ECON 176A
HEALTH, HUNGER AND THE HOUSEHOLD
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

OVERVIEW

This course will examine various aspects of poverty and nutrition that are faced by households in developing countries. We will explore the economic foundations that underlie growth, investments in health, the labor market, credit, and adoption of new technologies. An important focus of this course will be a discussion of how households in developing countries cope with risk. In the process of analyzing optimal decision-making in the face of credit constraints and unexpected weather shocks, we will study the importance of savings, implicit contracts, and reputation effects. Most of these issues will be examined from a microeconomic perspective.

This course is designed to strengthen a student's knowledge of the process of development at the individual and household level. It builds on the introductory class in economic development by applying the classical theories to real world situations and problems. The course aims at highlighting unique features of life in developing countries, and the often-unconventional solutions that need to be adopted to circumvent everyday problems. An important pedagogical tool of this course will be assigned readings from various economic journals. This will serve to familiarize students with advances in the development related areas of the discipline, and acquaint them with the techniques necessary for critical evaluations of theories and models.

Intermediate Microeconomics (ECON 80A) and Econometrics (ECON 184B) are prerequisites for this course.

REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements include mandatory attendance at lectures, timely completion of assigned readings, problem sets, a 10-15 pages research paper, in-class presentation, a midterm, and a final exam. The midterms and final exam (cumulative) are closed-book closed-notes exams. Six problem sets will be assigned. You may discuss your problem sets with other students but answers must be written individually. Since you have a week for each problem set, these are due first thing in class, and no late problem sets will be accepted whatever the reason.

No makeup exams will be offered during the semester. Absence from an exam is excused only if the student has a serious illness or family emergency that has been previously documented. There are no exceptions to this rule. A student who is unable to take the final exam for a legitimate reason must obtain advance authorization from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

The weighting scheme for course requirements is as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Sets</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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IMPORTANT DATES

Exams: Midterm Exam – Friday, October 16, in class
Final Exam – TBD

Paper: Due in class on December 8 (last class)

Presentations: In class on November 17, November 20, November 24, December 1

Problem Sets: Problem Set 1 – Assigned on September 4, due in class on September 11
Problem Set 2 – Assigned on September 11, due in class on September 22
Problem Set 3 – Assigned on October 2, due in class on October 9
Problem Set 4 – Assigned on October 13, due in class on October 23
Problem Set 5 – Assigned on October 27, due in class on November 6
Problem Set 6 – Assigned on November 10, due in class on November 17

TEXTBOOK


2. *Development Economics* by Debraj Ray. Referenced chapters will be distributed in class. A copy will be placed on reserve in the library

Readings from journal articles will be posted on LATTE.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, *please see me immediately*. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdje/ai/). Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

*Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be vigorously prosecuted.*

OUTLINE OF LECTURES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

**August 28, September 1: INTRODUCTION**

*Introduction* – Perkins et al., Chapter 1- Terminology, growth & development, approaches to development.

**September 4: INCOME LEVELS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

*Structural Change* – Perkins et al., Chapter 3 – Two sector models, empirical approaches.

**September 8: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY MEASURES**

*Development and Human Welfare* – Perkins, et al., Chapter 4 – Income distribution, poverty and inequality measures.

**September 11, 18: PROGRAM EVALUATION – IVs & RCTs**

Menon, Nidhiya and Kathleen McQueeney, “Christianity and Infant Health in India,” Mimeo.


**September 22, 25: NUTRITION AND HEALTH**


**October 2, 6: ENVIRONMENT, POLLUTION AND CHILD HEALTH**


**October 9, 13: MIGRATION, POVERTY AND THE LABOR MARKET**

*Labor’s Role* – Perkins et al., Chapter 8 – Migration, labor absorption through industrialization.

*Labor* – Ray, Chapter 13 – Poverty, nutrition and labor markets.

**Midterm Exam – Friday, October 16, in-class.**

**October 20, 23: PRODUCTIVITY**


October 27, 30: HUMAN CAPITAL AND NON-MARKET INVESTMENTS AND CREDIT MARKETS


Credit – Ray, Chapter 14 – Rural credit markets, theories of informal credit markets.

November 3, 6: CREDIT AND INSURANCE MARKETS


Insurance – Ray, Chapter 15 – The perfect insurance model, limits to insurance.

November 10, 13: LEARNING


November 17, 20, 24, December 1: In-class presentations on research papers.

December 4, 8: TARGETING POVERTY & REVIEW


Research Paper Due in-Class on Tuesday, December 8.

Final Exam - TBD

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