be able to understand the most recent micro-econometric methods commonly used to evaluate economic policies. They should understand their basic identification strategies, the data requirements to implement these methods as well as their potential shortcomings. The seminar aims at providing students with the necessary skills to understand and to critically assess empirical evaluations of economic policies.

**General information and prerequisites**

Participants should have a solid background in econometrics and statistics. In order to pass the seminar, students must submit a term paper (maximum 12 pages) on one of the ten topics and present their work in the seminar. Students are also expected to prepare one-page summaries [in a bullet-point manner] of the other readings discussed in class. Summaries are to demonstrate familiarity with and discuss critically the required readings. Grading is based on the term paper, presentation, participation and the one-page summaries. The language of the seminar is English.

**Registration**

During the official registration period in January 2020. Students applying for the seminar should pick three topics from the list below, rank them according to their preferences (from 1 to 3 with one being the most preferred topic) and send an email to office.schwerdt@uni-konstanz.de. Topics are allocated on a “first come, first serve” basis. After the enrolment period students cannot drop the seminar any more. No-shows receive a 5.0.

**Procedure of the seminar**

The seminar starts on April 27 with a preliminary session. This preliminary session introduces basic concepts, present a common conceptual framework for evaluating economic policies and show the key empirical approaches. The key empirical approaches include experiments, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity designs, and difference-in-differences estimation. The preliminary session is obligatory for all participating students.

The deadline for submission of the term paper is June 30, 2020. Students should send an electronic copy of the paper (pdf) to office.schwerdt@uni-konstanz.de. The block seminar will take place on July 6 and 7, 2020. Students are expected to prepare one-page summaries for each of the required readings, which should be submitted electronically by July 3, 2020.
# Important dates and deadlines:

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 27, 2020</td>
<td>15:15 - 16:15</td>
<td>Preliminary session</td>
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<td>June 30, 2019</td>
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<td>July 3, 2019</td>
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<td>Deadline for submission of one-page summaries</td>
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<td>9:00 – 17:00</td>
<td>Block seminar</td>
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Topics and Readings

**Topic 1: Political economy I: Preferences for redistribution**  

**Topic 2: Political economy II: Preferences for public spending**  

**Topic 3: Tax policy: Support for inheritance taxation**  

**Topic 4: Education policy I: Role models in education**  

**Topic 5: Labor market policy II: Labor disputes**  

**Topic 6: Health policy: Smoking bans**  

**Topic 7: Labor market policy II: Labor market deregulation**  

**Topic 8: Education policy II: Testing**  

**Topic 9: Family policy II: Public child care provision**  

**Topic 10: Education policy III: Computers in classrooms**  