ECON 440: Topics in Economics of Globalization and Development

Spring 2021

Course Information and Syllabus

Instructor: Cem Mete

**Content**

This course is intended for advanced undergraduate students who would like to explore how fundamental economic concepts can be used to analyze selected economic development challenges. The lectures and discussions will touch on labor supply and demand, targeting of social programs, informality, human capital, inequality, urbanization, economic crisis, poverty and vulnerable groups.

Lectures will consist of three segments.

1. Presentation on a development economics topic. During most weeks, we will have World Bank economists as guest presenters.
2. Discussion, question and answer period.
3. Finally, I will assign relevant readings on the newly introduced topic alongside questions to be answered in written (weekly homework).

A key component of this class will be the group assignment for the semester: formulation of a sectoral development plan for a selected country. Students will be divided into three 5-person groups. Each group will be assigned a “sector”: employment/labor-markets; education/human-capital; or poverty reduction. The lectures and associated discussions will help with these assignments, but we will also allocate dedicated time to ensure progress in the group assignments throughout the semester. Each group will make two presentations: one at the middle of the semester (to receive early feedback), one at the end.

The course grade will be based on class participation (20%), weekly homework (40%), and group assignment (40%).

* Class participation grade to be based on attendance and contributions to the in-class discussions.
* Weekly homework will simply be written responses to four basic questions about the assigned readings. Two of these questions will be somewhat generic (e.g., What is the paper’s principal question? Why is it relevant? Are there alternative interpretations of the results? What, if anything, would you do differently? The remaining two of these questions will be substantive, relating to the development topic covered. The maximum length of the weekly assignment is one page.
* Group assignment grade will be based on the sectoral-development-plan and presentation. Each group will prepare a 5-10 page report, alongside a 20-25 minutes presentation to be delivered at the end of the semester. Following the presentation, other students are encouraged to ask questions challenging the group’s arguments (I will do the same). One or more students can lead the presentation.

Objectives / learning outcomes

1. Learn about the process of economic development, the experiences of underdeveloped and developing countries, and possible explanations for the process of development and the problem of underdevelopment.

* 1. What affects economic growth, inequality, and poverty?
  2. Why do some countries achieve high levels of economic development and others do not?
  3. What are the policies governments can implement to change the growth path of their countries?

1. Learn to analyze specific economic development issues and develop proposals to address them in the form of a sectoral development plan.
2. Practice presentation and debate skills.
3. Experience working as a group to tackle a development challenge.
4. Gain familiarity with the economic development profession.