

ECO 4903: Undergraduate Seminar

Ji Gu

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E-mail: jgu@fiu.edu

Office hours: MW 8:45AM - 9:45AM at DM 312

Class time: MW 10:00AM-1:20AM

Classroom: Graham Center 275A

Course Description

This course serves as a capstone achievement of your economics major. We will be concentrating on topics in world economic development. Development economics is a diverse field addressing a range of vital issues. For instance, how can we accurately identify, measure, and alleviate poverty? Why isn't the whole world developed? What can history teach us about the process of development and about the prospects for the future? What is the role of geography, institutions, and trade? How do we design and implement effective policy? These and other pressing questions from the study of economic development. Topics discussed in this course include poverty, inequality measurement, economic growth, historical development, colonialism, convergence, demographics, trade, development policy and institution, credit markets, migration, and foreign aid.

Course Format

The course will be taught through two weekly classes. Students must finish the required reading assignments prior to class. Students will then make presentations and discuss readings. Readings for each class are specified in the reading list.

Course Objectives

Successful students should be able to effectively discuss readings, write research paper, and defend research and ideas orally. This course satisfies the SACS requirement in oral competency.

Textbook

No textbook is required. I post all the readings on Canvas.

Assessment

Highest Presentation	30%
The Other Presentation	10%
4 Reading Quizzes	10%
Course Paper	40%
Class Participation	10%

Presentation

- Each student is going to make presentations based on articles from the reading list. Each presentation should last about 30 minutes, during and after which all participants in the seminar are free to ask questions.
- **Each student must make two presentations, one by May 22 and the other by June 12.**
- The presentation schedule is posted on Canvas.
- Not presenting on a scheduled time will result in a presentation score of zero.
- If you are presenting, please arrive 5 minutes early to set up the projector.
- Some articles are harder to present than others. The grading on those presentations will be relatively more lenient.
- Your presentation should have two components: a summary of the reading (about 20 minutes), and your original thoughts about the reading (about 10 minutes). Regarding the latter, you can think about a few questions. For example,
 - 1) Does the paper address the question with the appropriate methods? What are the advantages/shortcomings of the methods employed?

- 2) How valid do you think the results are? Do you agree/disagree with the author(s)?
- 3) What, if anything, would you do differently?

Reading Quiz

There will be four unannounced reading quizzes. These quizzes are to test if you finished reading assignments. To compensate for any bad luck that causes you to miss a quiz, I will drop the lowest one.

Course Paper

The course paper must be a literature review. **It is due on Canvas by 11:59PM on June 14.** Your paper must meet the following formatting requirements:

- At least 8 pages of double-spaced text (not including references, tables and figures).
- Use a 12-point font and Times New Roman.
- Number the pages.
- The organization of your paper
 1. Abstract
 2. Chapters/Sections
 3. References

The goal of a literature review is to offer an overview of the literature published on a topic. A literature review should have the following elements:

- An overview of the topic under consideration; why the literature review is necessary and important.
- Division of works under review into categories.
- Summaries of each work; explanation of how each work is similar to and how it varies from the others.
- Conclusions.

Class Participation

You are expected to **attend every class on time** and participate in discussions. You will receive a class participation grade for every class meeting. Being a passive observer will cause you to

earn a grade of zero. Being late to class can also negatively affect your class participation grade. I will drop the lowest class participation grade.

Grading Policy

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	89.50 or above	B	79.50 - 83.49	C	64.50 - 69.49
A-	86.50 - 89.49	B-	74.50 - 79.49	D	59.50 - 64.49
B+	83.50 - 86.49	C+	69.50 - 74.49	F	59.49 or less

Classroom Policy

1. Personal conversations should be avoided.
2. Laptops, tablets, and cell phones are not a problem if they are being used to help enhance your learning in the classroom. They are not to be used for other personal activities.

Academic Integrity

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic misconduct. Academic honesty is fundamental to our community, and I take it very seriously. A confirmed violation of the Code of Academic Integrity in this course will result in failure for the course.

AI Policy

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student.

Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Ethics still matter and plagiarism is a serious offense.

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you need accommodations for disabilities, I ask you to contact the Disability Resource Center

(DRC) as soon as possible. The DRC will work with me to make necessary accommodations to facilitate your educational opportunities.

Tentative Course Schedule and Reading List*

Schedule	Date
Course introduction	5/6
<i>Topic 1: Introduction to Economic Development</i>	
1.1 Wheelan (2010) "Development Economics-The Wealth and Poverty of Nations" in Naked Economics: Understanding the Dismal Science.	5/6
<i>Topic 2: Understanding Development</i>	
2.1 Banerjee and Duflo (2007), "The Economic Lives of the Poor", Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol. 21(1).	5/8
<i>Topic 3: Measuring Inequality and Poverty</i>	
3.1 Deaton (2004), "Measuring Poverty" Chapter 1 in Banerjee et al., Understanding Poverty.	5/8
3.2 The Economist, "More or less equal", March 11th, 2004, and "Ravallion's Response to The Economist." April 7th, 2004.	5/13
<i>Topic 4: Modern Economic Growth Theory</i>	
4.1 Easterly (2001), "Chapter 3: Solow's Surprise" in The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics.	5/13
<i>Topic 5: Inference in Economic Development</i>	
5.1 Banerjee (2009) "Big answers for big questions: the presumption of macroeconomics" in "What Works in Development? Thinking Big and Think Small".	5/13
<i>Topic 6: Geography</i>	
6.1 Bloom and Sachs (1998), "Geography, Demography, and Economic Growth in Africa", Brookings Papers on Economic Activity	5/15
<i>Topic 7: Historical Institutions: Warfare, Colonialism, and the Slave Trade</i>	
7.1 Fisman and Miguel (2008) "Chapter 7: The Road Back from War" in Economic	5/15

Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations

7.2 Nunn (2008) "The Long-Term Effects of Africa' Slave Trades", Quarterly Journal of Economics. 5/20

7.3 Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. 5/20

Topic 8: Gender

8.1 The Economist, Dec. 17, 2008 "6.3 brides for seven brothers", Apr. 17, 2003 "Missing Sisters", and Mar. 6, 2010, "The Worldwide War on Baby Girls". 5/20

8.2 Fisman and Miguel (2008) "Chapter 6: Death by a Thousand Small Cuts" in Economic Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations. 5/22

8.3 Nancy Qian (2008). "Missing Women and the Price of Tea in China." Quarterly Journal of Economics. 5/22

Topic 9: Demographics, Population Policy, and Migration

9.1 Pritchett (1994) "Desired Fertility and the Impact of Population Policies", Population and Development Review 5/22

Topic 10: Health and Nutrition

10.1 Fox et al. (2004), "The impact of HIV/AIDS on Labour Productivity in Kenya", Tropical Medicine and International Health. 5/27

Topic 11: Education

11.1 Case (2006), "Chapter 18: The Primacy of Education" in Banerjee et al. Understanding Poverty. 5/27

11.2 Jensen, R. (2010). The (perceived) returns to education and the demand for schooling. The Quarterly Journal of Economics. 5/29

11.3 Banerjee, Abhijit and Esther Duflo (2006). "Addressing Absence." Journal of Economic Perspectives, 5/29

Topic 12: Pollution Exposure

12.1 Jayachandran (2009), "Air Quality and Early-Life Mortality Evidence from Indonesia's Wildfires." Journal of Human Resources, Vol 44(4). 6/3

Topic 13: Health Care

13.1 Das, Jishnu, Jeffrey Hammer, and Kenneth Leonard (2008). "The Quality of Medical Advice in Low-Income Countries." Journal of Economic Perspectives. 6/3

Topic 14: Credit, Insurance, and Financial Crises

14.1 Yang (2007) "Migrant Remittances." Journal of Economic Perspective, Vol 25(3). 6/3

Topic 15: Corruption, Culture, and Regulation

15.1 Fisman and Miguel (2007), "Corruption, Norms and Legal Enforcement: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets" Journal of Political Economy 6/5

15.2 Werker (2006), "How Much is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations" Journal of Political Economy 6/5

Topic 16: Behavioral Economics

16.1 Pascaline and Robinson (2013), "Why Don't the Poor Save More? Evidence from Health Savings Experiments". American Economic Review, 103(4). 6/10

16.2 Pascaline et al. (2013) "Micro-ordeals, targeting, and habit formation" 6/10

Topic 17: Globalization, Migration, and Foreign Aid

17.1 Stromberg (2007), "Natural Disasters, Economic Development, and Humanitarian Aid", Journal of Economic Perspective, 21(3): 199-222. 6/12

17.2 Clemens (2010), "The Biggest Idea in Development That No One Really Tried" In the Upton Forum and Beloit College. 6/12

*The course schedule is subject to change.