Economics 483: Cross-Sectional Methods (Winter 2024)
Topic: Social Planning under Uncertainty

This Ph.D. field course integrates elements of welfare economics and consequentialist decision theory with econometric study of identification and statistical imprecision to study the broad problem of social planning under uncertainty. Planning problems to be analyzed include individualistic treatment under ambiguity, treatment choice using data from randomized trials, policy to mitigate infectious disease, income tax policy, and climate policy. Evaluation is by student writing of original research papers, due at the beginning of spring quarter. There will be no exams or problem sets. The recommended prerequisite is Economics 480-1.

The specifics of this course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Instructors will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

Instruction in this course seeks to promote academic freedom of expression, as discussed in the 2007 report of the AAUP on Freedom in the Classroom: https://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm


Tentative Syllabus

1. Credible Social Planning under Uncertainty (1/3, 1/8)
   SPU Chapter 1

2. Incredible Certitude (1/10, 1/17)
   SPU Chapter 2

3. Identification of Treatment Response (1/22, 1/24)
   SPU Chapter 3

4. Identification of Choice Behavior and Personal Welfare (1/29, 1/31)
   SPU Chapter 4

5. Diversified Treatment under Ambiguity (2/5)
   SPU Chapter 5

6. Treatment with Data from Statistically Imprecise Trials (2/7)
   SPU Chapter 6

7. Personalized Treatment (2/12, 2/14)
SPU Chapter 7

8. Treatment with Social Interactions (2/19, 2/21)
SPU Chapter 8

9. Climate Planning with Uncertainty in Climate Modeling and Intergenerational Discounting (2/26, 2/28)
SPU Chapter 9

Student Presentations of Papers in Progress (3/4, 3/6)

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