

Syllabus
Econ 465: Economic Development
Fall 2015
Last updated: Aug 12, 2015

Professor: Toan Phan (toanphan.org)
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Office: 301 Gardner Hall
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment
Class hours:
 Section 3: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30pm-1:45pm
 Section 4: Tuesday & Thursday 03:30pm-4:45pm

Overview

Roughly half of the world's population lives in poverty (average daily income less than or equal to \$2.50 at purchasing power parity), and among them are one billion children. Why are there poor people? What characterize the economic lives of the poor? How have some societies grown out of poverty while others decline? What are the effects of global trade on growth and poverty? What are some lessons we have learned from centuries of data and decades of experimentation with economic growth and development policies?

In this course we study the science of *economic growth* and *economic development*: the theories and empirics of how economies develop. We will look at poverty from both macro- and micro-perspectives, by asking big and small questions. We will also cover a variety of important related topics (including economic inequality, female empowerment, political economy, wars, effects of environmental degradation and climate change...). Overall, we will practice three important pillars of science: curiosity (asking why?), creativity (asking how?), and critical thinking (being skeptical of existing answers, including your own). Rigorous theoretical modeling and hypothesis testing will be applied throughout.

Prerequisites: ECON 410 (Intermediate Theory: Price and Distribution), basic calculus (e.g., derivatives and integration, algebraic manipulations), basic probability and statistics (e.g., OLS regressions, understanding of correlation, statistical significance, etc.), or permission of the instructor. Most importantly: curiosity for the world.

Reading materials

1. Research papers and book excerpts (posted on Sakai)
2. "Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of The Way to Fight Global Poverty" by Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo

Grading

Midterm 1: 20%

Midterm 2: 20%
Final: 30%
Homework: 20%
Random Quizzes: 10% (note: quizzes are *unannounced* beforehand, and are based on reading assignment and/or materials covered in class; they can be at the beginning or at the end of any class.)

Policies

Academic integrity: I highly value academic integrity. I expect each of you to follow the UNC Honor System. I encourage working in groups on homework. However, each student must write up his or her own version of the homework assignment. Exams must be taken individually.

Not handing in homework or midterm on time: If you miss a deadline, then your score will be halved for each late day. (So your late score = actual score * $0.5^{\text{numbers of late days}}$). In other words, please do not miss a deadline.

Not handing in a quiz: If you miss any unannounced quiz, your score is automatically zero. The lowest quiz score will be dropped from the final grade calculation (i.e., if your quiz scores are $a_1 < a_2 < \dots < a_n$, then a_1 will not be included in the final grade calculation).

Appeals regarding the grading of a test must be submitted to me or to an Economics Department secretary in writing within one week of your receipt of the graded work. The original test must accompany the appeal. I will re-grade the entire test. Note that this may lead to a lower overall grade. Your complaint has to be in writing and in detail.

Email policy: I will do my best to respond to e-mail within 24 hours on a weekday, 48 hours on a weekend, according to the following policy:

- I only respond to e-mails posing questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. For detailed questions, please see me after class or in office hours.
- I do not reply to e-mails that request information that can be found on the web or the syllabus, so you should check those places first.
- I do not reply to e-mails regarding the results of graded material – for that, please see me after class or in office hours.