Syllabus
Course description

Course title	**Economics and Public Policy Design** **M2 Behavioral Economics and Public Policy Design**
Course code	**27606B**
Scientific sector	SECS-P/02 - ECON-02/A
Degree	Master in Public Policy and Innovative Governance
Semester and academic year	a.y. 2025/2026 2nd Semester
Year	1
Credits	6
Modular	YES

Total lecturing hours	36
Total lab hours	-
Total exercise hours	-
Attendance	Attendance is recommended but not mandatory.
Prerequisites	B1 level in English is required to sit the exam. It is highly recommended to have successfully completed the course "Policy, Management, and Innovation in the public sector".
Course page	https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/master-public-policy-innovative-governance/

Specific educational objectives	The course refers to the typical educational activities and belongs to the scientific area of Economics (SECS-P/02 - ECON-02/A). The course is designed to provide students with comprehensive economic knowledge to enhance students' proficiency in data-driven decision-making, supporting the evaluation and decision-making processes specific to public sector challenges from a sustainability perspective. The course deepens the understanding of key economic issues related to the design and implementation of public policies. Educational objectives include to critically assess the use of tools developed by behavioral economics in the context of public policy design; reflect on the nexus between design and implementation of public policies. It will prepare students for advanced studies by cultivating a level of autonomy in learning and critical analysis, necessary for the investigation and evaluation of complex policy issues and for pursuing further research or doctoral studies in public policy analysis.

Module	**2**
Lecturer	**Mirco Tonin,**

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Scientific sector of the lecturer	SECS-P/02- ECON-02/A
Teaching language	English

Office hours	18 hours MySNS – My timetable Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/timetable/?sourceId=unibz&department=26&degree=14100
Lecturing assistant	None
Teaching assistant	None
List of topics covered	Behavioral aspects of public service delivery; fundamental concepts and methodologies; practical application of behavioral principles to enhance the efficacy of public services; strategic incorporation of nudges, default settings and deadlines; analysis of specific public policies, from design to implementation challenges with a focus on sustainability.

Contents/ course outline	1. **Introduction to Behavioral Economics**
	    ○ Key principles and concepts
	    ○ Departure from traditional economic models
	    ○ Overview of heuristics and biases
	2. **Decision Making and Choice Architecture**
	    ○ How individuals make decisions
	    ○ The role of choice architecture in influencing decision-making
	    ○ Nudge theory and its applications
	3. **Experimental and Quasi-experimental Methods in Behavioral Economics:**
	    ○ Designing experiments to test behavioral interventions
	    ○ Analyzing the impact of policies through behavioral lenses
	4. **Ethics and Public Policy:**
	    ○ Ethical considerations in using behavioral economics for public policy
	    ○ Balancing paternalism and autonomy in policy design
	5. **Incentives and Motivations:**
	    ○ Understanding intrinsic and extrinsic motivations
	    ○ Designing incentives that align with desired behaviors
	6. **Behavioral Economics in Health and Education Policy**
	7. **Behavioral Economics in Sustainability and Environmental Policy**
	8. **Digital Technologies and Behavioral Economics:**
	    ○ The role of digital technology in shaping behavior
	    ○ Digital nudges and their policy implications
	9. **Crime and Behavioral Economics**

Teaching format	The course will combine frontal lectures, discussion of case studies and projects. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions.

Learning outcomes	Through this course the students will develop the ability to understand the key issues related to the design and implementation of public services.
	Knowledge and understanding Students will acquire a comprehensive understanding of behavioral public policy tools and theoretical frameworks, all supported by empirical data, enabling them to craft and execute impactful public policy interventions. Furthermore, the course will deepen students' knowledge of the necessary instruments for developing sustainable policies, enhancing their capacity to contribute positively to the long-term well-being of society and the economy. Students will also strengthen their understanding of public policy mechanisms, equipping them with the strategic insight needed to address complex governance challenges while adapting to the evolving demands of the public sector.
	Applying knowledge and understanding Students will develop the ability to apply the analytical methods presented to real world problems related to the design and implementation of public policies.
	Making judgments Students will learn to effectively evaluate the economic aspects of public policy. They will link academic theories directly to real-world challenges and shape recommendations grounded in solid research. They'll learn to critically use data to inform and improve public sector initiatives, with an emphasis on bettering procedures, offerings, and results. Moreover, they will discern the interconnectedness of various policies to construct comprehensive approaches to societal problems. Lastly, they will be encouraged to merge theoretical insights with factual data in their analyses, always mindful of the ethical and long-term consequences of their decisions on society and the stewardship of public resources.
	Communication skills Through discussions in class and the presentation of projects, the students will develop the ability to debate using appropriate analytical tools and evidence in the field of behavioral economics.
	Learning skills Development of learning skills that allow students to continue to study at an advanced level.

Assessment	**For Attending Students** 20% team project presentation, 20% team project report, 60% written exam. **For Non-Attending Students** 100% written exam.

	Exam: review questions
Assessment language	English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks	Evaluation criteria relevant for all assessments: clarity of answers, mastery of specific terminology, ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics, ability to apply concepts to real-world examples.
	
	• **Team Project Report:**
	   o Depth and accuracy of content.
	   o Integration and application of course concepts to the project topic.
	   o Originality and creativity in problem-solving and analysis.
	   o Clarity, organization, and professionalism of the written report.
	
	• **Team Presentation:**
	   o Effectiveness of communication and ability to engage the audience.
	   o Visual and analytical clarity of presentation materials
	   o Responsiveness to questions and ability to discuss the project in depth.
	
	• **Written Exam:**
	   o Comprehension of course material and key concepts.
	   o Ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios.
	   o Critical thinking and analytical skills in responding to review questions.
	   o Quality of written communication, including structure and articulation of arguments.

Required readings	A required reading list will be published on TEAMS.
Supplementary material	Additional material will be distributed in class and published on TEAMS.

SDGs	The course covers a wide range of SDGs, with a particular emphasis on: • Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages • Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all • Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.