ECON 5254: Applied Development Economics II
Winter 2019 Course Syllabus

Mondays and Wednesdays 13:05-14:25, LSC-COMMON AREA C214

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Office hours: Wednesdays 14:30-16:00 (no appointment needed during this time). Meetings at any other time must be arranged in advance, preferably via e-mail.

Course Description:
This course is one of the core courses of the Master of Development Economics (MDE) degree. The aim of this course is to provide an overview of the current literature on the microeconomic foundations of development as well as the literature explaining the macroeconomic factors hindering economic growth. Topics covered include the role of human capital (health, education), the functioning of factor markets, the role of institutions in mediating change and paths for sustainable growth, economics of conflict and women empowerment. On the methodological side, we will examine econometric techniques that researchers have used to identify causal relationships (ordinary least square, panel data, instrumental variables, randomized experiments, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity design).

Learning Outcomes:
• Students will attain, through lectures, readings, weekly writing, problem sets, the knowledge of the foundation of development economics.
• Students will be able to critically assess and analyze the scholarly articles through weekly writings.
• Students will be able to estimate econometric techniques that are used to identify causal relationships and evaluate their empirical analysis.
• Students will produce an independent research paper tackling the pressing issues in development through synthesizing the causal estimation techniques, data from developing countries and economic reasoning.

Requirements and Grading:
1. Midterm: 20% (in class on Wednesday, February 27)
2. Final: 30% (10:00-13:00 on Tuesday, April 9)
3. 5 Bi-Weekly Writing: 10% (500 word mini-essays) (5 in total)
4. 5 Assignments: 30% (Each worth 6%)
5. Presentation: 10%

Class Procedure: Few. Please show up on time. Please leave your phones and pagers and other electronic items OFF. At this level of graduate study, we are trying to engage in a discussion about current research, and we are trying to avoid me simply lecturing. As part of this, you must read the required material BEFORE class. Come with questions or ideas that came out of the readings.

Midterm and Final: Exams will draw from lectures and papers covered in the class. They are NOT open-book. The final exam will cover the subject matter of the entire course. The midterm will take place during the class time as indicated above. The final will be scheduled after the completion of the class. If you miss
the midterm or the final exam for a valid medical reason, you must notify me immediately, provide an appropriate medical documentation, and make arrangements to write-up exam as soon as health permits.

**Weekly Writing:** Every other week, I’ll expect a 500-word mini-essay on a point/ conclusion/ assumption/ argument that you have found interesting from some of our readings. 500 words is about one single-spaced page. You should identify an interesting idea from the readings or class discussion and expand on it. Does it make sense? What are the counter-arguments? Could you test this idea using data? Is there a prevailing counter-argument to this idea? How could this idea be used to motivate new research?

**Assignments:** There will be several homework assignments, usually, which make up 30% of your grade. They will consist of several parts: you would have to carefully read an assigned paper, and then replicate its results in Stata. The assignments will be graded on the “check-/check/check+” basis, which roughly correspond to 60/80/100 points. It’s nearly impossible to complete a homework assignment in one day, so I strongly recommend starting early. Only hard copies of homework turned in prior to class will be accepted. Homework assignments received after the due date will receive a grade equal to zero. Students are encouraged to work together on problem sets. However, each student must write up his/her own problem set. No copies will be accepted, and this includes programs.

**Presentation:** In the second half of the term, for each reading, a student will be assigned to "present the paper for 45 minutes" and “lead” the discussion on the reading. The class presentation will constitute 10% of your final grade. Class presentations are aimed in increasing your understanding on the question, contribution and main conclusions of the reading. Each student is required to meet me during the office hours a week before the presentation and have their slides and presentation ready in this meeting.

**Grading:** Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

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*Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss classroom or exam accommodations are asked to come and see me as soon as possible.*

I strongly encourage you to attend the Department Seminars which are held Fridays 2:30-4pm (see the department website for the schedule of speakers). Though seminar attendance is not counted in your grade for this class, attending seminars is an excellent way to expose yourself to current research, learn what a research paper comprises, and learn how to give oral presentations.

**General Readings:**

**Textbooks:**


The following books and seminal articles may be of interest to you.


COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change):

I. Introduction to Economic Development (Lectures 1-5)


II. Institutions and the Historical Roots of Under-development (Lectures 6-11)


III. Gender and Family in Developing World (Lectures 12-16)


IV. Economics of Conflict (Lectures 17-20)


**V. Health, Nutrition and Education in Developing World (Lectures 21-24 if time permits)**


