

3rd term workshop 2021-2022

Knowledge Translation- Public Outreach from the Ivory Tower

Workshop instructor:

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Date & Venue:

8 June 2022 & 13 June, Seminar room 2

Description:

Have you noticed the increasing number of academic journals where a ‘policy recommendation’ section follows the ‘abstract’? How about the permanentizing of the ‘public outreach’ section in academic CVs? More than ever academics are also evaluated for their public outreach agenda. ‘Knowledge translation’ thus became an important component of a researcher’s skill set. That same set of skills is also useful to access new job markets for those interested in complementing their academic careers.

Getting research into the mainstream can change the direction of public policy; it can also enhance your visibility and expand your profile on different job markets, many of which are compatible with academia. Writing for a non-academic professional audience requires a full awareness of who are those who can benefit from your expertise, and how you can reach them effectively. It also requires an understanding of how to deliver forward looking analysis in an accessible and convincing manner, and build and communicate narrative structures that link your research to evidence-based interventions. This flash workshop provides some shortcuts in how academics can work with policy experts, government and community experts to participate in a knowledge network that benefits the public and the researcher.

Writing in a way that considers the future implications of present events is one of the main expectations of professionals, whether they are consultants or practitioners. Yet people are surprisingly bad at predicting the future. By way of their training, researchers have the necessary analytical skills that may improve foresight. And yet they are some of the most reluctant stake holders when asked to engage in predictive activities. Our goal is to identify ways to deploy analytical skills used to explain causality into models that can predict and efficiently communicate the future. To achieve this goal, we will explore the basic principles of prediction and risk analysis. We will also practice writing to template, and create an awareness of the

necessity of writing and speaking in an accessible and convincing manner. There will be opportunities for interactive exercises and in-class feedback - all with the aim to increase your confidence in presenting your expertise to the wider public and policy makers.

Learning objectives:

- Define basic concepts related to effective policy intervention.
- Use analytical skills to identify causal connections between the present and possible futures.
- Identify the limits of forecasting tools.
- Demonstrate how to recognize when one pathway to the future is more likely than another.
- Organize to deliver a forward-looking analysis under time pressure and in an accessible language.
- Build and communicate narrative structures that turn your research outputs into predictions or evidence-based policies.
- Defend your judgement about which pathway is the most likely (and where you might be mistaken).

Format:

I will run the workshop as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm. You are expected to disagree with everything; do not hold back. The short syllabus contains academic, popular readings, policy briefs and podcasts. I understand popular readings may not be your thing, but what better way to skim the surface? The format of this workshop demands us to be fast paced.

During each session we will discuss the content of the resources suggested for consultation for each session. We will run short exercises aimed to mobilize your analytical skills towards making predictions or effective policy recommendations. We will discuss examples of risk analysis products. You will receive guidance and advice on how to write mini policy briefs (very short!).

Written assignment:

Our work will be divided in three sections that will run for two days with a few days break in between. Each section lasts half a day. At the end of the first day (June 8), each of you will choose a real-life event or subject under development and make a prediction about its implications. You will write a mini brief on that topic (800 words). A style guide and template are attached to this syllabus. During this first section we will discuss examples and how such briefs connect to our research. You will have to write this brief under time pressure. You will email me your brief before the start of the second session (June 18 – 9am). You will receive written and/or in class feedback during or after our June 18 meeting.

This brief proposal may or may not connect to your research interests or field of study. Here are some classic examples of analysis outcomes: Russia will conduct a full scale invasion of Ukraine; the European Central Bank will raise interest rates by the end of the year; Viktor Orban will win elections in Hungary. But you can also predict more general trends: anti-

Semitism will continue to rise in Europe; EU counter-disinformation strategies will fail; the US 2025 elections will be controversial. Much like any client or employer would, we will focus on why we should care about any of these predicted events: so what if Russia invades Ukraine; so what if V. Orban wins elections in 2022.

Section 1 – June 8 – 2pm – 6pm

How do we use our analytical skills to guide interventions?

Readings:

- Nate Silver. *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail – but Some Don't* (New York: Penguin, 2012). Chapter 2
- Nancy Cartwright and Jeremy Hardie, *Evidence-Based Policy: A Practical Guide to Doing it Better* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). pp. 51 – 76;
- Cristina Bicchieri, *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) Chapters 1 and 4

Podcast:

Predicting the Future Is Possible. ‘Superforecasters’ Know How: Philip Tetlock on the Ezra Klein Show <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/predicting-the-future-is-possible-superforecasters/id1548604447?i=1000543841996>

Section 2 – June 13 – 10.00 am – 12.30 pm

Why do we make mistakes? How do we get better?

- Nate Silver. *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail – but Some Don't* (New York: Penguin, 2012). Chapter 8
- Douglas W. Hubbard, *The Failure of Risk Management* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2009) Chapters 1 and 5
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018) Chapters 1, 3 and 6. [or you can listen to the BBC Reith Lectures series that inspired this book. Find link below]

Podcast:

Daniel Kahneman on Why Our Judgment is Flawed — and What to Do About It - <https://freakonomics.com/podcast/daniel-kahneman-on-why-our-judgment-is-flawed-and-what-to-do-about-it-people-i-mostly-admire-ep-27/>

The BBC Reith Lectures: Kwame Anthony Appiah - Mistaken Identities , The Reith Lectures <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b080twcz/episodes/player>

Section 3 – June 13 – 1.30 pm – 5.00pm

How do we convince people ?

- Elinor Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) Chapters 1-2, 8-9.
- Richard A. Clarke and R.P. Eddy, *Warnings: Finding Cassandras to Stop Catastrophes* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017). Chapters 3 and 6
- Chip Heath, Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (New York: Random House, 2007). Pages 3- 24

Podcast:

Robert Cialdini – How to get anyone to do anything - <https://freakonomics.com/podcast/how-to-get-anyone-to-do-anything-ep-463/>

Tara Slough and Graeme Blair on Scope Conditions -

<https://www.scopeconditionspodcast.com/episodes/episode-23-randomizing-together-part-1-with-tara-slough-and-graeme-blair> [there is also a part two]