MPA 816 – Quantitative Program Evaluation

Instructors: Christopher Cotton and Bahman Khasi

Description:
This course focuses on monitoring, evaluation, and learning in the context of public policy and social programs. The course covers basic and advanced topics on theories of change, program evaluation and experimental design, sampling and data collection, qualitative and quantitative data analysis to determine program impact, and reporting. Furthermore, the course takes a close look at the institutional barriers and enablers for the creation and use of evidence through pilot programs or ongoing projects, including different project financing methods, including results-based financing and impact bonds.

During this course, students will:
- Develop frameworks for monitoring, evaluation, and learning and assess which framework is the "best-fit" for a given project or policy
- Assess the quality of past and ongoing evaluations
- Learn statistical foundations and tools for monitoring and evaluation
- Learn about experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methods
- Adjust project design to meet learning and performance monitoring objectives
- Communicate evaluation plans and results
- Assess the suitability of innovative financing models such as impact bonds

This is one of the three MPA and PMPA courses that together satisfy the course requirement for the Certified Professional Impact Analyst (CPIA) certificate.

Grading scheme:

Short quizzes on lecture materials: 15%
Short assignments and discussion activities: 15%
Semester-long "best-fit evaluation" assignment building into paper and short presentation: 35%
Final exam: 35%