

Economic Development in the Global South

Microeconomic Foundations and Empirical Evidence

Semester: HWS 2026/27

Target group: Bachelor students in Economics

Teaching method: Lecture and tutorial, 4 SWS

Course language: English

Class times: Wednesdays 14:15-15:45 and Fridays 12:15-13:45

Session duration: 1.5 hours (90 minutes) per lecture or tutorial

Room: Übungsraum 00.028 (4310.EG.0.28)

Content

The course studies questions in development economics through economic mechanisms and empirical research. It focuses on household and firm decisions, market failures and institutions in low- and middle-income countries. Topics include agriculture, poverty, education, child development, health, gender, finance, labour markets, migration, firms, informality, institutions and crime.

Each unit connects a development question to an economic mechanism and empirical evidence. Causal identification is introduced where it is needed to understand the research, but the course is not a full econometrics or impact-evaluation course.

Previous knowledge expected

Students should be familiar with introductory microeconomics and basic statistics or econometrics, including the interpretation of regression coefficients and confidence intervals. Prior coursework in development economics and programming experience are not required.

Objectives

- Explain the economic mechanism behind a development question and derive its main predictions.
- Distinguish causal evidence from descriptive association.
- Identify the comparison, counterfactual and identifying assumption in an empirical paper.
- Interpret the direction, magnitude and uncertainty of results shown in tables and figures.
- Assess limitations, external validity and policy implications.
- Compare development outcomes and evidence across country contexts.

Teaching format

The course consists of 14 paired content units. The main lectures are concentrated in the first half of the semester. Tutorials are concentrated later and may revisit a topic several weeks after the corresponding lecture. Lectures introduce the question, mechanism and an empirical paper; tutorials work more closely with a second paper and its main tables or figures. No programming is required.

Assessment

Component	Weight
Written final examination	50%
Fourteen short preparation assignments	20%
Development in the News: presentation and class debate based on a recent news article	10%
Comparative country project	20%

Course structure and provisional schedule

Unit	Main lecture	Topic	Tutorial
1	14 Oct 2026	Development Economics and Causal Evidence	11 Nov 2026
2	16 Oct 2026	Agriculture: Technology Adoption, Inputs, Soil Health and Market Access	13 Nov 2026
3	21 Oct 2026	Poverty Traps and Social Protection	18 Nov 2026
4	23 Oct 2026	Education and Human-Capital Investment	20 Nov 2026
5	28 Oct 2026	Early Childhood Development	2 Dec 2026
6	30 Oct 2026	Measuring Child Development and Educational Outcomes	9 Dec 2026
7	4 Nov 2026	Health, Prices and Preventive Behaviour	13 Jan 2027
8	6 Nov 2026	Gender and Intrahousehold Allocation	15 Jan 2027
9	25 Nov 2026	Savings, Credit and Commitment	20 Jan 2027
10	27 Nov 2026	Risk and Insurance	To be defined
11	4 Dec 2026	Labour Markets and Labour Unions	27 Jan 2027
12	11 Dec 2026	Migration	29 Jan 2027
13	16 Dec 2026	Firms, Capital Constraints and Informality	3 Feb 2027
14	18 Dec 2026	Institutions, Crime and State Capacity	5 Feb 2027

Recommended reading

Todaro, Michael P., and Stephen C. Smith. 2020. *Economic Development*. 13th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Additional empirical papers will be listed before the relevant sessions.