The Formalities:

Course Instructor:
Mahesh Karra (mvkarra@bu.edu)

Instructor Office Hours (at 152 Bay State Road, Room G04C):
Mondays 3 PM – 4 PM
Wednesdays 4 PM – 5 PM
By appointment on Calendly at calendly.com/mvkarra

Teaching Assistant:
TBD

Course Website:
Log into Blackboard Learn website at learn.bu.edu

Class Times and Location:
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11:00 AM – 12:15 AM
Room 220, IRC Building

The Course:

Course Summary:
This course examines a range of issues in human development in low- and middle-income countries from the standpoint of applied economics and with a particular focus on global health and well-being. Students will be introduced to the theories of growth and development and will evaluate the empirical economics literature in order to understand key features of the human development process. Students will also be exposed to different disciplinary perspectives and approaches to understanding key problems in development. Selected topics include: (1) economic growth, global inequality, and poverty; (2) human capital (health and nutrition, education, and productivity); (3) the micro and macro links between population, health, and development; (4) agriculture, food and food security, environment, and resource management; and (5) the role of culture, gender, religion and ethnicity, leaders and institutions, and corruption in economic development. We will also examine the empirical evidence in support of programs, policies, and interventions that aim to overcome some of these problems and will evaluate the extent to which these interventions are successful.

Prerequisites and Corequisites:
Upper-level undergraduate standing or permission of instructor. A math background, particularly in probability and statistics, is encouraged. In the first week of class, I will hold an extra (optional) lecture that covers some fundamental mathematical topics for students who seek to refresh their skills. We will assume familiarity with intermediate economic theory and econometrics—including consumer theory, income and substitution effects, producer theory, experimental design, instrumental variables, and difference-in-differences estimation.
Primary Textbook:
This class is centered around two to three readings from the development literature chosen for each session (two or three readings per topic, and one topic per session). Students are required to complete the readings prior to class and will need to answer short quizzes prior to each session to demonstrate their understanding of the readings. The deadline for the submission of short quizzes is the beginning of each class – zero credit will be given for late submission. All short quizzes will have to be submitted to

IR480-680.Fall.2019@gmail.com

For students who need to re-familiarize themselves with some of more basic concepts of statistics and econometrics, I recommend to also look at Learning and Practicing Econometrics by Griffiths, Hill and Judge (1993) and Basic Econometrics by Gujarati (1995). I will assign additional readings and small (possibly Stata-based) problem sets each week which will be posted on the course website and discussed in the weekly review sections.

Evaluation:
Your grade in the class will be derived from the following components:

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<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short quizzes</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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All assignments are to be handed in on the due date in the beginning of class (11:00 AM). Unless otherwise instructed, assignments are to be individually completed. **No late work will be accepted.**

Midterm Exam
The midterm exam will be a closed-book in-class exam and will include true/false/uncertain questions as well as short-answer questions that test the understanding of the readings covered in class.

Final Project
The final project will be a paper in which students will need to apply the materials and concepts learned during the course. Each student will need to pick a low- or middle-income country, assess its current development conditions, and make specific recommendations on how the development outcomes in the country of choice could be improved most effectively.

The final paper will have five main components:
1. Introduction (~ 1 page)
2. Country background: A description of the current development landscape of the country as well as current resource allocation: what does the government spend its money on? What do donors (if there are any) spend their money on? (about 2-3 pages)
3. Proposed intervention: A description of the proposed intervention and about what is known regarding its impact. E.g. if you propose to invest into HIV prevention, you need to describe what kind of prevention you will do and conduct a PUBMED search to find all studies which have proved these interventions to be effective as well as to get a point estimate of the expected impact (2-3 pages)
4. Estimated impact: Combine parts 1) and 2) to compute the expected impact of your intervention (most likely, lower bound, upper bound (1-2 pages)
5. Summary and Discussion: Justify the main recommendation you made; discuss alternative interventions, and also the feasibility of the intervention you propose given the overall budget of the government (1-2) pages.

The overall length of the proposal cannot exceed 5,000 words. The final document will use font size 12, 1.5 line spacing, and standard one inch margins. Proposals will be evaluated with respect to their significance, innovation and approach following standard National Institute of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation (NSF) guidelines. Students are expected to choose their country and start working on the papers the week after the midterm. A preliminary outline (not to exceed 3 pages) needs to be submitted for review by November 9. The final paper is due by Wednesday, December 12, at 8:00 AM (the beginning of our last session). Students will prepare a 10-minute presentation of their final proposals and will present their proposal during the last week of class (December 4, December 6, and December 11).

Grading Policy:
The following grading system will be utilized:

90 to 100 = A
85 to 89 = A-
80 to 84 = B+
70 to 79 = B
65 to 69 = B-
60 to 64 = C+
55 to 59 = C
50 to 54 = C-
40 to 50 = D
Less than 40 = F

In the event of decimals, I shall truncate the decimal to the tenth place, round up if the decimal is greater than or equal to 0.5, and round down if the decimal is less than or equal to 0.4. NO EXCEPTIONS!

BU Academic Code of Conduct and Policies:
All members of the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, and the CAS Academic Conduct Code will be strictly enforced.

Boston University is committed to providing equal access to our coursework and programs to all students, including those with disabilities. In order to be sure that accommodations can be made in time for all exams and assignments, please plan to turn in your accommodations letter as soon as possible after the first class to me by e-mail. After you turn in your letter, please meet with me to discuss the plan for accommodations so that we can be sure that they are adequate and you are supported in your learning. If you have further questions or need additional support, please contact the Office of Disability Services (access@bu.edu).

For additional information, please refer to the complete Academic Conduct Code and the BU CAS Policies and Procedures using the links below.

https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/
https://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/
Course Outline:

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Required Readings:

**WEEK 1**

Aid and Development


**WEEK 2**

Health for Development: The Economic Debate


Health for Development: The Population Debate


**WEEK 3**

Economic Returns to Health


In-Utero and Early Childhood Development


**WEEK 4**

**Valuation of Life in Public Health**


**Private Valuation of Life**


**WEEK 5**

**Pricing to Increase Valuation, Measurement in Health**


**Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation**


**WEEK 6: MIDTERM EXAM**
**WEEK 7**

**Malnutrition and Under-Nutrition**


**Conditional Cash Transfers**


**WEEK 8**

**Maternal Health**


**Health Insurance in Developing Countries**


Community Health Workers and Incentives


Human Capital


Household Bargaining and Marriage Markets


Women, Gender, and Well-Being


WEEK 11

Sex Ratios and Son Preference


WEEK 12

Agriculture, Property Rights, and Technological Adoption


WEEK 13

Conflict and Violence


Topics in Political Economy


WEEK 14

Ethnicity and “Culture”


Institutions
