

Course Description

This course will introduce students to quantitative methods for studying social policy problems. Topics to be covered include descriptive statistics and sampling, correlation and causation, simple and multiple regression and experimental methods. The emphasis will be on the selection, interpretation and practical application of these methodologies in specific policy settings, rather than with formal proofs. Skills will be reinforced by hands-on exercises using statistical software. Over the course of the semester, students will critically analyze policy reports and empirical research in a range of policy areas and learn how to present this research to a non-specialist audience. Finally, we will discuss the pros and cons of quantitative vs. qualitative methodologies. The course will conclude with group presentations that draw on all these skills.