**Economics 270B: Development Economics (Ph.D. course)**

**Professor Edward Miguel** (emiguel@berkeley.edu)

**SPRING 2017 SYLLABUS**

**Description:** This course covers current research topics and methods in Development Economics. It is appropriate for Ph.D. students in Economics and related fields.

**Prerequisites:** Graduate coursework in economic theory and econometrics.

**Lectures:** Monday 2-4pm, Evans 597.
Prof. Fred Finan (Dept. of Economics) will also give two lectures in the course.

**Office hours:** Please email Corinne Cooper (ccooper@berkeley.edu) for an appointment.

**Extra discussion sections and office hours:** Daniel Haanwinckel (haanwinckel@berkeley.edu) will hold extra office hours and serve as an additional resource person for the course.

**Assignments and Grading:**
(Note: assignments should be uploaded on bCourses by 2pm on the due date.)
(1) Referee reports on papers by job market candidates (40 percent):
-- Each referee report should be no more than 3 pages double-spaced. The report should start off with a one paragraph summary of the main argument of the article. You should describe your main 3-4 points in detail as if you were writing directly to the author. Conclude the report with more minor comments. A good referee report not only clearly states the shortcomings of the work, but also lays out constructive, detailed and realistic suggestions for improvement.
-- These assignments will allow you to read and critique papers on the research frontier of development economics, and get a concrete sense of the quality of work being done by leading Ph.D. candidates in the field. These papers are also posted on bCourses.


-- Report 3 on Meredith Startz (Yale) “The value of face-to-face: Search and contracting frictions in Nigerian trade”, due Monday 3/6 [https://sites.google.com/site/meredithstartz/research]

* Extra credit option for each referee report: please critically assess the presentation of data in each of the referee report papers. You can receive one point of extra credit for each report if you also include a detailed discussion of the shortcomings of one particular table / figure in the paper, and the concrete modifications you would make to improve the presentation of the data. (This does not count toward the 3 page limit for the referee report itself. Please restrict yourself to 1 page for this additional discussion of data presentation.) For a classic treatment on the presentation of quantitative data, refer to: Tufte, Edward R. (1983). *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.* Cheshire: Graphics Press.

(2) Two problem sets (20 percent):
Problem sets require manipulation and analysis of datasets using STATA or R. I will ask you to apply some of the methods and approaches from the course to real data, and ask you to interpret the results. These assignments will provide good practice in applying econometric methods to data, something many (if not most) of you will need to do in your own research.
-- Problem set 1, posted Friday 3/24 and due Friday 4/7
-- Problem set 2, posted Friday 4/7 and due Monday 4/17

(3) One research proposal, 8-9 pages (30 percent):
The research proposal should briefly (3-4 pages) survey an existing literature in Development Economics, and then describe a planned research project (5-6 pages). Proposals should be in 12 point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins. Proposals exceeding 9 pages in length will lose credit. This assignment will encourage you to generate, refine and receive feedback on a research idea that might form part of your dissertation.
-- The research proposal is due Friday 4/28 at 2pm (uploaded on bCourses).

(4) Class participation (10 percent): In borderline cases, attendance at lecture and the quality of classroom comments may be a factor in assigning grades. Active class participation enriches the course, benefiting other students (and me), and is highly encouraged.

(5) There are no exams.

Special Accommodations: If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately by email or in office hours.

Honor Code: The student community at U.C. Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the U.C. Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The hope and expectation is that you will adhere to this code.
COURSE SYLLABUS

I. Overview of international economic development

Lecture 1: Understanding economic growth and development (1/23)


Additional readings:


Lecture 2: Sectoral productivity gaps and misallocation (1/30)


Additional readings:


II. Human capital in economic development

Lecture 3: The Psychology of poverty (2/6)


Additional readings:

**Lectures 4-5: Education (2/13, 2/27)**


Additional readings:


**Lectures 6-8: Health and nutrition (3/6, 3/13, 3/20)**


Additional readings:


**[SPRING BREAK – 3/27]**

**III. Political economy**

**Lectures 9-10: Corruption and institutions (4/3, 4/10) – by Prof. Fred Finan**

**Corruption**


Additional readings:

**Institutions**


Additional readings:

**Lectures 11-12: The political economy of conflict (4/17, 4/24)**


Additional readings:

**IV. Extra topics (for Development Economics field exam)**
**Topic 1: The persistence of historical institutions**
(Optional: read these articles during the President’s Day holiday week, 2/20.)


**Topic 2: Ethnic and social divisions**
(Optional: read these articles during the Spring Break week, 3/27.)


Additional readings:

**Topic 3: Environment and energy in economic development**
(Optional: read these articles during Reading week, 5/1.)


Additional readings: