

ELECTIVE COURSE

Course Title:

PUBLIC POLICY OF DEVELOPMENT

Course Description:

This course provides an investigation of key issues in development economics from the lens of public policy. The course will deal with evaluating policy impacts crucial in development contexts and study problems in a range of domains such as poverty, health, education, among others. Lastly, the course will also deal with emerging challenges and issues in development and public policy, especially with conducting large-scale randomized control trials (RCTs).

Instructor Information:

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Requisites:

Ideally, students taking this course should be well versed with theories in microeconomics, essentials of probability, statistical methods, undergraduate-level econometrics, and some understanding of political economy.

Course Objectives:

Successful students:

- Will be able to read and absorb contemporary research in development economics and public policy.
- Will critically evaluate design and implementation of public policy.
- Will develop an ability to think about design of randomized control trials (RCTs).
- Will be able to critically review complex public policy problems through the lens of development economics.

Course Content:

1. Institutions and Public Policy: This unit will introduce fundamental concepts and theories in development and public policy using an institutional approach.
 - Institutions in public policy and development
 - Market failure, government failure, and institutions.
2. Health: This week will cover contemporary issues in health, healthcare, and policy.
 - COVID-19 and role of public policy in health crises
 - Evaluating health outcomes using RCTs
3. Education: This week will discuss ongoing and seminal research in the education sector, covering major recent findings from development research.
 - Designing education RCTs and outcomes
 - Education policy in developing countries

ELECTIVE COURSE

4. Gender: This week will extensively discuss research focus areas in gender, women's agency and empowerment in different domains.
 - Large-scale field experiments and RCTs in gender
 - Gender and finance, institutions, labor
5. Designing RCTs and Ethics: Randomization, practical issues in designing and implementing RCTs, and ethical issues in RCTs.
 - How to randomize?
 - Ethical issues in RCTs
6. Impact Evaluation in Practice: This unit will summarize impact evaluations in public policy and development
 - Understanding and building a theory of change in IE
 - Identifying and using appropriate data sources for IE

References:

- This course will draw on a few reference books but mainly rely on research papers. Since this course relies heavily on academic research, it is important to be able to synthesize information from academic work in economics efficiently. Some advice on how to read research papers effectively can be found [here](#). Additional readings and papers will be provided alongside relevant lectures. Some additional references that may be used are provided below:
- Gertler, P. J., Martinez, S., Premand, P., Rawlings, L. B., & Vermeersch, C. M. (2011). *Impact evaluation in practice*. World Bank Publications.
- Bardhan, P., Udry, C. (1999). *Development microeconomics*. OUP Oxford.
- Glennerster, R., Takavarasha, K. (2013). *Running randomized evaluations*. Princeton University Press.

It is recommended that you read at least some of the material suggested *before* class each week so that you are better prepared.