City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of Public and International Affairs
with effect from Semester A 2024/25

Part I   Course Overview

Course Title: Behavioral Insights in Public Policy

Course Code: PIA6203

Course Duration: one semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: P6

**Medium of
Instruction:**   English

**Medium of
Assessment:**   English

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title)   NIL

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title)   NIL

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title)   POL6203 Behavioral Insights in Public Policy

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title)   NIL

Part II   Course Details

1. **Abstract**

   The making of public policy and its analysis have been strongly informed by microeconomics. In all public sectors, the role of behavioral insights (combining knowledge from economics and psychology) has become critically important for better policy making. The objective of this course is to provide students a basic understanding of microeconomics and the principles of behavioral economics and insights. In terms of methodological training, this course will introduce the experimental method and design that have been widely applied in social science research, such as field experiment and survey experiment. Based on latest research on human behavior and cognitive bias, this course intends to help student to comprehend how behavioral insights can inform public policy by using experimental method. Evidence and practice will be provided in policy fields, including environment, education and health.

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.	Examine, understand, and critically apprise how insights from behavioral economics, psychology, and the behavioral sciences challenge traditional microeconomic frameworks to public policy making and analysis.		√	√	
2.	Familiar with the application of different experimental design in policy making and can critically assess the experiment that intends to improve the well-being of citizens and society by "nudging" them.		√	√	√
3.	Critically apply the behavioural insights way of thinking for particular public policy problems, and be able to integrate these knowledges with skills and theoretical constructs from other parts of their studies relating to public policy analysis.		√	√	√
		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 real-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. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)
(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No. 1	2	3				Hours/week (if applicable)
Lectures	Introduction of the various roles that microeconomics and behavioural insights and its analysis in the realm of public policy. Examination of a range of microeconomic and behavioural insights theories on issues of public policy.	√	√	√				
Class Discussion	Discussion and debate over the merits and demerits of various microeconomic and behavioural insights theories and analysis on issues of public policy.	√	√	√				
Group Presentations and Group projects	Student will have chance to group together and apply and behavioural insights analysis on public policy topics they are interested in.	√	√	√				
Final Test	It is a chance for students to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of the microeconomic and behavioural insights theories and related public policy analysis applications and their limitations.	√	√	√				

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)
(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No. 1	2	3				Weighting	Remarks
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Group Presentation	√	√	√				35%	Group presentations will provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their behavioural insights analysis skills by working together as a group for analysing public policy issues. It is also an opportunity for students to give effective policy presentation under time constraints.
Group Project	√	√	√				35%	After receiving the responds from students and from

										instructors during the presentations, students need to revise their policy analysis accordingly and to be able to convert the policy analysis into formal policy report.
Final Test	√	√	√					30%		This in-class test at the end of the semester will cover the student's understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings. To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in behavioural insights; this test will include questions, requiring students to develop their own microeconomic and behavioural insights reasoning and analysis to policy issues.
Examination: ___% (duration: three hours , if applicable)										
								100%		

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

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Group Presentation	Students are able to demonstrate their behavioural insights analysis skills by working together as a group in evaluating public policy issues using behavioural insights. Able in give effective policy presentation given time constraints.	Excellent in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	Good in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	Adequate in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	Marginal in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	No understanding in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.
2. Group Project	Students are about to complete a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and are able to demonstrate the limitation of their analysis.	Excellent in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	Good in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	Adequate in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	Marginal in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	No understanding completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.
3. Final Test	Students are able to show their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings. They are	Excellent in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings;	Good in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings;	Adequate in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; in	Marginal in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; in demonstrating their	No able to show their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; to demonstrate their

able to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; students are able to develop their own behavioural insights reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	in demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insights reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	in demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	understanding of key concepts and knowledge in behavioural insights; to develop their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Group Presentation	Students are able to demonstrate their behavioural insights analysis skills by working together as a group in evaluating public policy issues using behavioural insights. Able in give effective policy presentation given time constraints.	Excellent in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	Good in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	Adequate in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.	No understanding in behavioural insights analysis and in group presentation.
2. Group Project	Students are about to complete a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and are able to demonstrate the limitation of their analysis.	Excellent in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	Good in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	Adequate in completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.	No understanding completing a formal policy analysis report using behavioural insight analysis and in demonstrating the limitation of their analysis.

3. Final Test	Students are able to show their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings. They are able to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; students are able to develop their own behavioural insights reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	Excellent in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; in demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insights reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	Good in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; in demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	Adequate in showing their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; in demonstrating their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in microeconomics and behavioural insights; in developing their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.	No able to show their understanding of the material covered in lectures and the associated assigned readings; to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and knowledge in behavioural insights; to develop their own behavioural insight reasoning and analysis to policy issues.

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.)

   Behavioural insights, microeconomics, public policy, policy analysis

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.)

1.	John, Peter. (2018) How Far to Nudge?: Assessing Behavioural Public Policy. Edward Elgar Publishing.
2.	Druckman, J., D. P. Green, J. H. Kuklinski, and A. Lupia. (2011). Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science
3.	Thaler R, and C. Sunstein. (2008) Nudge: Improving Decision about Health, Wealth and Happiness. New Haven: Yale University Press.

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

1.	Gigerenzer, Gerd. 2018. "The Bias Bias in Behavioral Economics." Review of Behavioral Economics 5 (3-4): 303-336.
2.	Ariely, D. (2008). Predictably irrational: The hidden forces that shape our decisions. London, HarperCollins.
3.	Dolan P. et al. (2010) Mindspace: Influencing Behaviour through Public Policy. London: Cabinet Office and the Institute for Government.
4.	Kahneman, D. (2011) Thinking, Fast and Slow. London, Allen Lane.
5.	Le Grand J. (2006) Motivation, Agency and Public Policy: of Knights and Knaves, Pawns and Queens. Revised paperback edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6.	Le Grand J. (2007) The Other Invisible Hand; Delivering Public Services through Choice and Competition. Oxford: Princeton University Press.
7.	

8.	Oliver, A. (Ed) (2013) Behavioural Public Policy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
9.	Sousa, Joana Lourenço, Emanuele Ciriolo, Sara Rafael Almeida, and Xavier Troussard. (2016) *Behavioural insights applied to policy: European Report 2016*. European Union: Joint Research Centre.
10.	Sunstein, C. (2016) The Ethics of Influence: Government in the Age of Behavioral Science. Cambridge University Press.
11.	Brafman, O. and R. Brafman. (2008) Sway: the irresistible pull of irrational behavior. Doubleday: New York.
12.	John, Peter, et al. (2011) Nudge Nudge, Think Think. Experimenting with Ways to Achieve Civic Behaviour. London: Bloomsbury.
	James, O., S. Jilke and G. Van Ryzin. (Ed) (2017) Experiments in Public Management Research: Challenges and Contributions. Cambridge University Press.