

Applied Research in Development Economics

ECO 685

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Objective:

The primary focus of the course is reading and understanding the recent empirical research in development economics. Since it is impossible to cover all possible topics in this area within the time-frame, I would like to focus on selected areas relevant in more recent times and it could be used as a sequence to first Graduate Level Development Economics course (ECO 605).

The objective of the course can be divided into two components: The first component is that students should learn about the major problems and issues in developing world; should critically study the readings on selected topics, and should be able to analyze how the problems are addressed in applied research .

The second learning component from the course is that students should pick up the expertise in applying some of these techniques in areas of development economics. The reading list should include papers rich in empirical techniques, so that students are able to devise identification mechanism in establishing causality. By the end of the program, they should be able to measure the impact of causal effects of programs in selected areas, such as, health, education, and job market programs in development sector, in experimental, quasi-experimental settings. This second component will carry about 70 percent weightage in the course.

Evaluation:

The course evaluation has two components:

1. First one is a mid-term: 30 % weight –

It will be a 2-hour exam, where I will give two research problems, and you have to suggest ways to address that and propose the methodology to solve it. It will be relative grading and your answers will be judged on the basis of its relevance in development literature, how innovative is it, whether your solution can be implemented or scaled up, what could be the problems issues around it.

2. **Second one is several assignments throughout the semester**, the compilation of which will lead to a term paper: **70% weight**

The components in the second part include:

- One assignment of selecting a research problem and question: 10%
- Writing a Research proposal: 30%
- Final term paper using the proposal: 30%

For each stage of submission, students should discuss the topic/submission with me in advance. Please adhere to all deadlines carefully. If you have any problem, you should discuss with me in advance (not after the deadline is over or just on that day), so that I can help you or guide you.

For students taking this course for AUDIT, it's absolutely important to be present in all my classes, read all the assigned papers and participate in the discussion in class. Since, I am not evaluating them on the basis of exam or project, it is their responsibility to let me evaluate them on the basis of their class-participation.

Contents:

The potential topics are:

- Gender and Family Economics, Labor
- Health and Nutrition
- Child Labor, and its relation to health, education, credit market
- Migration
- Financial Development, Credit Constraints, Joint Liability and Micro-Credit, Access too credit in Education
- Women and gender Roles in Education, Labor force participation

These are some preliminary selected areas; I may elaborate or brief it further as I develop the course.

Some of the above topics will be studied along with the following applied knowledge. Therefore some of the readings will specifically focus on learning the following techniques in the context of development economics.

- Program Evaluation
- Evaluation of Policy intervention

Readings:

The course may not have any required text book; however, I will circulate a list of required as well as optional readings on all the topics. Those will be journal articles.

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class regularly; else it will be difficult for me to meet the course objective. Students will need to start learning Stata during the course, if they haven't learnt it already. They will be expected to submit their assignments using that knowledge. Anyone not having the knowledge of Stata, should approach me at the beginning of semester, so that I can make necessary arrangements for faster learning.

Reference Text (Optional reading):

1. Handbook of Development Economics: Volume 4
2. Devraj Ray, Development Economics.

Prerequisite:

Graduate Level Econometrics.

Important Deadlines:

- Submission of first Assignment: Submit Research Question/s after a discussion with me: 23rd February, 2015
- Submission of Research Proposal: March 9th
- Mid term: On the Mid term week of the university, during class hours (2 hours).
- Submission of final term paper: 27th April.