BOEC0380 – Global Policy Analysis: Poverty, Development, Growth

Instructor
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Teaching Assistants and Section Times
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Time and Location
Lecture: Tuesday 16:15-18:00, Zoom
Exercise sections: Wednesday 16:15-18:00, Zoom
Zoom link (for both): https://zoom.us/j/3513830261?pwd=enFJQy9WTXppQlpLeE9OdWlDNzE2QT09

Final Exam
Tuesday 22/06/2021, Location TBD
Link to questions
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1PcKylpo2pWSuWcO1-O3bxhevHac7ySkU2Im7tZfjww/edit?usp=sharing

Course Description
This course has two primary objectives: First, it provides students with a solid overview of what we know about key topics of global development, such as the trends in poverty around the world, inequality, access to education and healthcare, international migration, world hunger and population growth. Second, it equips students with tools to critically assess statistical claims and analysis about these issues of global development, by providing an introduction to commonly used empirical methods. In other words: how to spot when someone lies with data? Students will have some opportunities to try out these methods themselves in a hands-on way.

Grading

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Problem sets (best 6 out of 7)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
<td>75%</td>
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Problem sets will be due on March 8th, 15th, April 12th, 26th, May 10th, 17th, 31st. They need to be uploaded on OLAT drop box folder. The content of the problem sets will be discussed in the exercise sessions.
You can work in groups (of up to 4 students) but each student should submit the problem set separately. If you work in group, please mark the names of other group members on your problem set, which will facilitate the grading process.

The final exam will include questions concerning the required readings, the material in the slides, and the materials covered in problem sets.

**Class Policies**
Lectures will be online. Lecture slides will be uploaded before and after class. It is mandatory that cameras be turned on during class sessions.

**Guest Speakers:**
- Lecture 8: Carol Nekesa and Frank Odhiambo, RCT experts from Kenya
- Lecture 9: Shailee Pradhan (Swiss RE), Oyebola Okungobe (World Bank), Pascal Fendrich (Helvetas), Laura Rutishauser (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs)

**Schedule and Topics (preliminary, subject to changes)**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Weekday</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>23/02</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>Global Poverty Measures I</td>
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<td>09/03</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>16/03</td>
<td>Inequality II &amp; Population Growth</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>24/03</td>
<td>Health I &amp; Introduction to Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>30/03</td>
<td>Introduction to Difference-in-Differences Analysis &amp; Perspective from Ghana on Development and Business in Africa</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Covid and Health II</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>20/04</td>
<td>Education &amp; Comparison of Impact Evaluation Methods</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>21/04</td>
<td>Career Panel &amp; Climate Change</td>
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<td>Corruption, Democracy, Institutions, and Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD)</td>
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<td>Aid &amp; Impact Measurement</td>
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<td>Colonialism, Power and Political Economy of Development</td>
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<td>18/05</td>
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<td>Migration</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>01/06</td>
<td>Review Session</td>
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Reading List
In order to keep the course up-to-date, the reading list might be updated slightly throughout the semester based on the experience of the early classes and class interests. Changes to readings will come at the latest one week before the lecture they pertain to.

The required readings are in bold. It is recommended to read them before the class and they will be part of the materials covered in the exam. The other readings are optional for those who are interested in further learning.

At the beginning of the reading list there are also a few books for further reading that might be of interest to some of you and are very related to the course content.

Suggested Additional Books for Further Reading

On empirical methods:

On development economics

On effective altruism

Lecture 1, February 23rd: Course Introduction

Lecture 2, March 2\textsuperscript{nd}: Global Poverty Measures I

- **Global Extreme Poverty** (Subsections: “Overview”; “Extreme poverty in the broader context of well-being”; “Historical poverty around the world”; “Historical poverty in today’s rich countries”; “The evolution of extreme poverty, country by country”; “Total population in extreme poverty, by world regions”; “How many poor people live in each country?”; “Who are the people living in extreme poverty?”; “Setting the International Poverty Line”; “What is the cost of ending extreme poverty”), Our World in Data. 
  \url{https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty}
- **What Are PPP Adjustments and Why Do We Need Them?**, Our World in Data. 
  \url{https://ourworldindata.org/what-are-ppps}
  \url{https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript}

Lecture 3, March 9\textsuperscript{th}: Global Poverty II & Inequality I

- **Global Economic Inequality** (In Section “The history of global economic inequality”, Subsections: “Global divergence followed by convergence”, “Global income inequality increased for 2 centuries and is now falling”, “The latest data on global inequality and a look into the future”, “Inequality within countries and inequality between countries”), Our World in Data. \url{https://ourworldindata.org/global-economic-inequality}
- **Income Inequality** (Subsections: “How unequal were preindustrial societies?”; “How has inequality in high-income countries evolved over the last century?”; “Inequality before or after taxes?”; “Inequality of disposable incomes over the long run”; “How are the incomes of the rich changing relative to the incomes of the poor?”; “High-income countries tend to have lower inequality”; “Latin America is the world region with the highest income inequality”; “Inequality in the US has been growing substantially in recent decades”; “Taxation and public spending reduce inequality”; “The Gini Coefficient”; “Pen’s Parade”), Our World in Data. \url{https://ourworldindata.org/income-inequality}
- **World Inequality Report (2018)** (Parts 4.1,4.2: pages 196-211), Alvaredo, Facundo; Chand, Lucas; Piketty, Thomas; Saez, Emmanuel; Zucman, Gabriel (2017). 
- **Die Verteilung von Einkommen und Vermögen in der Schweiz.** Foellmi, Reto & Martinez, Isabel


Lecture 4, March 16th: Inequality II & Population Growth

- "*Life Expectancy* — What Does This Actually Mean?, Our World in Data. https://ourworldindata.org/life-expectancy-how-is-it-calculated-and-how-should-it-be-interpreted
- Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things Are Better than You
Lecture 5, March 24th: Health I & Introduction to Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

Health

- **Child Mortality** (Sections:"Child mortality- where we are today" (only intro + subsection "Child mortality is an everyday tragedy of enormous scale that rarely makes the headlines"); "Mortality in the past – around half died as children" (all subsections included); "Child mortality around the world since 1800" (all subsections included); "Global picture of child mortality from 1800 until today" (all subsections included); "Child mortality and income level" (all subsections included)). Our World in Data.  
  https://ourworldindata.org/child-mortality

  https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/2012.08.30_Spring_Cleaning_0.pdf


- **Famines** (Section (all subsections included): “Famine across the world since 1860”), Our World in Data.  
  https://ourworldindata.org/famines

- **Free Malaria Bednets**, Innovation for Poverty Actions.  
  https://www.poverty-action.org/impact/free-malaria-bednets

- **Hunger and Undernourishment** (Sections (all subsections included): “Undernourishment”; “Childhood malnutrition”), Our World in Data.  
  https://ourworldindata.org/hunger-and-undernourishment

  https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/122/1/73/1924773

  https://doi.org/10.1162/qjec.2010.125.1.1

  https://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty

  https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qj0010

- **What Does a Famine Declaration Declare?**, Our World in Data.  
  https://ourworldindata.org/what-does-a-famine-declaration-declare


- **COVID-19 pandemic drives global increase in humanitarian food assistance needs: Lasting economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to adversely affect food security into 2021,**
RCT

  

  
  [https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/0002828041302109](https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/0002828041302109)

  
  [https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/introduction-to-evaluations.pdf](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/introduction-to-evaluations.pdf)


  
  [https://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty](https://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty)

  

- **Data analysis**, Duru, Maya and Sarah Kopper. [https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/data-analysis](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/data-analysis)

Lecture 6, March 30th: Introduction to Difference-in-Differences Analysis & Perspective from Ghana on Development and Business in Africa

Difference-in-differences

  


Lecture 7, March 30th: Covid & Health II

  

  
  [https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/7/6/eabe0997/tab-pdf](https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/7/6/eabe0997/tab-pdf)

- **Is there a health-wealth tradeoff during the COVID-19 crisis?** National COVID-19 Science
https://science.sciencemag.org/content/sci/371/6534/1107.full.pdf

https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.12.10.20247080v1


https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26775/w26775.pdf

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28942/w28942.pdf


National COVID-19 Science Task Force (NCS-TF) Policy Briefings on Economic Topics:


Lecture 8, April 20th: Education & Comparison of Impact Evaluation Methods

• Increasing Test Score Performance, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Cambridge, MA. (article on OLAT)

Lecture 9, April 21st: Climate Change

• Climate change and infant mortality (2018), Michael Geruso and Dean Spears: https://voxeu.org/topic/energy-environment/climate-change-and-infant-mortality
• The Shared Socioeconomic Pathways and their energy, land use, and greenhouse gas emissions implications: An overview. Riahi, Keywan, Detlef P. van Vuuren, Elmear Kriegler, Jae Edmonds, Brian C. O’Neill, Shinichiro Fujimori, Nico Bauer, Katherine Calvin, Rob Dellink, Oliver Fricko, Wolfgang Lutz, Alexander Popp, Jesus Crespo Cuaresmo, Samir KC, Marian...
Lecture 10, April 27th: Corruption, Democracy, Institutions, and Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD)

- **Corruption** (Introduction; Sub-sections from Section “Empirical View”; “Where is perceived corruption highest?”; “Where are people more likely to pay bribes to access public services?”; “How does petty corruption affect the income of the poor?”; “Where are firms more likely to be asked for bribes”), *Our World in Data*. https://ourworldindata.org/corruption
- **Democracy** (Empirical View), *Our World in Data*. https://ourworldindata.org/democracy
- **War and Peace** (Section “War and Peace after 1945”), *Our World in Data*. https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace + old version on OLAT

Lecture 11, May 4th: Aid & Impact Measurement


Lecture 12, May 11th: Colonialism, Power and Political Economy of Development

- **Colonialism, Our World in Data.** (available on OLAT)
Lecture 13, May 18th: Taxation


- **Working in Emerging Markets: Opportunities and Blind Spots,** Adhikari, Samik; Elorrieta Juan Ignacio and Dina Pomeranz. Technical Note. (available on OLAT)

- **Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking colonialism from the margins,** Purtschert, Patricia, and Harald Fischer-Tiné (2015). Springer.

- **Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things Are Better than You Think** (Chapters 6, 8), Rosling, Hans, Rosling, Ola and Anna Rosling Rönnlund (2018). Flatiron Books, New York.


- **Things to remember as you volunteer or conduct research in a developing country this summer,** Opalo, K. Ochieng’ (2015). *An Africanist Perspective*, blog. [https://kenopalo.com/2015/06/07/things-to-remember-as-you-volunteer-or-conduct-research-in-a-developing-country-this-summer/](https://kenopalo.com/2015/06/07/things-to-remember-as-you-volunteer-or-conduct-research-in-a-developing-country-this-summer/)


- **Taxation** (Sub-sections: “Taxes started growing in early-industrialised countries after the First World War”; “In the process of development, middle income countries have increased tax revenues”; “How much tax revenue do countries collect today?”; “How have income tax revenues evolved around the world?”; “How is consumption taxed?”; “How has the taxation of goods and services evolved around the world?”; “Rising GDP is associated with rising tax revenues”), *Our World in Data.* [https://ourworldindata.org/taxation](https://ourworldindata.org/taxation)


- **Building State and Citizen: How Tax Collection in Congo Engenders Citizen Engagement with the State,** Weigel, Jonathan (2018). Working Paper. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59832fbcf9a61eb15deff3b3c/t/5c1595501ac6cf467782b0cc/1544918365137/weigel_participation.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59832fbcf9a61eb15deff3b3c/t/5c1595501ac6cf467782b0cc/1544918365137/weigel_participation.pdf)


Lecture 14, May 25th: Migration


