# Economic Evaluation of Social Services

## Prof. Gian Paolo Barbetta

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the key information and knowledge they need to understand if social interventions can achieve the objectives they pursue (their effectiveness), and estimate their costs (their efficiency). In particular, it aims to introduce students to the use of *counterfactual logic* for the evaluation of the effects of social interventions, programmes, and politics.

At the end of the course, students will be able to know the key counterfactual methodologies to estimate the effects of social interventions, and establish which ones can be applied to specific working environments. Furthermore, they will be able to interact with professional assessors, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solutions. Students will also be able to use MS Excel to organise databases, and analyse them through the use of basic statistical tools. This will allow them to form an opinion – based on empirical data – on the effectiveness of their interventions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will explore the following topics:

– The estimation of the effectiveness of a social intervention, programme, policy.

– The concept of effect and the counterfactual paradigm.

– The threats to causal inference: auto selection and spontaneous dynamics.

– Controlled experiments to estimate effects and their limits.

– The non-experimental techniques to estimate effects and their limits.

– An introduction to the key concepts and tools of descriptive and inferential statistics to estimate effects.

– The use of MS Excel to create, organise, and analyse useful databases to estimate the effects of social interventions.

***READING LIST***

*Compulsory readings*

A. Martini-U. Trivellato, *Sono soldi ben spesi? Perché e come valutare l'efficacia delle politiche pubbliche,* Marsilio, 2011.

P.J. Gertler-S. Martinez-P. Premand-L.B. Rawlings-C.M.J. Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, 2nd edition, The World Bank, 2016. Only the chapters indicated by the lecturer in class

D. Giuliani-M.M. Dickson, *Analisi statistica con Excel*, Maggioli, 2015. Only the chapters indicated by the lecturer in class

*Optional readings for the students who want to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the topics presented in class and learn new concepts*

A. MARTINI-M. SISTI, *Valutare il successo delle politiche pubbliche,* Il Mulino, 2009.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, held in class and in the computer lab (to explain how to use Microsoft Excel).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written exam, usually consisting in open-ended questions aimed to assess theoretical knowledge (the definition of terms, the meaning of concepts, etc.) and the ability to carry out simple practical activities, also through the use of MS Excel. The final mark will result from the weighted average between all the questions.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have a basic knowledge of descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency, indexes of dispersion, and the concept of regression). Those who are not familiar with these concepts are invited to consult a statistics textbook.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.