Econ 590: MSPE Development Economics  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Department of Economics

Professor: Richard Akresh  
Semester: Spring 2018  
Class meeting time: Monday/Wednesday 8:00-9:50  
Classroom: David Kinley Hall, Room 123

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Course Description: This course examines microeconomic development issues in poor countries. We will examine research on health, cash transfers, early childhood development, education, risk-sharing, and the causes and welfare impacts of conflict. Much of the focus of the course will be on using empirical methods to measure the causal impact of development programs. We will study specific programs that have worked in improving health/education/child outcomes and we will discuss how economists evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

Course Prerequisites: Econ 500 (microeconomics), Econ 502 (Statistics), and enrolled in Econ 503 (Econometrics) this semester.

Course Objectives:
The first objective is to provide a critical overview of the current microeconomic development literature and central debates in economic development.

The second objective is to understand econometric and methodological issues that arise when doing microeconomic development research. In particular, we will focus on how hypotheses may be tested with data and how to identify causal relationships.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:
Grades will be based on the following:
- Problem sets and research summary (20%)
- Midterm exam 1 (25%)
- Midterm exam 2 (25%)
- Final exam (30%)
- Each student is expected to be able to discuss the required readings assigned for each class.

Exam Policy:
In the event that a student has an excused absence from one of the midterm exams, the points from the missed exam will be placed on the final. There are no make-up exams. The final will then be worth 55% rather than 30%. In the event that a student misses a second midterm exam, the instructor reserves the right to give the student a zero on that exam.
During the exams, only pens/pencils for writing are allowed in the room. There are to be no papers/books, cell phones, watches, headphones, or other items that connect to the internet. Students found to be using unapproved items are in violation of the Academic Integrity policy of the University and will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Important Dates:**

**MIDTERM #1:** Wednesday, February 14 (in class)

**MIDTERM #2:** Wednesday, March 14 (in class)

**FINAL EXAM:** Wednesday, May 9, 1:30-4:30 PM

**Readings**

On the compass course site, I have added links to most of the readings.

*Recommended readings:*

**Africa News and Development Blogs:**

*News:*
BBC Africa: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm)
All Africa: [http://allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)

*Blogs:*
[http://www.poverty-action.org/blog](http://www.poverty-action.org/blog)

**Final Exam Conflict Policy:**

From the University’s final exam policy:
- Any student having more than two consecutive final examinations is entitled to rescheduling as follows if he or she takes the following action no later than the last day of classes:
  - The student must investigate whether a conflict examination is being held at another time for any of the examinations involved.
If a conflict examination has been scheduled for any of the courses, the student must take one or more of these conflict examinations. If conflict examinations are offered for more than one course, the student must take the conflict for the course that has the largest number of students.

If no conflict examinations have been scheduled, the student must contact the instructor of the course having the largest number of students. The contact must be made no later than the last day of classes, and that instructor must provide a makeup examination.

Normally in a semester several combined-sections, conflict, and noncombined examinations are given at the same time. As a guide to resolving conflicts, an order of priority has been established within each examination period, and a student should resolve a conflict using the published examination schedules and the following priority guidelines.

- National and state professional examinations (e.g. CPA, actuarial science, Architecture Registration Examination) take priority over campus final examinations. An instructor must offer a conflict examination to a student scheduled to take a national or state professional examination and a campus final examination at the same time.
- A noncombined course examination has precedence over any combined-sections or conflict examination.
- A department offering a combined-sections final examination must provide a conflict examination if required to accommodate student conflicts.

The University’s final exam policy is available at:
http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3_part2_3-201.html

Emergency Response Recommendations:
The university maintains guidelines for emergency responses. A list of recommendations when to evacuate and when to find shelter are available at:
http://illinois.edu/cms/2251/general_emergency_response_recommendations_8_16_13_final.doc

Floor plans for specific buildings are available at:
http://police.illinois.edu/emergencyplanning/floorplans/

Statement on Accommodations:
To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TTY), or email a message to disability@uiuc.edu.

Academic Integrity:
“The University has the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity so as to protect the quality of education and research on our campus and to protect those who depend upon our integrity. Expectations of Students. It is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions. Students have been given notice of this
Part by virtue of its publication. Regardless of whether a student has actually read this Part, a student is charged with knowledge of it. Ignorance is not a defense.”

The University’s full academic integrity policy is available at:
http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html

Class Schedule:
Developing Country Overview


Development Program Evaluation

Health: HIV/AIDS


Health: Malaria, Fetal Origins Hypothesis, Vaccinations


**Risk-Sharing**


Debraj Ray, *Development Economics*, Chapter 15.1, 15.2, 15.3 [handouts]


**Education**


**Cash Transfers**


**Early Childhood Development**


**Causes of Conflict**


**Impacts of Conflict**


**FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 9, 1:30-4:30 PM**