

**Spring 2021**  
**University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill**  
**Economics 590**

**Research in Development Economics**

**Dr. Klara Peter**

This syllabus contains important information about this class including important assignment dates, class policies, and topics to be covered. This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

**Target audience:** senior undergraduate students in Economics

**Email Address:** [kpeter@unc.edu](mailto:kpeter@unc.edu)

**Class Schedule:** 11:00-12:15 pm TTh

**The class is on zoom (invitations with zoom link and passcode are sent individually to enrolled students)**

**Teaching assistant (ULA):** Katie Baker ([katieb99@live.unc.edu](mailto:katieb99@live.unc.edu))

**Prerequisite:** a grade of C or better in ECON 400 and 410, co-requisite of ECON 470 or 570 or permission of instructor.

**Instructor's office hours:** Thursdays 1:20-3:20 by appointment via Calendly, additional appointment slots will be made available on Tuesdays and Fridays as needed:

<https://calendly.com/ksp0101/office-hours>

- You will find the zoom ID and passcode for office hours in the above link.
- When you zoom in, you will be in a waiting room. I will let you in as soon as the student before you leaves their session so just be patient.
- If you cannot make it, please cancel your appointment at least 3 hours in advance. Do not sign up just in case. Come when you have questions. Use one 20-min interval per person.
- Please come prepared with questions to get the most out of office hours.

**Teaching assistant's office hours:** Wednesdays 4:00-5:00 pm at: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/93827245788>. During select weeks, the teaching assistant will also conduct the Stata workshop using the same zoom link.

**Course Materials**

- Course materials including datasets will be placed in the Dropbox folder "ECON590\_2021DB".
- You will need to install the Dropbox app to allow the Stata do file to open the datasets in the Dropbox folder.
- Check your university email and the Dropbox folder on a regular basis for announcements, handouts, and assignments.

**Zoom**

- You will need Zoom to join synchronous live sessions and to access my office hours. Zoom is freely available to you and you can sign up here ([unc.zoom.us](https://unc.zoom.us)). The course meetings will not be recorded. During the zoom sessions, please **turn your videos on** but mute the sound. You are

welcome to unmute yourself when you have questions or comments. You can also virtually raise your hand and communicate in the chat box.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to advance analytical skills in the field of development economics. The course covers empirical models of development gap, economic growth, human capital, income inequality, corruption, informality, and current COVID-19 crisis. Students will learn how researchers evaluate development policies, including tax and welfare reforms, education programs, privatization, regulation, immigration, and COVID-19-related policies. Students will improve programming skills in Stata and use real-world survey data in writing a research project.

## II. COURSE COMPONENTS

Your performance in this course will be evaluated based on the following assignments:

Research assignments . . . . .	40%
In-class participation . . . . .	10%
Midterm exam . . . . .	25%
Final assessment. . . . .	25%

- *Research assignments both at home and in class (40%)*

There will be a series of empirical exercises to help students gain research experience in development economics. You will choose one of the world regions and one of the countries for your research assignments. Questions will be generic and applicable to all regions/countries. Because the answers will be provided on the due date, homework assignments submitted after the due date will receive no credit.

- *Participation (10%)*

Participation in this class is demonstrated through attendance, attention, making substantive contribution to discussions, and completing in-class assignments. I expect you to be on time, have completed the assigned readings, and actively engage and participate in the classroom activities.

- *Midterm exam (25%, **March 18<sup>th</sup>**)*

Your midterm exam will be held on **March 18th, 2021 during class**. Material for the exam will draw from your readings, empirical exercises, and class lectures. If you must miss the midterm exam for any excused reason, it is your responsibility to alert your instructor as soon as possible. You may only take the make-up exam with an official university exam excuse. Please see the University policy regarding examinations ([http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#final\\_exams](http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#final_exams)).

- *Final assessment (25%, **TBA**)*

Your final exam will be held according to the **UNC Schedule of Final Examination (TBA)**. Details on the format of the exam will be discussed as the semester progresses. Material for the exam will draw from your readings, empirical exercises, and class lectures.

## III. GRADING SCALE

The following grading scale will be employed:

92 and above	A	80 – 81	B-	68 – 69	D+
90 – 91	A-	78 – 79	C+	60 – 67	D
88 – 89	B+	72 – 77	C	59 and below	F
82 – 87	B	70 – 71	C-		

Your grade will be determined by calculating the percentage of the possible points that you earned during the semester. Any fraction greater than or equal to 0.5 rounds up, all others round down. For example, a final weighted average of 81.5 rounds to 82, which is a B; 81.4 rounds to 81, which is a B-.

If you feel that your work has been graded unfairly, you may submit it for a re-grade within one week of your work being handed back. In order for your re-grade request to be considered, you must submit the original work with NO additional markings or changes along with a detailed description of what you believe was graded unfairly and why you think you deserve additional points. Please keep in mind that I reserve the right to re-grade any and all parts of the work which is submitted for re-assessment, and your grade may increase, decrease, or stay the same as a result.

**Grades of IN (Incomplete) and AB (Absent from the Final Exam):**

Please refer to the Graduate School Handbook <http://handbook.unc.edu/grading.html> for rules regarding these grades.

**IV. CLASS POLICIES**

**Late Work Policy**

Due dates and times of assignments are firm. Assignments handed in after the due date will receive no credit.

If you must miss the final exam for any excused reason, it is your responsibility to alert your instructor and Dean as soon as possible. You may only take the make-up exam with an official university exam excuse. Please see the University policy regarding final examinations ([http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#final\\_exams](http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#final_exams)).

**Academic Integrity**

As a student of the University of North Carolina you are expected to behave in accordance with the school’s honor code. Plagiarism, forgery, unauthorized collaboration and the use of unauthorized materials are only some of the behaviors that will not be tolerated in this course. If you have any uncertainties about any of your work, please approach me before an assignment’s due date. I take academic integrity very seriously and will not hesitate to report any instance where I feel academic integrity has been compromised, either intentionally or unintentionally.

The Instrument of Student Judicial Government can be found here:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>

**Email Policy**

Please feel free to contact me by email if you have any questions about course policies or any personal concerns. My email is listed on the first page of this syllabus. I will try to respond to emails promptly, but if you haven’t heard from me in 48 hours, please do not hesitate to resend the email. Please use your UNC email, as emails from other clients could be sent to the spam folder. Please indicate in the subject of your email that you are in ECON590. For example, the subject of your email might read, “[ECON590] question about office hours.”

## Using Gradescope

All assignments will be submitted online using **Gradescope**. I will register you for Gradescope using your official UNC email address.

- You can only submit one pdf file. Thus, separate files (such as a log file, do file, your written answers, etc.) must be combined into one pdf file. Make sure that pages are properly oriented and clearly indicate where each problem appears.
- Written assignments must be typed using font size 10-12, including equations (e.g., by using Equation Editor) and also saved as a pdf file.
- To submit an assignment, please follow instructions here: <https://www.gradescope.com/help#help-center-item-student-submitting>
- To view submissions and interpret the rubric: <https://www.gradescope.com/help#help-center-item-assignments-submissions-show>
- You will receive an email once an assignment has been graded.
- Since the answers to assignments will be given during the class on the due date, I cannot enable late submissions.
- In some weeks, you will be asked to submit assignments in groups. To submit an assignment as a group, please follow the instructions here: <https://gradescope.com/help#help-center-item-studentgroup-members>
- Assignments will be weighted differently depending on their complexity. You will be able to see the maximum points for each assignment.
- Not all assignments will be graded based on the rubric, some will receive points for the submission only. The decision on how the assignment is graded will be random and determined after the submission.

## V. TEXTBOOK, READINGS, AND SOFTWARE

There is no required textbook for this class. However, you may find it helpful to consult some of these development and econometrics books throughout the semester for reference.

### Development:

Rodrick, Dani and Mark Rosenzweig, eds., *Handbook of Development Economics*, North-Holland Vol. 5, (2009).

Roland, Gerard, 2014. *Development Economics*. Pearson.

### Applied econometrics:

Angrist, Joshua and Pischke, Jorn-Steffen, 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion* (<https://www.stata.com/bookstore/mostly-harmless-econometrics/>).

Cameron, A. Colin and Trivedi, Pravin, 2010. *Microeconometrics Using Stata, Revised Edition* (<https://www.stata.com/bookstore/microeconometrics-stata>).

Cameron, A. Colin and Trivedi, Pravin, 2005. *Microeconometrics: Methods and Applications*.

Wooldridge, Jeffrey, 2016. *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*.

### Readings:

We will be reading various articles throughout the semester. The majority of articles are available online at JSTOR ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)) if they are older than 3 years. More recent articles are available through library

electronic access, NBER working paper series, and on the author’s SSRN, REPEC, or personal web sites. Please let me know if you have trouble finding any articles.

**Stata:** The software is available via high-speed Internet from the UNC Virtual Computing Laboratory <https://vcl.unc.edu/index.php?mode=selectauth>. You may also find it on computer lab machines and on computers at the UNC library. It is also available for purchase. A six-month Stata/IC student license may be purchased for \$48 at <https://www.stata.com/order/>.

## VI. COURSE TIMETABLE

	<i>Topics</i>
1	Introduction to course
	<b><i>Country-level models</i></b>
2	Data for macroeconomic development research. Writing programs in Stata.
3	Descriptive trends in economic development using Stata
4	Development gap and convergence
5	Empirical growth models. Determinants of economic growth.
6	Interpreting interactions effects in growth models
7	<i>Research workshop on convergence and growth models</i>
8	Inequality models
9	Inequality and taxes
10	Using instruments in inequality models
11	<i>Research workshop on estimating cross-country models of inequality</i>
12	Cross-county analysis of the current COVID-19 crisis.
13	Evaluation of COVID19 policies throughout the world.
14	Preparation for the midterm exam
15	Midterm (March 18)
	<b><i>Individual-level models</i></b>
16	Introduction to IPUMS and Census data
17	Creating micro workfile for an individual country
18	<i>Research workshop: calculating basic economic statistics by country and cross-country comparison</i>
19	Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition of the income gap
20	Sources for income inequality using JMP decomposition
21	The role of quantile regressions in inequality analysis
22	Inequality review
23	Main evaluation methods of development policies
24	Using DID in policy evaluation
25	<i>Research workshop on policy evaluation</i>
26	<i>Discussion of student projects</i>
27	Exam review

## VII. UNC STUDENT SERVICES

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically

appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

**Accessibility Resources and Services (ARS):** UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>.

**Diversity statement:** I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions.

**Title IX Resources:** Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).