



Heidelberg, February 23, 2026

**Summer Term 2026**  
**Research Seminar Political Economy and Development Economics (Master)**

Prof. Dr. Axel Dreher  
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Participants will write and present an empirical seminar paper on a research question in political economy and/or development economics. The topic can be chosen based on personal interest. Examples are given below; please contact the supervisor that your own interests are most closely aligned to based on these topics. The paper is then presented in the seminar, followed by group discussion.

- First Meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2pm – 2:15pm, Zoom  
<https://eu02web.zoom-x.de/j/64416020528?pwd=jrgJxJbacHd6fsCaNSN91ULCmMfuGq.1>  
Meeting ID: 644 1602 0528  
Passcode: 160013
- Seminar: Friday, July 10, 9am – 6pm, library room 1. floor (no online option)  
Saturday, July 11, 10am – 6pm, library room 1. floor (no online option)
- Registration deadline: Friday, May 15 (registration per mail to [annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de)). After registration, you cannot opt out. If you are registered and do not submit a thesis you fail the course.
- Deadline for paper submissions: Sunday, July 5, 23:59h  
Please send an electronic version of your seminar paper (in pdf) to [annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de)  
If you fail to meet this deadline, you fail the course.  
Should your paper not be graded as at least “sufficient” (grade 4.0), you will not be able to attend the seminar.
- Grading will be based on: Your seminar paper (60 percent)  
Your presentation (15 minutes, 30 percent)  
Your participation during discussions (10 percent)  
(You will only be graded when present during all presentations.)
- Language: Papers have to be written in English.  
Seminar meetings and all presentations will take place in English.

## Guideline for Seminar Papers

**Editing:** You may use any word processing software that you feel comfortable with. Preferentially make use of LaTeX. Papers have to be submitted by Email in PDF format.

### Style

- Font Size: 12 pt
- Line Spread: 1.5pt
- Alignment: justified
- border: 2.5cm

**Length:** The seminar papers should not exceed 12 pages excluding references, tables and title page.

### Organization

- Cover (Include name, student number, title, AI declaration)
- Table of Contents: Number headings in the table of contents and the text identically.
- Table of Figures: List all figures (if any) with number and heading.
- List of Tables: List all tables with number and heading.
- (Table of Symbols: List all symbols and variables (if any) with their definitions.)
- Content: The introduction leads to and defines the subject, the body deals with the subject and the summary sums up the results in a critical manner. Number content, table of contents, table of figures, the list of tables, and the table of symbols. Reduce the number of footnotes to a minimum. Abbreviations have to be explained. Number only important equations that you refer to. Within the text argue in economic terms and not with variables. Orthography, grammar, and style are taken into account. Refrain from excessive bulleting and numbering.
- References
- (Appendix)

**Quotations:** use Harvard style, i.e. quote within the text and not in footnotes (e.g., as has been shown by Sturm (2022)...).

**References:** all studies that you have quoted in the text have to appear in the reference list. Anything that you have only read, but that is not quoted in the text, must NOT appear in the list of references. There are no restrictions on the reference style. However, consistency is required.

**Plagiarism:** any text parts (of more than two words) or ideas that are not strictly your own have to be marked. That means that the text has to be phrased in a way that makes unambiguously clear which parts are your own thoughts and which part repeats ideas from other persons. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of your paper, i.e., you fail the course, and possible further disciplinary measures by the Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg. Each paper will be tested in that respect.

**Artificial Intelligence:** Clearly explain how you have used AI.

**Finding Literature:** The references that you get from us are only a starting point (and we will not provide these articles). You are supposed to do your own literature research. The first step in the search for relevant literature is to check the reference lists of the literature that we gave you. Good sources for economic literature, among others, are:

-<http://ideas.repec.org>

-<http://www.jstor.org>

-Business Source Premier and EconLit (via the university library website)

-<http://www.nber.org>

-<http://www.cepr.org>

A rule of thumb is that the list of references should have about as many entries as there are pages in the seminar paper, e.g., 20 pages, 15-25 references. Be prepared to read about the double amount of papers that finally make it into the list of references. Wikipedia is not a scientific source.

**Deadlines:** Make sure that you submit your paper well *ahead of the deadline*. If you miss the deadline, the rules are strict and you will not pass the course.

**Interaction with your supervisor:** It is recommended that you discuss with your supervisor (at least once, but better regularly) in order to discuss the progress of your paper. The first contact should be as soon as possible and ideally with a research concept in mind. Supervisors are:

Fernanda Almeida Ribeiro de Jesus ([fernanda.almeida@awi.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:fernanda.almeida@awi.uni-heidelberg.de))

Annika Kaiser ([annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:annika.kaiser@awi.uni-heidelberg.de))

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### Suggestions for topics by supervisor

Media and electoral accountability	Fernanda Almeida Ribeiro de Jesus
Integration of migrants into the labour market	Fernanda Almeida Ribeiro de Jesus
Political economy of immigration	Fernanda Almeida Ribeiro de Jesus
Migration and historical data	Annika Kaiser
Regime change and judicial bias	Annika Kaiser
China and overseas financing	Annika Kaiser
Analysing heterogeneous treatment effects in RCTs using ML	Robin Möllerherm
Investigating the effects of infrastructure projects.	Robin Möllerherm
Water pollution and economic growth	Robin Möllerherm
Investigating the consequences of a social media ban	Robin Möllerherm
The impact of development aid on gender equality and women empowerment	Jingke Pan
Natural resources and conflict	Jingke Pan
Greasing the wheels: corruption and infrastructure	Jingke Pan
The Pope and Tourism: Religious elevation, pilgrimage dynamics, and local economic activity	Tilmann Waffenschmidt

Chinas Soft Power in Africa: The role of Confucius Institutes in shaping attitudes toward China	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
Political influence of Religious groups on the allocation of Foreign Aid	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
Political influence of Ethnic Minorities on the allocation of Foreign Aid	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
When Leaders align: The Role of Leader Similarity in Foreign Aid Allocation	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
Cyberattacks and Financial Markets: Event-study evidence on market reactions	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
Bundesliga and Voter Turnout: Do football matches affect electoral participation?	Tilmann Waffenschmidt
Does development drive well-being? Evidence from demographics and gender equality.	Anika Khan
Shared faith and trust dynamics in development aid	Anika Khan