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

Professor: Richard Akresh
Semester: Spring 2023
Class meeting time: Monday/Wednesday 11:00-12:20
Classroom: David Kinley Hall, Room 215B

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Email: akresh@illinois.edu
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 12:30-1:30 or by appointment
Website: https://sites.google.com/view/Akresh/

Course Description: This course examines microeconomic development issues in poor countries. We will examine research on health, early childhood development, education, cash transfers, 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 Econ 503 (Econometrics) (or enrolled in Econ 503 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 (20%)
- Research summary (10%)
- Midterm exam 1 (20%)
- Midterm exam 2 (20%)
- Final exam (30%)
- Each student is expected to be able to discuss the required readings assigned for each class.

Exam Policy: If 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 50% rather than 30%. If 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 22 (in class)

**MIDTERM #2:** Wednesday, March 29, (in class)

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, May 11, 8:00-11:00am

**Readings**

On the compass course site, I have added links to all 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)

**Twitter:**

[https://twitter.com/seema_econ](https://twitter.com/seema_econ) (Seema Jayachandran)
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.docx
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:**
According to the Student Code, “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.” Please know that it is my responsibility as an instructor to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found here: [https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/)

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the Academic Integrity Policies. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity. **Read the full Student Code at [https://studentcode.illinois.edu/](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/)**

**Student Support**
The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. Please visit their website to find valuable resources and services: [https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/](https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/).

**Counseling Center Information:** 217-333-3704  
Location: Room 206, Student Services Building (610 East John Street, Champaign IL)

**McKinley Mental Health Information:** 217-333-2705  
Location: 3rd Floor McKinley Health Center 1109 South Lincoln, Urbana, IL

**Emergency Dean:** The Emergency Dean may be reached at (217) 333-0050 and supports students who are experiencing an emergency situation after 5 pm, in which an immediate University response is needed and which cannot wait until the next business day. The Emergency Dean is not a substitute for trained emergency personnel such as 911, Police or Fire. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911. Please review the Emergency Dean procedures: [http://odos.illinois.edu/emergency/](http://odos.illinois.edu/emergency/)

**Class Schedule:**
**Introduction and Economic Development Overview**


**Development Program Evaluation**
Health


Early Childhood Development


Health: HIV/AIDS


Risk-Sharing
Debraj Ray, *Development Economics*, Chapter 10.3 (p.388-395), Chapter 11, Chapter 15.1, 15.2, 15.3


Education


Cash Transfers


Causes of Conflict


Impacts of Conflict


**FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 11, 8:00-11:00am**