Department of Economics
Boston College
EC 830: Topics in Development Economics
Fall 2013

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Office: Maloney 445
Office Hours: Mondays 10 am – 12 noon, or by appointment

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 – 10:15 am (Maloney 480P)

Description: EC 830 is the first course in a two-part graduate sequence in development economics. The primary motivation is to introduce students to a subset of the microeconomic literature on development and some frequently used empirical techniques. A year of graduate-level microeconomics and econometrics are pre-requisites for registration. All course materials will be posted on Blackboard Vista. Some recommended background texts are:


Requirements and Grading:

Students are expected to (1) read the starred (*) papers in advance of the lecture and (2) attend the Tuesday Applied Microeconomics Seminar (12 – 1:30 pm). The grade will be based on:

1. Presentations on papers in the reading list (10%): You will be required to make two presentations to the class on papers marked $. These presentations should be no more than 30-45 min long. Please email me your top three choices by Sep 4.

2. Two problem sets (20%): These data-intensive exercises will require STATA. I encourage you to work together on the assignments, but you should write the answers on your own. The problem sets will be posted on Sep 17 and Nov 12 and the respective due dates are Sep 27 and Nov 26.

3. A 10-15 page research proposal (25%) and its presentation (5%): The proposal should include a well-defined question, a description of its economic relevance, a brief review of the literature, a discussion of the relevant economic theory, and an overview of the data and the methodological approach that will be used. The deadlines for various sections are as follows:
   A) Oct 1: Submit 2-3 potential research questions, each with a short paragraph describing the motivation. I will provide feedback on these.
   B) Oct 15: Discussion of the relevant empirical and theoretical literature.
   C) Nov 12: Data and methodological framework.
   D) Dec 10: Classroom presentation of the proposal.
   E) Dec 11: Full proposal (by midnight).

4. Two “referee reports” (20%): Each report should be no longer than 3 double-spaced pages. You should include a one-paragraph summary of the paper’s main result, 3-4 main comments, followed by some minor points. You should clearly state the shortcomings of the work and provide constructive and realistic suggestions for improvement. The papers are:
   + Bharadwaj, Prashant and Leah K. Lakdawala (2013), “Perverse Consequences of Well-Intentioned Regulation: Evidence from India’s Child Labor Ban” (Due by Oct 17)

5. A take-home final (20%): The exam will be distributed on Dec 11 and will be due by midnight on Dec 13.
Reading List:
(Required readings are marked with a *. Papers marked with a $ are for classroom presentations.)

1. Introduction to Development Economics


2. Empirical Methods


Ravallion, Martin (2009), *Should the Randomistas Rule?*, *The Economists' Voice*, 6 (2)

3. Health and Fertility


4. Family and Gender

"Fafchamps, Marcel and Agnes R. Quisumbing (2008), "Household Formation and Marriage Markets in Rural Areas," Handbook of Development Economics, 4, 3187-3247


5. Education

"Glewwe, Paul and Michael Kremer (2006), "Schools, Teachers, and Education Outcomes in Developing Countries," Handbook of the Economics of Education, 2, 945-1017


Angrist, Joshua D. and Victor Lavy (1999), "Using Maimonides' Rule to Estimate the Effect of Class Size on
Scholastic Achievement,” Quarterly Journal of Economics, 114 (2), 533-575


6. Social Capital

*Durlauf, Steven N. and Marcel Fafchamps (2005), "Social Capital," Handbook of Economic Growth, 1B, 1639-99


7. Corruption, Accountability, and the Political Economy of Development

*Olken, Ben and Rohini Pande (2012), "Corruption in Developing Countries," Annual Review of Economics, 4, 479-509


Dal Bó, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, and Martín A. Rossi (2013), "Strengthening State Capabilities: The Role of
Financial Incentives in the Call to Public Service,” Quarterly Journal of Economics (forthcoming)


8. Behavioral Development Economics


