Analytic Methods for Policy (STEP0020)

Description
The problems encountered within the spheres of public policy and public administration typically span diverse topical domains, involve the perspectives of multiple actors, and are situated within rapidly changing environments. The nature of these problems thereby demands a diverse and complex skill set from those working directly to engage with them. Policy analysts need to be able to not only understand the requirements of effective and efficient analysis of complex problems, but also know how such insight can be operationalised into practical process design, procurement, execution, quality assurance, and communication of such analytical processes - often attempting to deploy rigorous techniques in far from ideal situations and environments.

While policy challenges faced will be diverse in their context and specialist requirements, this course seeks to impart a systematic and widely applicable approach to underpin their analysis. It contends that there is a subset of analytic methods likely to be useful in resolving a wide range of policy issues. This approach is, however, not readily encountered in practice. Constrained by time, limited resources and other working pressures, analysts often default to selecting analytic methods on grounds of their familiarity rather than suitability to the task at hand. In addition, it is not uncommon for analysts to have been conditioned throughout their educational and professional personal histories to affiliate themselves with either quantitative or qualitative expertise. Such biases within analytical enquiry fundamentally (and regretfully) put at risk the potential for further useful analytical insights to contribute to the resolution of a policy issue. Rather than separately engage quantitative and qualitative techniques, this course is grounded in the view that analysis for policy instead requires multi-methodological practice that simultaneously combines their relative contributions.

The course introduces a diverse range of analytical methods for informing public decisions. Over 30 different methods are presented to provide students with an

Key information
- Year: 2020/21
- Credit value: 15 (150 study hours)
- Delivery: PGT L7, Campus-based
- Reading List: View on UCL website
- Tutor: Dr Ine Steenmans
- Term: Term 2
- Timetable: View on UCL website

Assessment
- Coursework: 50.0%
- Coursework: 40.0%
- Practical examination (departmentally managed): 10.0%

Find out more
For more information about the department, programmes, relevant open days and to browse other modules, visit ucl.ac.uk

Disclaimer: All information correct as of March 2020. Please note that aspects of the module may be subject to change. UCL will make best efforts to inform applicants of major changes.
overview of the landscape of analytic practice for policy. These cover analytic contributions across the spectrum of public problem-solving activities: defining problem requirements; understanding the system; exploring options; analysing risk; informing action; and communicating insight. Traditionally these methods would be encountered and grouped under different sectoral or disciplinary labels, including ‘decision analysis’, ‘strategy development’, ‘operational research’, ‘problem structuring’, ‘foresight & futures’, ‘research design’, ‘evaluation’, ‘design thinking’, ‘systems analysis’, ‘data science’, and ‘coding’. The course will explain historical and emerging connections between these fields, and introduce all methods with a single, overarching analytic practice for policy framework.

This course is intended to support students on the UCL STEaPP Masters of Public Administration (MPA) programmes explore the practical ways by which evidence and scientific analysis can be generated and used to inform policy development and public decision-making. It is also intended for UCL postgraduates who have an interest in analytic practice for public policy.