Department of Economics  
Boston College  
EC 887: Topics in Development Economics  
Fall 2018  

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Office: Maloney 329  
Office Hours: Thursdays 3-5 pm or email for appointment  

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm (Maloney 330)  

Description: EC 887 is the first course in a two-part graduate sequence in development economics. The primary motivation is to introduce you to a subset of the micro-economic 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 Canvas. Some recommended background texts are:  

- Banerjee, Abhijit and Esther Duflo (2011), Poor Economics, PublicAffairs  
- Wooldridge, Jeffrey (2002), Econometric Analysis of Cross Section and Panel Data, MIT Press  
- Bardhan, Pranab and Christopher Udry (1999), Development Microeconomics, Oxford University Press  

Pre-requisites: One year each of Ph.D.-level microeconomic theory and econometrics.  

Academic Integrity: Please familiarize yourself with BC’s policies and procedures on academic integrity. http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html  

Requirements and Grading: Please submit all assignments by 11:59 pm of the due date. The final grade will be based on the following:  

1. Seminar attendance (5%): You are expected to attend the Human and Economic Development (HED) seminar and the Applied Microeconomics Seminar. The schedules are available on the department webpage. If you have a class that clashes with either seminar, inform me in advance.  

2. Presentations on papers in the reading list (10% each): 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 6.
3. A 10-15 page research proposal (25%) and its presentation (10%): 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) **Sep 25** Submit 2-3 potential research questions, each with a short paragraph describing the motivation. I will provide feedback on these on Sep 26.
B) **Oct 18**: Discussion of the relevant empirical and theoretical literature.
C) **Nov 15**: Data and methodological framework.
D) **Dec 4/6**: Classroom presentation of the proposal.
E) **Dec 10**: Full proposal

4. Two “referee reports” (40%): Each report should be <= 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, if any. You should clearly state the shortcomings of the work and provide constructive and realistic suggestions for improvement. The papers are:

+ **Experimental Evidence on the Economics of Rural Electrification** by Kenneth Lee, Edward Miguel, Catherine Wolfram (Due by Oct 4)
+ **The Entertaining Way to Behavioral Change: Fighting HIV with MTV** by Abhijit Banerjee, Eliana La Ferrara, and Victor Orozco (Due by Nov 6)

**Reading List:**

Before each lecture, I will assign the readings we will discuss in the next lecture. You are expected to read the assigned papers in advance.

1. **Introduction to Development Economics**


2. Empirical Methods


Angrist and Pischke (2008), Instrumental Variables in Action: Sometimes You Get What You Need (Chap 4)


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

3. Health, Nutrition, and Productivity


4. Education


5. Fertility and the Family


6. Gender Gaps


7. Corruption and Political Economy


$Bertrand, M., S. Djankov, R. Hanna, and S. Mullainathan (2007), “Obtaining a Driving License in India: An Experimental Approach to Studying Corruption,”* 122(4), 1639-


