Class time and location: Fridays 10:15-1:15

Professors:
Heather Schofield (hschof@wharton.upenn.edu) – Course head and point of contact
Shing-yi Wang (was@wharton.upenn.edu)
Susanna Berkouwer (sberkou@wharton.upenn.edu)
Corinne Low (corlow@wharton.upenn.edu)

Office Hours:
Professor Schofield: Friday 2-3 on the weeks that I teach. By appointment on weeks that other professors teach.

All other professors office hours: Please schedule by email.

Description: This course will cover current microeconomic issues of developing countries including poverty, risk, savings, and human capital. We will also explore the causes and consequences of market failures that are common in many developing countries with a focus on credit, land, and labor markets. The course is designed to introduce recent research with a focus on empirical methods and testing theories with data.

Prerequisites: Micro theory at the graduate level and at least one semester of econometrics. If you are unsure whether you meet these criteria, please reach out to Prof. Schofield to discuss. Students who do not meet the prerequisites are welcome to audit the course, but are expected to do the reading and participate actively.

Course Objectives: The following is a partial list of course objectives:

1) Obtain exposure to the frontier of research in development economics

2) Develop technical skills including:
   -- Econometric approaches to identify causal relationships
   -- How to design field or lab-in-the-field experiments
   -- How to relate empirical design to economic theory

3) Learn how to produce research including:
   -- Assess how a paper contributes to the literature and what makes it valuable
   -- How to identify opportunities for natural experiments

4) Other professional skills, such as learning:
   -- To write a referee report
   -- To give a short presentation and engage in discussion about it

Grading:
The course grade will be based on the following components:

1) Two problem sets (15% each)
2) Referee report (10%)
3) Research proposal (30%)
4) Class participation and reading summaries (20%)
5) Presentation (10%)

**Problem Sets**
Additional information will be provided about each problem set three weeks in advance of the due date.

1) Thinking through an empirical design - Due Feb 4
2) Design an experiment - Due March 4

**Referee Report**
Students will write one referee report on a recent working paper or a JMP by a development job market candidate. The report should be 2-3 pages and include a one paragraph summary of the paper. The structure should include several main points (which are essential to address) followed by some minor comments (which are less critical but may still be helpful). A good report does not only highlight the problems with the paper but offers constructive, detailed and realistic suggestions for improvement. The report is due on Feb 18. Please email me by Jan 21 with your paper selection.

**Research Proposal**
At the end of the semester, students will submit a research paper or a proposal that is between 8-12 pages double-spaced excluding tables, graphs, and appendices. A research proposal will motivate and pose an original research question, offer a short literature review that emphasizes the contribution of the research, explain the model and/or data and empirical methodology. The ideal is to submit a paper with all of the previous elements and present preliminary empirical results. Another option for the research paper is to replicate an existing paper with a different data set, or extend an existing paper with newer data. Please email me a copy of the paper by noon on June 15.

**Class participation and reading summaries**
Students are required to read the “Required reading” prior to class. For all classes except the first and Dr. Wang’s, students are also required to submit a short (less than 1 page with standard margins and 11 point or larger font) summary of one paper highlighting: 1) why is the paper important and what does it contribute? (or why you think it isn’t a significant contribution), 2) the methods used the answer the question (noting any major areas of concern), and 3) any questions about or suggestions for improving the paper. Note you do not need to restate results in this summary. These summaries do not need to be polished. The goal is to start thinking deeply about what makes a paper worth writing and what can be done to aid in identification. Bullet points or short notes are fine as long as they are considered and understandable. This summary should be submitted by noon the day before class. Late
submissions will not be accepted. These will be graded on a check, check plus, check minus basis. Finally, I have downloaded all of the readings into a dropbox folder. If you would like access to this folder, please email me indicating the email address you’d like me to use to share the folder.

It is also recommended that you skim the “Recommended readings.” “Additional readings” are listed for your reference, but it is not expected that you will be familiar with them.

**Note on absences**
If you are absent because you have received a red pass for the day (for any reason other than testing non-compliance) that absence will be excused (and will not impact your course participation grade). Please email me to let me know.

**Presentations**
There will be two short presentations for each student. First, on March 25 students will do one short presentation on a recent development job market paper of their choice. This provides an opportunity to get to deeply understand a paper that is relevant for their research interests and to practice presenting. Please plan to present for 20-30 minutes which includes time for questions from the audience. Email me your preferences by March 18.

Second, each student will present on their research proposal on Apr. 22. The goals of this session are 1) to help each student brainstorm and overcome any barriers they foresee in their proposal (as well as any concerns from the audience), and 2) to learn how to provide critical yet helpful feedback to your peers. This presentation is not graded. It is intended to be helpful in improving the final research proposal so feel free to ask pointed questions in areas where you would like help.

**Special Accommodations:** If you need disability-related accommodations in this class or if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, please inform me during office hours or after class as early as possible in the term.

**Class schedule:** There will be 14 classes, each lasting 3 hours. Each meeting will be divided into two “sessions” with a short break in-between.

- **SESSIONS 1 AND 2: INTRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION DYNAMICS** (Dr. Heather Schofield) – January 14, 2022
  
  **Required**
  
  *(Note: No summary is required this week)*

  **Recommended**


*Additional*


---

**SESSIONS 3 AND 4: MISSING MARKETS, CREDIT AND SAVINGS (Dr. Heather Schofield) – January 21, 2022**

*Required*


*Recommended*


*Additional*


---

**SESSIONS 5 AND 6: HUMAN CAPITAL 1, EDUCATION (Dr. Heather Schofield) – January 28, 2022**

*Required*


Recommended


Additional


SESSIONS 7 AND 8: HUMAN CAPITAL 2, HEALTH (Dr. Heather Schofield) – February 4, 2022

Required


Recommended


Additional


**SESSIONS 9 AND 10: CONTRACTING AND FIRMS (Dr. Heather Schofield) – February 11, 2022**

**Required**

**Recommended**

**Additional**

**SESSIONS 11 AND 12: LABOR AND MIGRATION (Dr. Shing-yi Wang) - February 18, 2022**

**Required – NOTE: No summary is required this week**

**Recommended**


**Additional**


---

**SESSIONS 13 AND 14: LAND, PROPERTY RIGHTS, AND AGRICULTURE (Dr. Heather Schofield) - February 25, 2022**

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Additional**


---

**SESSIONS 15 AND 16: TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION (Dr. Heather Schofield) – March 4, 2022**
**Required**

**Recommended**

**Additional**

**SESSIONS 17 AND 18: BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS (Dr. Heather Schofield) – March 18, 2022**

**Required**

**Recommended**

**Additional**
SESSIONS 19 AND 20: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Dr. Heather Schofield) – March 25, 2022

SESSION 21: GENDER (Dr. Corinne Low) – April 1, 2022
TBD

SESSION 22: THE FAMILY (Dr. Heather Schofield) – April 1, 2022
Recommended


Additional


SESSIONS 23 AND 24: CORRUPTION (Dr. Shing-yi Wang) – April 8, 2022
Required – NOTE: No summary is required this week

Required – NOTE: No summary is required this week


Recommended

SESSION 25: ENVIRONMENT 1 – IMPACTS & HOUSEHOLDS (Dr. Susanna Berkouwer) – April 15, 2022

Required


Recommended


Additional


SESSION 26: ENVIRONMENT 2 – REGULATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, & POLITICAL ECONOMY (Dr. Susanna Berkouwer) – April 15, 2022

Required


Recommended


Additional


### SESSIONS 27 AND 28: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON RESEARCH TOPICS

**Summary of deadlines**

- January 21 – Email Prof. Schofield with choice of paper for referee report
- Feb 4 – PS1
- Feb 18 – Referee report
- March 4 – PS2
- March 18 – Email Prof. Schofield with choice of JMP to present
- March 25 – Student presentations of recent JMPs
- April 22 – Student presentations of research proposals
- June 15 – Research proposals due