Introduction to Development Economics

Lecturer: Assistant Professor Anja Tolonen
Office hours: Tue 10-12
Office: Barnard Hall 230
Class time: Tuesday & Thursday, 02.40 – 03.55 PM
Class room: ALTSCHUL HALL 903
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Prerequisites
Permission of the Instructor. No course requirements.

Course Description
Despite unprecedented improvements in global living standards, as monitored for example by the Millennium Development Goals, many challenges remain. This course aims to develop an understanding of causes and consequences of development trajectories through applying theories developed within, and outside, the field of economics throughout the last century. The literature will come from economics, political science as well as anthropology. Introducing the student to economic methodology, the course will cover growth theory starting with the Solow model and follow the evolution of the field to the very recent empirical revolution in understanding economic development. The course will discuss the crosscutting themes of gender equality and environmental sustainability, while approaching topics within economic growth, population growth, human capital, health, agriculture, urbanization, natural resources, conflict, and institutions.

Literature
Course literature:
Development Economics by Gerard Roland (main textbook)
The Age of Sustainable Development by Jeffrey D. Sachs
Economic Gangsters by Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel (available as e-read through the library)

And selected chapters from:
Development as Freedom by Amartya Sen
Women and Human Development, A Capabilities Approach by Marta Nussbaum
The Plundered Planet by Paul Collier
Running Randomized Evaluations by Glennester and Takavarasha
Missing Women by Amartya Sen, published BMJ
Oil, Islam and Women by Michael Ross, published APSR
Why Gender Matters in Economics by Mukesh Eswaran
As well as articles and blog posts provided.

Suggestion: The main textbook has a student help site:
Learning Outcomes
Students completing this seminar will:

- Develop skills for analyzing current development issues in a global context.
- Become familiar with traditional economic concepts of economic growth and recent empirical approaches to evaluating development practices.
- Think critically about recent development policies, such as the Millennium Development Goal and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Apply basic skills of empirical reasoning to current development economic problems.
- Gain confidence in analyzing and evaluating texts and research relating to development.

Honor Code
The Barnard Honor Code will be *strictly* enforced. The Code reads:

*We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our academic life. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. We consider it dishonest to remove without authorization, alter, or deface library and other academic materials. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.*

Evaluation
In-class participation (5%)
Challenge 1 (1% and the honor)
Challenge 2 (1% and the honor)
Essay Athena Film Festival (5%)
Assignment 1 Population Trends and Growth Accounting (15%)
Assignment 2 Country director (20%)
Midterm exam (15%)
Final exam (38%)

Empirical assignments
The two empirical assignments will be to analyze empirical data and answer questions. In the first assignment, the student will be required to answer questions using Excel, or equivalent type of program, and submitting written answers and graphs. The second assignment is to write a policy brief for a chosen topic and country. The students will be encouraged to seek help from The Empirical Reasoning Lab, and a special session will be set up for the class to practice using Excel.
Course outline (preliminary and subject to change)

In all topics, a special focus on gender equality and environmental sustainability will be applied. In general, Tuesday classes will have a more qualitative focus, and Thursday classes a quantitative focus.

January 19 and 21
Theme 1: Global patterns of development
Subtopics: Freedom, indicators, GPD, GNI, HDI, measurement, Millennium Development Goals, Gapminder, the development gap, inequality, gini coefficient
Readings:
- Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom: Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1
- Gerard Roland: Chapter 1, The Development Gap, Chapter 2: Poverty and Inequality
- Jeffrey Sachs, Chapter 2, An Unequal World (suggested reading)
Watch: Gap Minder

January 26 and 28
Theme 2: Crosscutting themes of gender and economic sustainability
Subtopics: Capabilities, gender, inequality, sustainability
Readings:
Lecture 3: January 26
- Matha Nussbaum: Introduction, Feminism and International Development (in Women and Human Development)
- Amartya Sen: 100 million missing women
- Esther Duflo: Women Empowerment and Economic Development
- Suggested: Seema Jayachandran: The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries (2015)
Lecture 4: January 28
- Sachs: Introduction to Sustainable Development

February 2 and 4
Theme 3: Population dynamics
Subtopics: Demographic window, fertility, gender, Condorcet, Malthusianism, Neo-Malthusianism, One-child policy
Readings:
- Roland, Chapter 3: Population Growth

February 9 and 11
Theme 4: Fundamentals of economic growth & trade
Subtopics: Solow model, inclusive growth
Readings:
- Roland Chapter 4: Economic Growth
• Mukesh Eswaran, Chapter 6: What are the effects of Globalization on Women?
Thursday February 11: Excel tutorial.
Please bring your own laptop with excel

February 16 and 18
Tuesday 16: CLASS CANCELLED (extra class Sunday)

Thursday 18
Theme 5: Human capital
Subtopics: Investment, human capital formation, returns to schooling, how to estimate returns to schooling
Readings:
• Roland, Chapter 17, Education

Sunday February 21: Extra class during Athena Film Festival. Get your free ticket online!

February 23 and 25
Theme 5 continuation: Human capital and Causal Inference
Tuesday February 23:
Readings:
Tuesday 18: How to measure Human Capital
• Glennester and Takavarasha, Running Randomized Evaluations: Chapter 2: Why Randomize?
• Article: London Review of Books regarding MacAskill “Stop the Robot Apocalypse”
• Article: Deworming: A Best Buy For Development

Thursday February 25:
Recitation class with Ana Varela Varela
• (Readings: Glennester and Takavarasha, Running Randomized Evaluations: Chapter 2: Why Randomize?)

March 1 and 3
Theme 6 Health
Subtopics: health burdens, health investment, HIV, optimal payment for malaria bed nets
Readings:
• Roland, Chapter 16: Health care delivery in developing countries
• Sachs, Chapter 9: Health for all
• Watch: Hans Rosling’s Ted talk about the HIV epidemic
• Blog posts: All you need to know about Worm Wars and The 10 things I leaned in the trenches of the Worm Wars


**Tuesday March 8**

Midterm

**March 10: Agriculture**

Theme 7: Agriculture
Subtopics: Green revolutions, agricultural productivity, subsistence farming, land rights

Readings:
- Roland, Chapter 12 Rural Land Rights and Contracts
- IFPRI – Green Revolution Curse or Blessing

**March 22 and 24**

March 22, Theme 8: Urbanization
Subtopics: Agglomeration economies, sustainable cities

Readings:
- Roland, Chapter 13, Property rights and efficiency in urban areas
- Sachs, Chapter 11, Resilient cities

March 24, Theme 9: Natural resources

Readings:
- Paul Collier, The Plundered Planet, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.
- Sachs, Chapter 6 Planetary Boundaries
- Michael Ross, Oil, Islam and Women (2009) (research paper available on CourseWorks)

**March 29 and 31**

Theme 10: Climate Change and vulnerability
Guest Lecture with Dr. Amir Jina, University of Chicago

Subtopics: Climate agreements, Sustainable development goals, mitigation and adaptation, women and climate

Readings:
- Sachs, Chapter 12
- TBC

**April 5 and 7**

Theme 11: Institutions

Subtopics: Markets, institutions, norms, and international financial institutions, South-South trade and cooperation

Readings:
- Roland Chapter 7, Institutions

**April 12 and 14**

Theme 12: Corruption

Readings:
- Roland Chapter 19, Corruption
April 19 and 21
Theme 13: Conflict and violence
Subtopics: Conflict, war, domestic violence, sexual violence in conflict
Readings:
  • Roland, Chapter 20, Conflict
  • Fisman & Miguel: Economic Gangsters: Chapter 7
  • Devries et al. Global Prevalence of Domestic Violence

April 26 and 28
Reading: TBC