

PP - Public Policy  
 Course Name: Quantitative Approaches and Policy Analysis

Course ID: 01-PP455\_WT26

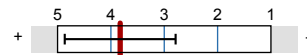
Course Convenor: Professor Mark Schankerman  
 Subject of Survey: Section 1



No. of overall course survey responses = 77 Response rate =53.1%

Overall indicators

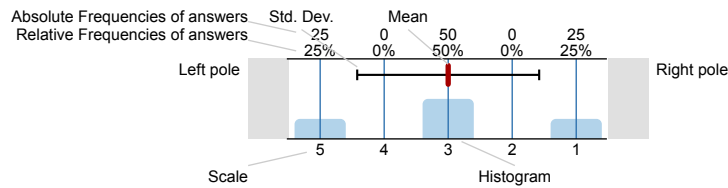
Course Questions Section Average



av.=3.8  
 dev.=1

Legend

Question text



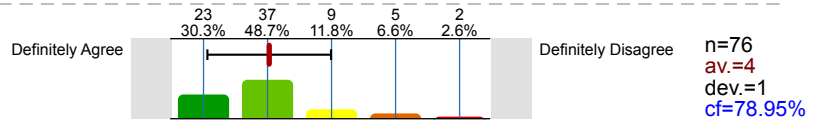
n=No. of responses  
 av.=Mean  
 dev.=Std. Dev.  
 ab.=Abstention  
 cf=Cumulative Frequency

1. Course Questions

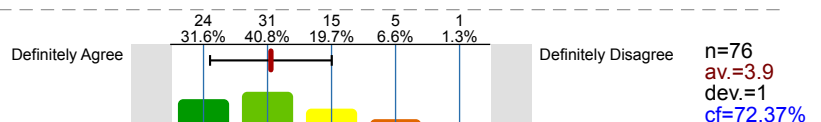
Course Survey Introduction:

Please comment on your course as a whole (lectures and seminars) in the course question section of the survey and please use the teacher section to submit comments on your individual teachers (lecturer and/or seminar teacher). Please ensure that any feedback you provide is constructive as this will help the department make appropriate course enhancements and adjustments going forwards. Likewise, when evaluating your course teachers, it is important that you focus only on the quality of their teaching, as opposed to reflecting on their personal protected characteristics. This is to ensure that the course is reviewed fairly and to prevent discrimination. Please note, the use of discriminatory or expletive language in any comments you submit will not be tolerated. Please see this page for more information on LSE's course surveys.

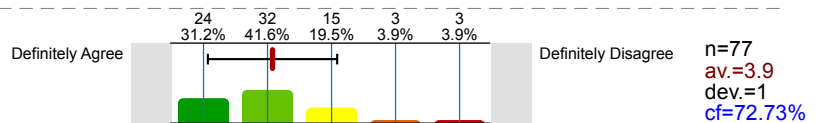
1.1) This course is intellectually stimulating.



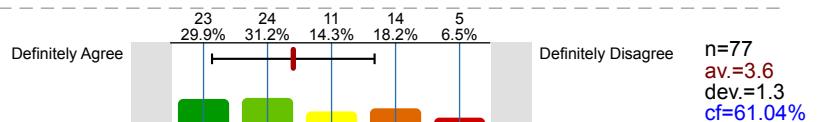
1.2) I found course information and activities accessed through Moodle useful for my studies on this course.



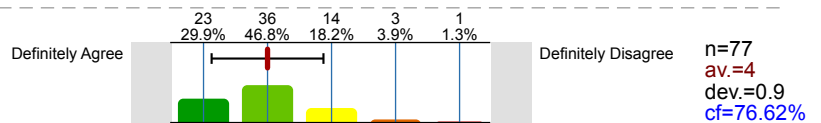
1.3) I have been able to contact teaching staff about this course when I needed to.



1.4) The criteria used in marking have been available in advance.



1.5) I contributed to class discussions and/or other learning activities.



1.6) Please comment on aspects of this course you think were particularly positive.

■ -The course content was challenging in an oftentimes positive way. I see why this is important for effective policy design and I learned a lot.

- Clear examples/interesting case studies. Slides were good and information was clearly presented. Challenging but rewarding.
- course content was presented in a clear fashion with advanced understanding of how each concept linked with each other
- everything
- Good mix of econometric theory and policy application. Seminars were useful and engaging
- Great introduction, the problem sets helped clearly understand the new concepts. Weekly assignment forced you to engage with the content. Second semester also felt like a genuine continuation of semester 1.
- Honestly, I do not know. Felt that I had no guidance whatsoever.
- I like the content covered, however the teachers and the pedagogical planning behind it was extremely poor to absent. Classes felt like a drag and I'm not particularly happy about the classroom environment or the intentionally created through it.
- In terms of content, I was quite satisfied. I believe the course covered a lot of useful material, giving me a good understanding of quantitative methods.
- I particularly appreciated the activities that tried to connect the course content with real world policy challenges, especially around how to measure and evaluate social programmes. Those moments made the course feel more practical and relevant, and helped show how the methods we were learning can be applied in real policy settings.
- I think the assigning of group work for this class was beneficial and helped build more connections with other students within the class. The lectures were mostly helpful and the structure was clear.
- I think the course topics taught are especially relevant for our degree and interesting. I enjoyed the policy memo assignment where we used the world bank enterprise survey data to research a topic of our choice. I also like the structure of the seminars. I enjoy how interactive they are and feel that I learned the majority of my knowledge from seminars rather than lectures.
- I think the material is useful and my TAs have been greay
- I think the structure of this course is really off. It is not condusive to learning the material, I have had to learn pretty much everything on my own as the lecture slides and instruction are not up to the standard that I would hope to recieve at lse.
- I thought this was an incredibly interesting course. I had taken some stats in the past, but this course taught it completely differently in a way that I really enjoyed. The lectures were okay, but the seminars were where this course really shined.
- Material was both informative and application based
- Most of the course has been taught very well.  
The problem sets have been well-varied, the readings interesting and the class discussions quite engaging.
- Positive about the TA, Thomas Monk, was very helpful and was ready to help with questions about the course material
- PP455 has been an interesting and intellectually challenging course that built well on the content learned in the Autumn Term. I found it particularly interesting to learn about a variety of different statistical methodologies and how to choose between them depending on the specific context and type of problem. I also appreciated the public policy focus, and the implications of the case studies we discussed in class and lectures on policy making. Weekly problem sets were relevant and positively contributed to my learning and understanding of the course content. Working within small groups for the problem sets was a valuable opportunity to collaborate with and learn from my classmates.
- Seminar environment has been supportive and welcoming for learning
- Slides were okay.  
  
Shout-out to Beyza Gulmezoglu, who, in Autumn Term, was an amazing TA and whose classes were quite literally life-saving for the course. She is an excellent teacher.
- The course is extremely helpful in bringing out evidence-based policymaking.
- The material supposed to be taught in this course is actually cool and useful.
- The seminar is where I learn the most and feel like I participated the most.
- The topics this term were interesting and I enjoyed learning about the policy applications.
- This course always discusses policy implications, which is what I expected.
- This course enabled me to progressively build my quant knowledge with weeks using material of previous chapters making transition from one topic to another smooth.
- This is one of the best learning experiences in my one year of studying at LSE. I have studied econometrics before, but it is only here that I gained a holistic experience of why understanding data is so important for a policymaker. The material is excellent — we were taught how and why to use those models, and how they apply in the real world. The reading materials can be difficult to understand, but very engaging regardless. I really enjoyed the group study arrangement in PP455. At first, I thought this arrangement would be quite troublesome since we had to coordinate schedules to find time to discuss and work on assignments together. However, as time went on, the group study became an opportunity to get closer with my peers and was also very helpful in deepening my understanding of the problem sets.

- Tom Munk and Jeremiah are great teachers. The memo was enjoyable.
- Tom was a great seminar teacher.
- Writing memo was helpful and real world application of the concepts were the best.

1.7) Please comment on aspects of this course you think could be improved.

- -The examples were often very dated, could update to more current policy topics
  - Do not really understand the usage of STATA in this course - was part of all of our problem sets at the beginning and was then barely used in the Winter Term
  - Schedule was confusing - Timing of problem sets and assignments did not line up since we raced through the material in lecture
  - Should not have seminar or problem sets due on readings weeks, this defeats the purpose especially when we took other weeks off (like the first one of term)
  - It should not be the job of students to manage the poor lecture quality of Shankerman. After reading the SSLC minutes, it is widely known that he is not fit for this job and the MPA Program team (whose literal job it is to provide a well-functioning program) should take action, not the SSLC reps (who are paying for this degree). This course is really important and covers a lot of interesting topics - it is a shame that the lectures so dramatically miss the mark and it feels completely unreasonable and unfair to expect students to "fix" this in a volunteer role.
- During the winter term, the sound quality in the lecture theatre was so poor that it was difficult to follow the lecture. I raised the issue several times with both Prof. Schankerman and my TA, but there was no improvement. The only viable option was to skip the lecture and watch the videos instead.
- For me, the only problem in PP455 is that the workload in Term 2 is very unbalanced compared to Term 1. From a content perspective, the material in Term 2 is significantly heavier, and yet we are still assigned weekly problem sets, a quant essay, a presentation, and an exam. In Term 1, the material is still more digestible and the assignments are not as demanding. It would be better if some of the Term 2 assignments were moved to Term 1, so that we could focus on the exam, which carries a far more significant weight.
- group project marking criteria
- However, I do not feel as though I genuinely learned much from this course. Lectures were hard to follow and there are vast differences between TAs that mean that learning is not equal between seminars.
- I am truly disappointed with this class in the winter term. The teaching instruction is not engaging, and the lecture material was not taught well. I did not learn the material from attending lecture, and had to completely supplement my learning on my own. I do not want to be paying such high tuition to LSE when I am teaching myself all of this material. The learning environment was very negative, and did not feel very welcoming, specifically in the winter term. For next year, please take this feedback into consideration about professors. As a student, I expect better instruction and a better learning environment at the LSE. Additionally, instructions for assignments were very unclear, specifically regarding the Final Presentation where instructions were given as several bullet points with no real grading criteria. This is a masters programme. If you expect high results from us as students, please dedicate time to providing us with adequate, clear instruction/expectations for students to follow as well.
- I found the quantitative policy memo/data analysis assessment to be poorly designed and over complicated. The level of difficulty for this assignment was disproportionate to the course content and the general lack of clarity on what was required made it challenging to learn from it. The exemplars provided from previous years were helpful in principle, but they appeared to be significantly more advanced than what was expected from this course. This caused significant anxiety and confusion across the class as to how to approach this assignment. It was disappointing that no rubric was provided, even upon request by students, as this should be standard practice for the university. The process of getting access to the data through the World Bank felt unnecessarily complicated, especially as it took some students weeks to get their access approved which significantly disadvantaged them in undertaking this assessment. I felt it was misleading to label this assessment as a 'policy memo' as it was more of a data analysis exercise that was dressed up as a policy memo by requiring us to include one section at the end on policy implications. Overall, I did not find that this assessment was reflective of the knowledge and skills I developed throughout this course, nor helpful for a policy student. For an introductory course in quantitative analysis, particularly one taught to public policy professionals, not students pursuing degrees in statistics, the assessments should be focused on building confidence in applying the skills from the class. While I appreciated a group assessment, and the opportunity to work with my classmates to outline how to run a realistic experiment on a particular policy problem, it was strange and counter-productive that we were assigned to such large groups of 7-8 members, and given only 9 minutes to present. This made group coordination more difficult than necessary and diminished the overall learning experience. I also found that the topics varied significantly in difficulty, with some being far more challenging and complex than others. There were also no clear guidelines as to what we were supposed to do for this assignment or how to approach it, nor was a rubric made available. It was disappointing and distracting that the lecturer and TAs were whispering to each other throughout students' presentations, and it did not seem like they were paying attention to the presentations nor respectful to the amount of effort students put in to this assignment.
- I think the course could benefit from having more of those applied activities throughout the term. In particular, it would be helpful to include more examples and exercises connected to real policy problems and programme evaluation. I also think the lectures could be more engaging in terms of delivery and structure, so that the material feels more dynamic and easier to follow.
- I think the winter term could be paved better. It felt as there was a massive disconnect between what we covered in lecture in Seminar. Mostly this was due to the fact that we sped through the lectures as quickly as possible and were reprimanded for asking questions. We finished the semester with almost two additional sessions where we were asked to ask questions. Given the hostile way in which people who were asked questions were treated during the semester few people were willing to participate. Questions were often contextual as well but we had forgotten them by the time we were given the opportunities to ask.
- I think we need longer seminars, we're never able to get through the material.
- I think we need more intentional teaching to make this worth it.
- Lectures were inconsistent in quality

- Lecture was not good. Bad audio quality all the time. Professor mumbling and not very nice.
- make a more unified stream of information. very confusing sectioning of topics and difficult to follow, also engagement in both lecture and seminars was difficult due to instructors. overwhelming (and this is coming from a student who has taken economics and econometrics in undergrad)
- Marking criteria for the presentation would have been helpful.
- Maybe more variation with the assigned work throughout the year would be better rather than having everything appear all at once at the end as well as overlapping with work in other mandatory classes. The group presentation would also be much better in smaller groups so that each member can better convey that they know all aspects of the identification assumptions and main points.
- none
- Nothing particular
- Presentation groups being smaller than the current size would be much more helpful.
- Professor's explanation in the second semester could be more clear and helpful
- Rubrics and guidelines are good please use them...The assignments this term were a mess (no or limited instructions for the presentation, conflicting information, students sitting on the floor or standing...). A logistical nightmare.
- Starting with what's been explicitly requested on feedback: on more than one occasion (notably, end of spring term presentations), criteria used in marking were expressly withheld from students.

This is emblematic of a general distaste perceived by most or all students from the teaching body to the student body. They did not like us and their dislike was clear. I have heard of teachers making students cry in office hours, of the lecturer insulting a student in private, among other disparaging or controversial remarks that seem to be made out of sheer distaste.

Besides this, there seems to be a certain disconnect between lectures and seminars that, while better in comparison to the one that existed in the Autumn Term, still made the class difficult to understand.

- STATA guides are needed
- STATA learning was pretty much completely individualised. Mark's pedagogy was particularly poor. I'm not sure if it's me or the course, but the first semester was particularly difficult. Additionally, moving lectures and seminars INTO reading week defeats the purpose. Finally, there are 7 people in my WT presentation group. With 9 minutes and an instruction that everyone has to present, this quite honestly meant that coordination problems took up most of our preparation. To no one's surprise, this led to someone always being unable to attend meetings or having to leave early. Overall, an underwhelming and frustrating assignment. This has given me little hope for the exam. I do not believe the over £4000 I have effectively spent on this course was worth it.
- Teaching, TA!!!!
- The content is overly simplified at times and the pace is quite slow. It would be useful to explore more advanced methods, especially as it is a full year course. The content feels overly stretched out to fill the longer timeline.
- The course and moodle page were deeply disorganized and difficult to navigate. The presentations required at the end of term were not useful in bettering my understanding of course content-- they simply took up so much time that none of us had to spare. Completing problem sets in groups was incredibly difficult as many groups relied on a few people to carry the brunt of the workload. The problem sets should not be group work in the future, that did not positively impact anyone's ability to learn the content. The lack of effort put into finding quality instructors for a course that is to integral to this field of work is astounding.
- The course content positions this course at an awkward position. Those who have STEM background may find it simple and would expect more complicated model for evaluation. Those who don't have STEM background may find it hard to understand because they haven't taught the basic statistics (e.g., the actual mathematic intuition behind the regression term). Going forward, if this course can be divided to cater for different levels, and let students to choose which level to attend for their own career objectives, then it would be beneficial. Also, one of the course assignment is a data analysis exercise. We haven't taught in class about stata at all and it is taught also minimally at seminars. Therefore, I found requesting students to do a data analysis from scratch using stata (especially most of us don't know how to run) is too demanding. A separate programme course on stata or programming course would be helpful if the programme would like to train coding.
- The course structure was a mess. The AT professor and WT professor were not on the same page and did not understand what each other had done or gone over with us already. We spent way too long on some topics, going over the same material again and again. We also did not need to have two lectures during reading week this term, it was totally unnecessary given that the course actually ended up finishing early! Also, the WT presentation totally should have been at the end of AT instead. It was ridiculous to ask students to write a policy memo and do real data analysis, and then have us backtrack to give a presentation on "what we would have done if we could do this study". It didn't make any sense and was just a huge source of stress for students as we had more important assignments going on at the time. No one was able to take the presentation seriously and it didn't get the time and effort it could have gotten if it were at a different point in the course.
- The final group presentation projects were not as enlightening as they may have seemed. After discussing with a majority of the DSPP cohort, it seems as though these randomized groups would end up placing a majority of the project work onto whichever DSPP students were in the group - causing a massive free-rider problem. I don't think groups should be randomly assigned in the future, especially if this continues to be the case, it's entirely unfair and frustrating to the DSPP students (especially when we're all studying the same material in this class).
- The lectures weren't very helpful.
- The lecture was difficult because I could not hear, even when sitting in the front row, and subjects were repeated. Every class had

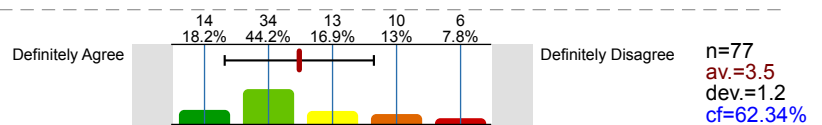
about an hour going through what was already recapped the previous class.

- The lecture were super confusing and the readings assigned were not really the best to introduce us to the concepts.
- The presentations felt cold and robotic, the environment created was quite stressful
- The professor is unkind and really gives LSE a bad reputation, I am honeslty very disappointed. I looked forward to this course to learn quant skills and I feel swindled.
- The quality of lectures was poor. Both Jeremiah and Mark were subpar at explaining course concepts and I had to completely rely on seminar, youtube, and AI to explain the concepts to me. I would expect more from a graduate degree at a top university. The lectures were complicated, messy, and unclear.

Additionally, the group-work was a part of the course that could definitely be improved. For the study groups, it was nice in the AT because they were ungraded so we could discuss the topics without the additional pressure of grades. However, in the WT, the additional layer of grading and the overall groupwork was unpleasant and a very stressful addition to our already stressful semester. My group decided to not show up half of the time, refused to discuss the course topics, and did not contribute to the assignment. Then, we are simply expected to still submit with our groups and there is no additional monitoring for when certain group members are not participating. Furthermore, the final presentation which had 9 group members giving a 9 minute presentation on a hypothetical research question felt pretty useless. I found the group to be way to large and the meetings to be unproductive given that it was such a large group.

- The sequencing of lectures in the WT was quite sub-optimal, with two lectures during the 'Reading Week', but then no substantive content taught after Week 8 (only a small amount of content covered in Wk 9, a Q&A session in Wk 10 and no lecture in Wk 11). This meant that certain methodologies were rushed through, or for most of the cohort covered during Reading Week and therefore remotely. Using these additional weeks to expand on one of the methods or covering an additional method would have made better use of the time available across the Term.
- The Stata component was quite overwhelming, especially for students with work experience backgrounds not focused on data analysis. A brief introduction to Stata and a deeper dive into data collection/result interpretation would be very helpful.
- The structure could be more intuitive from a pedagogical standpoint. Additionally, we'd like to see clearer criteria for when to apply each model — for example, specifying which model works best for which type of policy question.
- The teaching style for this term wasn't engaging and felt over-complicated. We could have had more discussions on papers/studies that were more recent. The group presentations were not good at all - Considering its the end of the term and all of us have commitments and different schedules, it became really difficult to coordinate and actually engage on this topic. Could have been designed better.
- This course started out as a bootcamp on understanding STATA, and suddenly dropped this in the winter term into understanding methodological concepts. I did not enjoy this course and felt like my learning was limited, mainly due to the weekly submissions. I would have preferred if it was individual work instead of group work, because what happened for me was that two members of the group basically completed each week's problem set the next day after it was released, both doing the full set individually. But that disincentivised me to actually do the work because it was already done, and I often felt like I could not contribute more, even when I also do the individual problem sets myself. I feel like this course would have benefitted greatly from PP440's method of weekly individual problem sets (with a shorter length, obviously). Furthermore, Mark and Jeremiah arent the best communicators, and more often than not, shut down questions or answers from students. They also refuse to use the mic in the lecture hall, very odd. Genuinely, reading through the lecture transcript with AI is a better learning experience than being in the lecture hall.
- What was covered by the Lecturer and what was reviewed in the seminars seemed disconnected in terms of what was already covered and what wasn't. Most of the times, it was necessary to check what contents we had already seen.

1.8) Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this course.



# Profile

**Subunit:** PP - Public Policy  
**Responsible for modules:** Professor Mark Schankerman  
**Name of the course:** Section 1  
**(Name of the survey)**  
**Comparative line:** School Average AT25 - Course Questions

Values used in the profile line: Mean

## 1. Course Questions

