Development Microeconomics Syllabus

Department of Economics

ECON 5000, Fall 2026

Dalhousie University acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

Dalhousie University also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.

Course Instructor(s)

Name	Email	Office Hours
Daniel Rosenblum	*Daniel.Rosenblum@dal.ca*	Tuesdays 2:30PM-3:30PM or by appointment, *C22, 6220 University Ave (Economics Department)*

Course Description

This course is one of the core courses of the Master of Development Economics (MDE) degree. This course introduces students to microeconomic models particularly relevant to understanding economics in a developing country context. These models help us to understand some of the difficulties for firms in a developing country and the challenges for individuals and households to emerge from poverty, as well as solutions. Topics may include: theories of the household and fertility, labor market models in a developing country context, the environment and development, land markets, credit markets, human capital, technology, and political economy models.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Exclusions

None

Student Resources

Please see the course Brightspace page for a list of Faculty of Science Student Resources and Support. Your professor will be available during the semester for office hours. If you are unable to meet your professor during regular office hours, please e-mail him to schedule an appointment. Your professor will only respond to e-mails during normal working hours (8:30AM-4:30PM) on weekdays. Your professor will generally respond to e-mails within 1-2 business days.

Course Structure

Course Delivery

The course will be in-person. Lectures will not be recorded, however previously recorded lectures from last year will be posted to Brightspace.
Lectures
TR 10:05-11:25AM McCain 2102
Laboratories
None
Tutorials
None

Course Materials

The required textbook is Bardhan, P., & Udry, C. (1999). *Development microeconomics*. OUP Oxford. (Link to electronic version of the textbook available through the bookstore website; also available at the library). I also recommend *Optimization in Economic Theory* by A.K. Dixit as a general reference for tools in micro theory.

Assessment

Course Assessment:

Component	**Weight (% of final grade)**	**Date**
4 Assignments	Each worth 7.5% (30% total)	Oct 9, Oct 16, Oct 30, Nov 27
Paper (3 stages)	The 1st stage is worth 10%, 2nd stage is worth 20%, 3rd stage is worth 30%. (60% total)	Stage 1: Oct 2 Stage 2: Nov 6 Stage 3: Dec 10
Presentation of Paper (dates may be added or subtracted, depending on class size)	10%	Nov 26, Dec 1, Dec 3

Conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the Dalhousie Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	**B+** (77-79)	**F** (<70)
A (85-89)	**B** (73-76)	
A- (80-84)	**B-** (70-72)	

Assignments:
There will be 4 mathematical micro theory assignments over the semester. Submit assignments online via Brightspace.

You are allowed to discuss the assignments with your classmates as you are working on them. However, you must submit your own **individual** assignment, which should not be a direct copy of someone else's assignment. The paper stages must be completed **individually**. You are allowed to discuss your paper ideas with your classmates.

Paper:
You must write a paper in which you describe your own economic model of individual, household, firm, or government behavior to help explain a topic of interest in economic development. The paper is completed in three stages over the semester so that students receive timely feedback to revise their paper. **Stage 1** is the paper topic (2-3 pages), where students explain their economic topic of interest, its importance, and provide a brief overview of current relevant microeconomic models with a reference list (helpful library resources can be found here: https://dal.ca.libguides.com/economics). If relevant, you can include how the topic relates to empirical research as well (e.g. is it trying to help solve a debate/puzzle that has been found empirically?). **Stage 2** is a draft microeconomic model of the economic topic of interest. **THIS SHOULD BE A THEORETICAL MODEL, NOT AN ECONOMETRIC MODEL.** This may be an extension of an existing model or a completely new model. If the model is an extension of another model, this stage should make it clear what is from the old model and what

is the new contribution. **Stage 3** is the final paper (8-10 pages) explaining the topic, the existing theoretical work, the proposed new model, and its implications/predictions. Stage 3 should also discuss if the model's predictions are empirically testable and any limitations to the model. More detailed descriptions of each stage are on Brightspace. Submit the paper stages online via Brightspace.

Presentation:

During the last 3-4 classes, students will give a short presentation of their paper. The presentation should explain the topic, its importance, and how it relates to other microeconomic models or other economic literature, the model, and its implications/predictions. Feedback from the presentations is intended to improve the Final Paper. Presentations will be graded based on the Oral Presentation Grading Rubric.

Course Policies on Missed or Late Academic Requirements

Unless an extension is approved **ahead of time** or there is an emergency, **late work will be given a grade of zero.** Medical notes are **NOT** required for absences and will not be accepted. You also do not need to submit a Student Declaration of Absence form. If you are unable to complete your coursework on time, contact your professor immediately to ask for an extension.

Course Policies related to Academic Integrity

Collaboration Policy

You are allowed to discuss the assignments/paper stages with the other students. However, all assignments/paper stages must be submitted **individually and should not be a copy of another student's work**.

Academic Integrity: Dalhousie University defines plagiarism as "the submission or presentation of the work of another as if it were one's own." All of the content of your assignments and final exam is expected to be your own thoughts and words unless that content is cited appropriately. You are expected to have completed the Writing Centre Academic Integrity Module (link on Brightspace). If you have any questions about whether you may or may not be violating the university's academic integrity policy, contact your professor before submitting your assignments/paper parts.

AI/Large Language Models (LLM): Unless you are told to use an AI/LLM program, such as ChatGPT, as part of the instructions of an assignment, **you are not allowed to use AI/LLM programs to assist you in writing your assignments**.

Learning Objectives

Understand, analyze, and evaluate a range of microeconomic models of development through readings, lectures, and assignments.

Apply microeconomic theory by designing your own economic model

Course Content

Tentative Course Content and Outline (subject to change by the professor)

Week 1:
September 8: Introduction
September 10: Micro-Theory Tools Part 1

Week 2:
September 15: Micro-Theory Tools Part 2
September 17: Micro-Theory Tools Part 3 and opportunity to discuss your paper topics.

Week 3:
September 22 and 24: Chapter 2: Theory of the household and intra-household bargaining. Unitary vs collective household models.

Week 4: (Paper Stage #1 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Oct 2)
September 29 and October 1: Chapter 3: Models of fertility and the demographic transition.

Week 5: (Assignment #1 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Oct 9)
October 6 and 8: Chapter 4: Labor market models

Week 6: (Assignment #2 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Oct 16)
October 13 and 15: Chapter 6: Rural land markets

Week 7:
October 20 and 22: Chapter 7: Credit markets

Week 8: (Assignment #3 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Oct 30)
October 27 and 29: Chapter 8: Risk and insurance

Week 9: (Paper Stage #2 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Nov 6)
November 3 and 5: Chapter 11: Efficiency/Equity Tradeoffs in Poverty Alleviation

Fall Break: No classes Nov 9-13

Week 10:
November 17 and 19: Chapter 12: Technological Adoption and Learning

Week 11: **(Assignment #4 Due by 11:59PM, Friday Nov 27)**
November 24: Chapter 13: Environment and Development
November 26: Paper presentations

Week 12:
December 1: Paper presentations
December 3: Paper presentations

Final Paper (Stage #3) Due by 11:59PM, December 10th.

Syllabus Appendix

(Formerly University Policies and Statements)

Please go to the following link for Student Supports & University Statements, Policies, and Guidelines:

https://dalu.sharepoint.com/sites/learn-teach/SitePages/syllabus-appendix.aspx