UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Microeconomics of Development

2526-2-F5602M007-F5602M011M

Learning objectives

Having successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

- Identify and understand some of the key issues developing countries face
- Formulate a balanced, critical judgment on the status of the debate around these issues
- Confidently discuss papers in the field of Development Economics
- Critically evaluate contributions to the field of Development Economics
- Provide a positive contribution to the debate, by working on a new research proposal (optiona)

During lectures we will discuss economic notions, theories, evidence, and examples that will help understanding and exploring the topics at hand. The course is entirely based on academic articles, with a combination of classic studies and new papers at the frontier of research. You will often find these papers difficult to read, but hopefully worth it as they all ask fundamental questions. We will learn to read critically, understand the limitations of each article, and see what we learn despite the limitations. Note that the lectures will raise many questions and although we will address most of them, some are going to remain open. Ultimately, the goal of the lectures is to make you think in a critical way about issues related to development economics. Active participation is therefore highly encouraged.

Contents

This module will cover a range of topics in the field of Development Economics. The focus will be on the micro-level and the lectures will build around the evidence provided by some of the most recent studies in the field. The module will be structured in two main parts.

The first part will focus on methodology. After a short introduction to the field, we will discuss the most common methodologies used in Development Economics. We will cover both experimental and quasi-experimental approaches. Although you are probably already familiar with many of these methodologies from statistics or

econometric modules, we will focus here on how to concretely apply them within Development Economics.

In the second part we will then zoom into a set of topics of special relevance to low-income countries and we will see how the methodologies previously discussed can be applied to investigate these topics. We will discuss questions such as:

- What is the relationship between development and psychological wellbeing?
- How does poverty affect stress levels and cognitive functions?
- Do perceptions on returns to schooling affect actual educational investment decisions?
- Do school subsidies raise school enrollment?
- What are the historical origins of cross-cultural differences in beliefs and values regarding the role of women in society?
- Is it possible to modify social norm that constraint female labor force participation?
- Is there any link between climate change and violent conflicts across the globe?
- What is the impact of air pollution on child mortality?

Detailed program

Prerequisites

Good understanding of basic econometrics (master level) is required.

Teaching methods

Lectures, with a mix of "standard" lectures and more interactive tutorial-style lectures.

Assessment methods

Assessment is based on a 90-minute written exam (open-ended questions) and an optional research proposal to be developed throughout the module.

The written exam consists of two main sections. The first focuses on discussing the literature covered in class, while the second requires students to apply the tools and concepts covered in class to a new context.

The research proposal includes two submission deadlines. The first requires students to present their initial idea and research question, for which they will receive personalized feedback. The second corresponds to the submission of the final proposal.

No midterm exams are scheduled. All assessments take place exclusively during the official examination sessions.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Corse materials include lecture notes and scientific papers.

Semester

Second semester

Teaching language

English

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | CLIMATE ACTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS