

**Syllabus: Economic Development (ECON 4411/6360)**  
**Spring 2026**

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<b>Office:</b>	Old CE Office 208 or Zoom/Teams
<b>Office hours:</b>	MW: 1:00pm-2:00pm (Email to book appointments)
<b>Classroom:</b>	East Architecture 309
<b>Time:</b>	MW: 9:30am – 10:45am
<b>Materials:</b>	1. Class Readings  2. STATA (Can be downloaded for free. More info <a href="#">here</a> (need to be on campus or through VPN to download)) or can be accessed for free via GT's VLab (more info <a href="#">here</a> )

**Course Objectives:** The goal of this course is to better understand poverty in the developing world and to explore the foundations of policy making directed at reducing poverty. The goals of this course encompass:

- Study key aspects of human development, including: Education, Health and nutrition, Institutions, and Property rights.
- Develop an empirical approach to understanding poverty and policy interventions.
  - Analyze detailed survey data of the world's poor.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of policies aimed at poverty reduction.
- Gain a strong foundation in Regression analysis and the use of statistical software
- Global Perspective: Integrating econometric skills with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing learning through problem sets and examples related to global challenges. Learn more about the UN SDGs here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this semester, students are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate command of the theoretical and empirical foundations of development economics
- Evaluate the effectiveness of various policies aimed at improving outcomes in the developing world.
- Analyze and interpret data to assess the conditions and challenges faced by populations in poverty.

**Class format:** The class will be a series of in-person lectures. I will post any material used (slides, notes, etc.) on Canvas. You are expected to read the assigned readings for each class before class time.

**Course Description:** The course covers the following general topics within developing countries. Refer to the *Class Schedule* for subtopics within these areas:

- Poverty traps
- Fundamental Causes of Growth
- Corruption
- Property Rights
- Health

- Education

**Participation:** Although I will not take attendance regularly, you are expected to be present at every lecture. Absences should be justified. The most important predictor of success in this class is regular attendance.

**Problem sets:** There will be five problem sets. These are mainly empirical exercises that require statistical software such as Stata to complete them. *Problem sets turned in within a day after the due date will receive half credit.* No problem set will be accepted more than a day late without a valid excuse. Problem sets need to be submitted on Canvas. The use of LLMs such as ChatGPT for the problem sets is strictly prohibited. *Lowest problem set grade will be dropped.*

**Exams:** There will be three exams: Two midterms and a final. Exams are in person. Refer to *Grades* for the dates of the exams. All exams are obligatory (no make-ups). *The lowest midterm grade will be substituted with the final exam grade as long as final exam grade is higher.*

**Idea:** You will submit a research idea related to one of the topics covered in class. I will provide you with a template that you need for this submission. This template and additional instructions are on Canvas. LLMs can be used for the idea generation stage of this assignment.

**Grading:** Your grade is based on two exams, five problem sets, and the research idea (except for the Final exam, the scheduled times may change)

Idea (10%):	See date in <i>Class Schedule</i>
Problem Sets (20%):	See due dates in <i>Class Schedule</i>
Midterm 1 (20%):	See date in <i>Class Schedule</i>
Midterm 2 (20%):	See date in <i>Class Schedule</i>
Final exam (30%):	See date in <i>Class Schedule</i>

**Grades:**  
 A: 90 - 100  
 B: 80 - 89  
 C: 70 - 79  
 D: 60 - 69  
 F: <60

**Etiquette:** From the start of the lecture until its end, please avoid doing anything that would distract your classmates or the lecturer. *Please refrain from using electronic devices during lectures and exams unless instructed otherwise. (These include phones, calculators, laptops, and such.)*

**Academic Integrity:** Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If a student with learning needs requires special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu> as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

**Core IMPACTS Statement:**

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

**Class Schedule: Economic Development (ECON 4411)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Problem Sets</b>
1/12	Intro / Definitions	
1/14	Poverty Traps	
1/19	No Class (MLK Day)	
1/21	Technical Class 1: OLS	
1/26	Technical Class 2: Inference	
1/28	Technical Class 3: IV	
2/2	Fundamentals: Intro and Geography	
2/4	Fundamentals: Institutions	PS 1 due (Feb. 6)
2/9	Fundamentals: Institutions (Cont'd)	
2/11	Institutional Persistence	
2/16	Institutional Persistence	PS 2 due
2/18	Midterm Review	
<b>2/23</b>	<b>Midterm 1</b>	
2/25	Corruption: Theory	
3/2	Corruption: Empirics	
3/4	Corruption: Empirics	
3/9	Technical Class 4: DID	
3/11	Property Rights	
3/16	Property Rights (Cont'd)	PS 3 due
3/18	Health: Demand	
3/23	No Class (Spring Break)	
3/25	No Class (Spring Break)	
3/30	Midterm Review	
<b>4/1</b>	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
4/6	Long-Term Health	
4/8	Education: Trends and Inputs	PS 4 due
4/13	Education: Teacher Incentives	
4/15	Education: Student Incentives	
4/20	Catch-up Class	
4/22	Catch-up / Extensions	
4/27	Final Review (Last day of class)	PS 5 due Idea due
<b>5/6</b>	<b>Final Exam (Wednesday)</b>	<b>8:00 AM – 10:50 AM</b>

Topic	Reading
Intro/Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banerjee, A. V., and E. Duflo. "<a href="#">The Economic Lives of the Poor.</a>" <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i></li> <li>• Olinto et. Al (2013) "<a href="#">The State of the Poor: Where Are the Poor, Where Is Extreme Poverty Harder to End, and What Is the Current Profile of the World's Poor?</a>"</li> <li>• Chapter 4 of "<a href="#">Handbook on Poverty and Inequality</a>". World Bank</li> <li>• <b>Eliminating poverty paper (Josh and others)</b></li> </ul>
Poverty traps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class notes</li> <li>• Balboni, C., Bandiera, O., Burgess, R., Ghatak, M., &amp; Heil, A. (2022). Why do people stay poor?. <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>, 137(2), 785-844.</li> <li>• Thomas, D. et. al. (2004) "<a href="#">Causal Effect of Health on Labor Market Outcomes: Evidence from a Random Assignment Iron Supplementation Intervention.</a>"</li> </ul>
Technical class 1: OLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class notes</li> </ul>
Technical class 2: Inference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class notes</li> </ul>
Technical class 3: IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class notes</li> </ul>
Fundamentals: Intro and Geo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallup and Sachs "<a href="#">The economic burden of malaria</a>" <i>American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene</i></li> </ul>
Fundamentals: Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson (2001) "<a href="#">The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation</a>" <i>American Economic Review</i></li> <li>• Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson (2002) "<a href="#">Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> <li>• Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson (2001) "<a href="#">The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation</a>" <i>American Economic Review</i></li> <li>• Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson (2002) "<a href="#">Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> <li>• Blattman, Christopher, Scott Gehlbach, and Zeyang Yu. <a href="#">The Personalist Penalty: Varieties of Autocracy and Economic Growth</a>. No. w34093. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2025.</li> </ul>
Institutional persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dell, Melissa (2010) "<a href="#">The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining Mita.</a>" <i>Econometrica</i></li> <li>• Nunn, Nathan (2008) "<a href="#">The Long term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> </ul>

Corruption: Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mauro (1995) "<a href="#">Corruption and Growth</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> </ul>
Corruption: Empirics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olken (2007) "<a href="#">Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia</a>" <i>Journal of Political Economy</i></li> <li>• Di Tella and Shargrotsky (2003) "<a href="#">The Role of Wages and Auditing during a Crackdown on Corruption in the City of Buenos Aires</a>" <i>Journal of Law and Economics</i></li> </ul>
Technical class 4: DID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class notes</li> </ul>
Property rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hernando de Soto (2000) "The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else." <i>New York: Basic Books</i></li> <li>• Woodruff (2001) "<a href="#">Review of de Soto's The Mystery of Capital</a>" <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i></li> <li>• Erica Field (2007) "<a href="#">Entitled to work: urban property rights and labor supply in Peru</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> </ul>
Health: Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duflo, Esther, A. Banerjee and A. Deaton (2004). "<a href="#">Wealth, health, and health services in rural Rajasthan.</a>" <i>American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings</i>, 94(2): 326-330.</li> <li>• Banerjee, Duflo, Glennerster, Kothari. 2010. "<a href="#">Improving Immunization Coverage in Rural India: Clustered Randomized Controlled Evaluation of Immunization Campaigns with and without Incentives.</a>" <i>BMJ</i> 340-222</li> <li>• Ashraf, Nava, James Berry and Jesse Shapiro (2010). "<a href="#">Can Higher Prices Stimulate Product Use? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Zambia.</a>" <i>American Economic Review</i>, 100(5): 2383-2413.</li> <li>• Cohen, Jessica and Pascaline Dupas (2010). "<a href="#">Free Distribution or Cost-Sharing? Evidence from a Randomized Malaria Prevention Experiment.</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>, 125(1): 1-45.</li> <li>• Kremer, Michael and Edward Miguel. 2007. "<a href="#">The Illusion of Sustainability.</a>" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> 122(3): 1007-1065.</li> <li>• Banerjee, Duflo, Glennerster, Kothari. 2010. "<a href="#">Improving Immunization Coverage in Rural India: Clustered Randomized Controlled Evaluation of Immunization Campaigns with and without Incentives.</a>" <i>BMJ</i> 340-222</li> <li>• Thornton (2008) "<a href="#">The Demand for, and Impact of, Learning HIV Status</a>" <i>American Economic Review</i></li> </ul>
Long-term health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duflo, Esther, A. Banerjee and A. Deaton (2004). "<a href="#">Wealth, health, and health services in rural Rajasthan.</a>" <i>American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings</i></li> <li>• Martina Bjorkman and Jakob Svensson (2009). "<a href="#">Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment on</a></li> </ul>

	<p><a href="#">Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda.</a>” <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambrus, Field, and Gonzalez (2015) “<a href="#">Loss in the Time of Cholera: Long-run Impact of a Disease Epidemic on the Urban Landscape</a>”</li> </ul>
Education: Trends and Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glewwe &amp; Kremer (2006) “<a href="#">Schools, teachers, and education outcomes in developing countries</a>” <i>Handbook of the Economics of Education</i></li> <li>• Duflo (2001) “<a href="#">Schooling and Labor Market Consequences of School Construction in Indonesia: Evidence from an Unusual Policy Experiment</a>”</li> </ul>
Education: Teacher incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glewwe, Ilias, and Kremer (2010) “<a href="#">Teacher Incentives</a>” <i>American Economic Review</i></li> </ul>
Education: Student incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, Linden (2007) “<a href="#">Remedying education: Evidence from two randomized experiments in India</a>” <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i></li> </ul>