

ECO 403
TOPICS IN DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS AND POLICY
Department of Economics University of Toronto
Fall 2020

Class: Tuesdays 10:10 am - 12:00 pm

Location: Zoom

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Office hour:

Tuesday 9:00-10:00, online

Course Description:

This course will focus on major topics in development economics. Broadly, the focus of the course will be focused in two areas:

1. What causes some regions to be poorer than others?
2. How do people make decisions differently in the context of living in poverty?

Pre-requisites:

Microeconomic Theory: ECO200Y/204Y/206Y

Macroeconomic Theory: ECO202Y/208Y/209Y

Quantitative Methods in Economics: ECO220Y/227Y/STA(247H,248H)/250H,255H)/(257H, 261H)

Grades:

- Term paper (20%)

Final paper due: December 15th, submit on Quercus.

Late Penalty: If late, papers will be penalized by 10% per day late.

- Tutorial Group Presentation (20%)

Dates: Tutorials starting (hopefully) after reading week (subject to class size)

- Mid-term exam (take-home) (20%)

Date: October 27th – you get 24hrs and we'll use class time + office hours for you to ask questions – instead of an in-class exam.

- Final exam (take-home) (40%)

Date: TBD

Term Paper and Presentation:

You should work in groups of 3 and write an original research paper on a topic in development of your choosing. The distinguishing feature of a 400-level class is that the writing requirement is high. Accordingly, I expect you to find data to test a hypothesis related to Development Economics. You can find off-the-shelf data such as the Latino Barometer, Afro Barometer, etc. or you can use the World Values Survey, or the Demographics and Health Survey. Or you can survey

students on campus and compare responses of people that grew up in different countries (I will take the effort required to write/design/implement an original survey into account and the bar will therefore be much lower in other areas).

This is a major project that will take the whole term to complete and I expect you to form groups now and start thinking of topics. I expect everyone to choose a presentation date and topic in the first few weeks of class. You should discuss your proposed topic with me before getting started. If you would like to be assigned to a group, I can help arrange that, I'll post a sign-up Google sheet online to facilitate this. Anyone who has not been assigned a group by the end of September will be assigned to a group by me.

The project can be on anything you want, subject to the following constraints: (a) it must be about development economics; (b) it must involve empirical investigation.

Starting before reading week, we will have group presentations which will include a detailed presentation of your topic. Think of the presentation as a detailed proposal for your paper. This should include a research design, a clear statement of the research question and a detailed literature review. The presentation is worth 20% of your overall grade and should last about 20-25 minutes. I'll put a sign-up list online early in the term.

Dina O'Brien, the TA for the class, will lead the presentation classes, and will provide feedback during the presentation. You are expected to incorporate any comments / suggestions into your paper. Dina will hold office hours throughout the year, where you can discuss your term project, and get feedback prior to presenting or submitting the associated paper. I'll post her office hours on Quercus early in the term.

The paper should include the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Background to research question
3. Data
4. Empirical Strategy
5. Results
6. Conclusion

I will post a grading rubric on Quercus.

I suggest that each group ensure that they have at least one member that is good with data (i.e. is very comfortable with Stata, Matlab, R or Python) and I would also suggest including at least one team member who is a very strong writer. Further, I would suggest checking your writing on both app.grammarly.com and hemmingwaypp.com before handing it in. Neither is always right, but they are both useful in flagging some potentially serious issues with spelling, grammar and sentence structure.

Mid-term:

The midterm is Tuesday October 27th.

It will be take-home / open book and you will have 24hrs to write the exam. I will be available online during class-time and office hours on Tuesday to address any questions you may have about the exam. A grade of 0 will be given to students who do not write the midterm exam unless an appropriate and convincing note is received within one week of the missed test, explaining why the test was missed.

If the student misses the test due to illness:

- The note must be provided using the University of Toronto medical certificate. No other documentation will be accepted. You can find a copy of the form here: <http://www.healthservice.utoronto.ca/pdfs/medcert.htm>
- The form must be completed by a Medical Doctor, and include the doctor's OHIP registration number.
- The note must clearly state that on the date of the test, the student was too sick to write the test. Notes that simply state that a doctor saw the student on the date of the midterm will not be accepted. Illness before the test is not

sufficient grounds for missing the test. Nor will I accept notes that indicate that the student would have performed “sub-optimally”.

- To comply with these requirements, it is expected that the student will have met with the doctor on the date of the test.
- **The student must email me the day of the test to indicate that they will not be able to write the test.**
- I will review each sick note to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for a student to be excused from a test. Part of this review process may include meeting with the student, and/or following up with a physician.
- It is an academic offense to feign illness to avoid a test.

If the student misses a term test due to another excused absence (e.g., funeral, car accident):

- The note must be accompanied by a note from a responsible third party that I can verify in order for excusal to be considered.

If a student has been excused from the midterm exam, he or she will be permitted to write a make-up test. Consistent with university policy, there is no make-up test for the make-up test. No medical excuses or scheduling conflicts will be accepted, and a grade of zero will be applied if a student fails to write the make-up test.

Final Exam: The final will be governed by the University’s rules for final exams. It will be take-home, you’ll get 24hrs, and it will be subject to the same open-book rules as the mid-term.

Course Website

Quercus will be used for this course. I’ll use it to make announcements to the class and to post lecture notes, additional readings, practice questions, etc. It is therefore vital that you log-on at least once a week.

Email Policy

I will respond to quick emails during normal business hours, but email is a pretty inefficient way to communicate. If the email requires a detailed response, please find me online during office-hours.

Academic Misconduct

Students should note that copying, plagiarizing, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be subject to academic discipline ranging from a mark of zero on the assignment, test or examination to dismissal from the university as outlined in the academic handbook. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

As a student it is your responsibility to ensure the integrity of your work and to understand what constitutes an academic offence. If you have any concerns that you may be crossing the line, always ask your instructor. Your instructor can explain, for example, the nuances of plagiarism and how to use secondary sources appropriately; he or she will also tell you what kinds of aids -- calculators, dictionaries, etc. – are permitted in a test or exam. **Ignorance of the rules does not excuse cheating or plagiarism.** For more information regarding the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters please visit (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Outline and Reading list (subject to change):

September 15th: Introduction

September 22nd: Institutions

Engerman and Sokoloff (2000) *Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World*

Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation”. *The American Economic Review*

Nunn (2008) “Long Term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades”. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

September 29th: Political Economy of Development

Burgess, Jedwab, Miguel, Morjaria, Pedro I Miguel (2015) “The Value of Democracy: Evidence from Road Building in Kenya”, *American Economic Review*

Eifert, Miguel and Posner (2010), *Political Competition and Ethnic Identity in Africa*, *American Journal of Political Science*

Beath, Andrew and Fortini Christia and Ruben Enikolopov (2018), *Do Elected Councils Improve Governance? Experimental Evidence on Local Institutions in Afghanistan*.

October 6th: Institutional Legitimacy

Banerjee and Iyer (2005) “History, Institutions and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India”. *The American Economic Review*.

Micholopolous and Papaioannou (2012) “Pre-colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

[On the Origin of States: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo](#), Raul Sanchez de la Sierra, *Journal of Political Economy*

October 13th: Corruption

Olken (2007), “Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia.” *Journal of Political Economy*.

Fisman and Miguel (2007), “Corruption, Norms and Legal Enforcement: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets”. *Journal of Political Economy*

Hanna and Wang (2014) “Dishonesty and Selection into the Public Service”. *Unpublished*

October 20th: The Value of Relationships

Grief (1993), “Contract Enforceability and Economic Institutions in Early Trade: The Maghribi Traders’ Coalition”

Macchiavello and Morjaria (2015), “The Value of Relationships: Evidence from a Supply Shock to Kenya Rose Exports”, *American Economic Review*

October 27th: Mid-Term

November 3rd: Poverty, Information, Media, Propaganda

Mani, Mullainathan and Shafir, “Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function”, *Science*, 2013

Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide, David Yanagizawa-Drott. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 129, Issue 4, 1 November 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju020>

November 10th: Reading week

November 17th: Ethnic Fractionalization and Discrimination

Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat, Wacziarg, (2002), Fractionalization, *Journal of Economic Growth*
Jonas Hjort (2014) “Ethnic Divisions and Production in Firms” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*

Micholopoulos (2012) “*The Origins of Ethnolinguistic Diversity*”, *American Economic Review*

Alberto Alesina, Stelios Micholopoulos and Elias Papaianou (2016) “Ethnic Inequality”, *Journal of Political Economy*

November 24th: Trust

Nunn, Wantchekon (2011), “The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa”, *American Economic Review*

Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2007) *The Role of Social Capital in Financial Development*

Bloom, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2008), “The Organization of Firms Across Countries”, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

Algan and Cahuc (2012), “Inherited Trust and Growth”, *American Economic Review*

December 1st: Culture

Cohen et al (1996). “Culture of Honour: The Psychology of Violence in the South” Boulder: Westview Press

Alesina et al. (2012) *On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough*

Miguel (2005), “Poverty and Witch Killing”, *The Review of Economic Studies*.

December 8th: Time for any necessary catch-up and Q&A and exam review