

---

## Eco 417H1S L101: Economic Development Policy: Community Engaged Learning, Winter 2018

### Prof. Freitas, Department of Economics, University of Toronto

---

#### Course Description

This course examines the causes and consequences of poverty with a focus on policy. An organization working in a particular village in a developing country has a complicated task. Even with a focus in a particular area, for example credit, education, etc., it has to figure out what intervention to implement, how to implement it and then measure its effectiveness. Over the course, we will learn how development economists approach such problems.

We start by trying to understand observed patterns of behavior by examining people's choices and the factors that affect it. This helps identify particular constraints and needs in a community. To design effective interventions or policy to meet these needs we need a proper, nuanced understanding of the context in which these decisions are made. We will work theoretically through possible mechanisms by which the policy could achieve its objectives. Specific implementation details could affect policy effectiveness as what works in one may not in another so we will spend time talking about the assumptions made, and toggling between theory and evidence. Finally, we need to empirically check if the program had any effect. We will discuss what constitutes "good" evidence, how to use it to inform and validate theory, and how it is used in program evaluation. We will critically examine the role of randomized evaluations in development.

Your in-class learning will be complemented by a required 30 hour unpaid placement in Toronto. You will get the chance to learn from a community organization that has responded effectively to local needs and explore what 'context-specific' means in your own community. Relating on-the-ground interventions to your in-class academic learning will build critical thinking skills and make you better prepared for jobs in the field of development.

#### Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to

- Characterize the main issues and mechanisms for a broad set of topics in economic development. They will construct concept maps to show patterns of connections between these topics, identifying conceptual similarities and differences.
- Use an economic framework to analyze the effects of policies using case studies, being careful to identify context-specific factors relevant to policy implementation.
- Identify and critically evaluate framework assumptions informed by empirical evidence and demonstrate this skill in their assignments and class discussions.
- Explain what constitutes good evidence and why. Describe the role of randomized evaluations in development highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the tool.
- Make policy recommendations, explaining their reasoning and decision-making criterion in an assignment. Important elements will include measurement issues, sources of data and empirical analysis.
- Link their experiential and in-class learning through a group final project that analyzes the implementation of a particular intervention. Important elements will include choosing outcome measures, identifying theoretical mechanisms through which the policy is expected to work, identifying context-specific implementation factors and a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation.
- Use reflection assignments and team feedback to identify workplace skills strengths and areas for improvement.
- Develop workplace skills, e.g. collaboration skills by working on a group project, the ability to effectively give and respond to feedback and communication skills through writing, an infographic assignment and oral presentations.
- Learn about development related issues in Toronto, innovative responses to them and issues a professional working in the field might face through their placement, reflection assignments, and structured group discussions.

## COURSE INFORMATION

### Meeting information

Section	Lecture day, time (location)	Tutorial day, time (location)
<b>L101</b>	Tue, 12-2 pm (OI 2198)	Tue, 2-3pm (OI 2198)

Please plan on being available for the **entire 3 hour block**. The first two hours will be used for lecture. The last hour will be used for assignment discussions, in-class writing, workshops, meetings (groups and individual) etc. Updates will be posted on Portal. I will post my slides on Portal the night before. We will use the slides as a framework to guide our discussion intensive classes. This means that they will be sparse, i.e. **not lecture notes and not a substitute for attending lecture**. You will need to supplement them with your own notes, both during and after class, for them to be useful for your assignments.

### Contacts

**Prof. Freitas:** Office – GE 224, [k.freitas@utoronto.ca](mailto:k.freitas@utoronto.ca), 416-978-2268  
**Office hours:** Thursdays 1.30-3pm (**location GE 213**)  
**TA:** Julian Dyer [julian.dyer@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:julian.dyer@mail.utoronto.ca)

### Communication

**Course website:** <http://freitas.faculty.economics.utoronto.ca/eco-417/> and [Portal](#)  
 I will use Portal to communicate general information, announcements, reading list, assignments and resources. You are responsible for checking it regularly. All **email** communication will be sent to the class list on Portal. If your email can be answered briefly, I will try to respond to within 3 business days. If you do not get a reply please check Portal, the syllabus or see me.

### Prerequisites

You will be dropped from the course if you do not have the required prerequisites. I will expect you to be comfortable with the material in the prerequisite courses. See <http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/index.php/index/undergraduate/load/prerequisites>

### Required Readings

The reading list will be posted on Portal. **It will be updated throughout the course. Please check it regularly.** The readings are complementary and more comprehensive than the material presented in class. Readings on JSTOR and library articles can be accessed for free if you have a **UofT IP address, use VPN if off-campus**. Always check if you can access them through the library. You should be able to access all readings for free.

## EVALUATION

### Overview

The focus of this class is for you to build links between your in-course learning and your experience at the placement. To develop and assess this, we cannot use the usual midterm and final exams. Keeping in mind the time you will spend at your placement and our course objectives, I've chosen to use **frequent, shorter and more varied** assignments instead. You will **work on assignment elements during class** to space out the work more evenly and use your time more efficiently.

Frequent work builds deeper learning, gives you feedback and lowers the weight of each individual piece. They are shorter to accommodate your time constraints. Some of them will be individual and others done in **groups** to build collaboration skills and lower the individual work burden.

### Important Dates

The grade for this class will be based on the term work below.

Term Work	Weight	Due Date	Time	Location
Placement Preference submission	0%	A.S.A.P.		Portal
Placement Required Forms	0%	10-Jan	10:00 AM	Portal
<b>(Individual) Reflections</b>				
Organization Overview and Goal Setting	10%	16-Jan	10:00 AM	Portal
Reconciling Placement + Class Experience	15%	13-Feb	10:00 AM	Portal
Job Skills	15%	27-Mar	10:00 AM	Portal
(Group) Data Assignment	15%	30-Jan		
<b>(Group) Assignment Stages</b>				
Group Presentation	13%	13-Mar	In class	
Final Submission	20%	20-Mar	10:00 AM	Portal
(Individual) Course Overview	12%	04-Apr	10:00 AM	Portal
Placement Log	0% (-25% penalty)	04-Apr	10:00 AM	Portal

Reflection Assignments	Traditional assignments work well for courses where we only have lectures and every student has the same experience. In a Community Engaged Learning course, each one of you has a different experience which means we need to use another way to help you learn. The most effective tool for this is Reflection Assignments where you actively link your academic and experiential learning for your particular experience.  You will write <b>three individual, 300-500 word</b> , reflection assignments. Assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be provided on Portal. During class some of our (ungraded) in-class writing will be reflection pieces that you can build on for these assignments. Shorter reflection pieces will be built into other work as well.
Data Assignment (Group)	You will work on a short data assignment. Your task will be to locate some data and present it on a <b>one-page infographic</b> . You'll contextualize it by explaining why you chose that measure. More details on Portal.
Assignment (Group)	You will work on a <b>1500 word (6 pages double spaced) group</b> assignment. Details provided on Portal. To give you feedback, it will be broken into stages. You will have the option to submit an outline (for bonus points). That will give us something to discuss during group meetings. Then you will have a short presentation to your class mates and then a final submission stage.
Course Overview (Individual)	Your final piece of term work is a <b>one-page visual representation</b> of what you learnt in the course. Your goal is to take a step back and see how the various topics connect to each other. It is graphical way of summarizing your learning in the course incorporating elements from your placement. As with the reflection part, you will be working on this during (ungraded) in-class writing and will use that to develop your final piece and clarify expectations.
Placement Log	You need to submit your complete placement log (available on Portal) signed by your placement supervisor and documenting that you have <b>completed your 30 hours</b> . If not submitted by the due date a 25% (out of 100) penalty will apply to your course grade.
Regrade Requests	Requests for re-grades will be accepted in writing up to <u>two weeks</u> after term work is returned. We will re-read your entire assignment so, your mark could go up, down or remain unchanged.

## COURSE POLICIES

Late Work	Late term work will be penalized at 10% per 24 hours after the due date.
Academic Integrity	Academic Integrity is central to a UofT education. We take it seriously and so should you. When we come up with new ideas we draw on contributions people have made. We must properly acknowledge them. You'd want others to do the same for your work. If you have any questions or need clarifications, please don't hesitate to ask. Better safe than sorry.  We expected you to have read the University of Toronto's <a href="#">Code of Behavior on Academic Matters</a> . Please see: <a href="http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai">http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai</a> for more details. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department of Economics and OSAI and the consequences can be severe. Being unaware of the policies or what constitutes plagiarism is, unfortunately, not a defense.
Use of Turnitin	Your writing assignments must be submitted to <a href="#">Turnitin.com</a> . The University policy is: <i>"Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site"</i> .
Resources	Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. Please feel free to approach me or Accessibility Services so we can assist you in achieving academic success in this course.  If you need accessibility services/accommodation please see: <a href="http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as">http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as</a>  Resources to help you at the UofT are listed at: <a href="https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc">https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc</a>  For course-related issues, please get in touch with me and your College Registrar. For longer run issues or issues outside our course please contact your College Registrar - <a href="http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/nextsteps/contact">http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/nextsteps/contact</a>