

# ECON729: Topics in Development Economics

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Term 2, AY 2019-20

## 1 Purpose of the course

This course provides an introduction to selected topics in development economics at PhD level. I aim to cover important analytical tools and empirical results so that students can understand the current development economics literature after taking this course. Poverty, inequality, microcredit, health, and education are the main topics covered in this course.

## 2 Prerequisites

Students taking this course are expected to have completed the first-year microeconomics and econometrics courses.

## 3 Recommended Books

There is no required textbook for this course. While it is a bit outdated, you may find Ray (1998) useful. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) and Karlan and Appel (2012) provide a good non-technical introduction to various topics covered in this course and cover various experimental studies (some of which are covered in this course). For those intending to do microeconomic analysis of household surveys, Deaton (1997) is still a good book to have. While we will not be using any econometrics textbooks, you may find Cameron and Trivedi (2005) useful. You may also find Angrist and Pischke (2015) handy. If you are doing developing for your research, it is useful to have de Janvry and Sadoulet (2016). It is a fairly comprehensive book on development.

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## 4 Reading Assignments

At the end of each lecture, I will assign a few papers to read. You are welcome to read them in advance but it is probably easier to read after attending the lecture.

## 5 Structure of the Course (Tentative)

The class will meet once a week. In each session, there will be a lecture and some informal discussions if time allows. I will also assign required readings at the end of each lecture. All the reading materials will be available either electronically or from the course reserve in the library. Below is the breakdown of grade components.

1. Participation (10%). Attend lecture and participate in informal class discussion.
2. Student project (40%; 15% for Presentation and 25% for report).  
The details of the project will be announced at the beginning of the course.
3. Final Examination (50%). There is a take-home exam at the end of the course.

## 6 Schedule (Tentative)

Date	Topic
Mar 19	Project Evaluation and RCT
Mar 26	Education
Apr 02	Health and Nutrition
Apr 09	Credit
Apr 16	Poverty
Apr 23	Inequality, Student Presentation, Final Exam Distributed
Apr 28	Final Exam Due

Lectures are held at Seminar Room 4.3 in SOE/SOSS.

## 7 Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offenses.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <http://www.smuscd.org/resources.html>.

## References

- Angrist, J.D., and J.-S. Pischke (2015) *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path From Cause to Effect* (Princeton University Press)
- Banerjee, A., and E. Duflo (2011) *Poor Economics* (Public Affairs)
- Cameron, A.C., and P.K. Trivedi (2005) *Microeconometrics: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge University Press). Available from <http://www.centroportici.unina.it/centro/Cameron&Trivedi.pdf>
- de Janvry, A., and E. Sadoulet (2016) *Development Economics: Theory and Practice* (Routledge)
- Deaton, A. (1997) *The analysis of household surveys : a microeconomic approach to development policy*. (World Bank). Available from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/1997/07/694690/analysis-household-surveys-microeconomic-approach-development-policy>
- Karlan, D., and J. Appel (2012) *More Than Good Intentions: Improving the Ways the World's Poor Borrow, Save, Farm, Learn, and Stay Healthy* (Plume)
- Ray, D. (1998) *Development Economics* (Princeton University Press)