

Sciences Po
Master of Public Affairs 2007-2008

Syllabus, Methodological Course, 1st semester (5 credits)

Course Title:

Risk Governance - Methodology
Policymaking, knowledge and uncertainty

Instructors:

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Course Description:

In today's world, policymaking can be a highly contentious and difficult process, due to the multiple uncertainties which characterize policy issues. The paradox of living in a "knowledge society" is that a growing number of problems on the agenda of governments, international organizations, multinational firms and large non-governmental organizations reveal gaps in the available data ("known unknowns" and "unknown unknowns"), rely on information open to multiple viewpoints (ambiguity and controversy), and rest on a difficulty in anticipating the future. Furthermore, a growing number of stakeholders demand to participate in the policymaking process, each of them bringing along their own values, interests and data. Risk governance offers a framework for the management of this state of uncertainty and controversy. Although this framework covers a wide range of instruments, tools and concepts, risk governance revolves around a central process: the production, interpretation and use of knowledge for policymaking, when knowledge is either initially lacking, incomplete, open to debate or dependent on alternative futures. Albeit closely related to risk management, the use of the term governance highlights the political nature of decision making on uncertain issues.

Course Objectives:

The objective of Risk Governance methods course is to provide high level practitioner experience in order for the students to get fully familiar with basic methodologies that are widely used in risk assessment and management : (i) risk perception; (ii) cost-benefit analysis; (iii) stakeholder participation and (iv) risk management.

By the end of this course, students will know how these basic methodologies work, what they can be used for, what can be expected of them in terms of results, and more generally when and how they can be used.

Course Requirements:

- Students following the Methods Course will have to perform practical exercises.
- In preparation of each session, students will read papers provided by the lecturer.

- A final examination will test the students' understanding of the various methodologies learned in the Course
- Attendance to the class is compulsory.

Assessment and Grade Distribution:

- 50% of the grade will be based on participation in class discussions
- 50% of the grade will be based on the final examination.

Course Outline:

Session 1. Presentation of the course (October 17)

O. Borraz, P.-B. Joly, C. Lajtha, C. Mays, M. Poumadère

Session 2. Cost Benefit Analysis and risk assessment (November 12)

James K. Hammitt - Professor of Economics and Decision Sciences
Harvard University, School of Public Health

Session 3. Cost Benefit Analysis and risk assessment (November 13)

James K. Hammitt - Professor of Economics and Decision Sciences
Harvard University, School of Public Health

Session 4. Cost Benefit Analysis and risk assessment (November 14)

James K. Hammitt - Professor of Economics and Decision Sciences
Harvard University, School of Public Health

Session 5. Risk perception (November 20)

M. Poumadère (Symlog)

Session 6. Stakeholder participation (November 27)

C. Mays (Symlog)

Session 7. Stakeholder participation (December 4)

C. Mays (Symlog)

Session 8. Risk Management (December 11)

C. Lajtha (Adageo)

Session 9. Risk perception (December 18)

M. Poumadère (Symlog)

Session 10. Risk Management (January 8)

C. Lajtha (Adageo)

Session 11. Risk Management (January 15)

C. Lajtha (Adageo)

Examination
O. Borraz, P.B. Joly