

Welcome to ECON 360
Economics of Developing Areas
Spring 2013 –Section 003 – 3 Credit Hours

I. Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Jason Dunick
Office: Enterprise 346
Office Phone: 993-1141
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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 1:00 - 3:00pm or by appt.

II. Course Overview

Catalog Description: A study of theories of economic growth, alternative approaches to development policy, and their applications in various developing countries or regions.

Learning Outcomes: This course is both a general education course in global understanding and an upper-division elective within economics.

As a **general education course** in global understanding, this course strives to help students:

- Develop an understanding of global patterns of economic activity and its interaction with society
- Identify, evaluate, and properly cite resources appropriate to researching the policies of economic development
- Apply awareness of global issues to a consideration of individual or collective responsibilities within the context of economic development.

As an **upper-division elective** in the discipline of economics, this course strives to help students:

- Understand and apply relevant economic concepts and theories to frame research questions and policy debates within the field of development.
- Analyze economic arguments made in peer-reviewed journals and mainstream media sources about economic development by breaking down arguments and identifying the relevant concepts and theories from economics.

Topics Covered: Below is a list of the **concepts, theories, and policies** that will be covered in the class

- Traditional Economic Theories of Growth
- Inflation and Currency Stabilization Policy
- International Aid, Debt Relief, and Government Spending
- Trade Policy
- Poverty Traps, Human Capital, and Health Economics
- Imperfect and Informal Markets
- Social Entrepreneurship and Market-based Incentives

Learning outcomes will be demonstrated through written assignments, oral presentations, a group research paper, exams, and classroom participation.

Readings & Textbooks: Reading assignments will be provided after each lecture to allow for flexibility in responding to students' interest. Most readings will be drawn from the following textbooks:

- Perkins, D., Radelet, S., & Lindauer, D., (2013). *Economics of Development*, 7th Edition, Norton Press.
- Easterly, W. (2002). *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, MIT Press.
- Banerjee, A. & Duflo, E. (2011). *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs Press.

Additional readings will be posted on the course site at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>

Course Outline:

Introduction: What is economic development and what are the common challenges faced by developing countries?

Part I: Macroeconomics of Development (Jan. 22nd – March 7th)

- Theories of Economic Growth
- Inflation and Currency Stabilization Policy
- Investment and Foreign Aid
- Trade Policy

Part II: Microeconomics of Development (March 19th – May 2nd)

- Access to Credit and Insurance
- Extreme Poverty, Poverty Traps, and Income Inequality
- Education
- Health Policy

III. Assignments

Course Assignments with Weights:

- Blog Posts (3 entries): 5%
- In-Class Assignments: 5%
- “Getting to Know an NGO” Presentation: 5%
- Policy Paper: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Final Exam: 35%

Grading Scale (as a percentage):

A +	100-97	B	86 – 83	C-	72 – 70
A	96 – 93	B-	82 – 80	D	66 – 60
A -	92 – 90	C+	79 – 77	F	59 – 0
B+	89 – 87	C	76 – 73		

Assignment Descriptions:

Blog Posts– Each student within an assigned group will be responsible for creating **three blog posts** about **one issue** in economic development using **three different types of sources** (popular press, peer-reviewed journal, and government or a research organization).

The blog post must answer the following three questions:

1. What is the background of the author?
2. What is the main argument of the article and why is it related to economic development?
3. What are some relevant economic concepts necessary to understand this article?

The blog post will be due by 10am on Tuesdays (see the Assignment Schedule below for your group’s due dates). Posts are turned in through Blackboard at mymason.gmu.edu. **Late posts will not be accepted but there will be one opportunity to make-up one missed assignment (see schedule for details).**

Grading will be based on how well the blog post answers the assigned questions, whether the correct type of source was use, and if the sources are addressing a single issue within the field of development.

In-class Assignments- At various times throughout the semester there will be in-class assignments that may include a problem set, a brief essay question, or a reading summary. **Late assignments will not be accepted** but your two lowest grades will be dropped when calculating the final grade for these assignments.

“Getting to Know an NGO” Presentation – Students will be responsible for a 5-10 minute presentation and **create a 1-page handout** about a non-governmental organization or an international organization that is involved in assisting developing countries. The presentation should answer the following questions:

- What does the organization do? Provide an example of at least one specific project.
- Why is this work important?
- What are the limitations of this organization?
- Are there opportunities for internships or employment?

Presentations will occur throughout the semester and students are responsible for signing up for a date. Students are also responsible for picking out the organization and are discouraged from repeating an organization already covered by another student. **Missed presentations cannot be made up.** You are allowed to make arrangements with other students to switch your time if necessary.

Grades will be based on how well students address each question in their presentations and handout.

Policy Paper – Each student will complete a 6-10 page policy paper analyzing a topic relevant to the economics of developing countries. A detailed description of the paper assignment will be posted on the course website at mymason.gmu.edu. The assignment will require students to turn in a proposal, an initial draft, and a final draft. The due dates are listed below.

Assignment Schedule:

Date	Assignments
Jan. 29 th	Group 1: Blog Post (Popular Press)
Feb. 5 th	Group 2: Blog Post (Popular Press)
Feb. 12 th	Group 3: Blog Post (Popular Press)
Feb. 19 th	Group 1: Blog Post (Peer-Reviewed Journal)
Feb. 26 th	Group 2: Blog Post (Peer-Reviewed Journal)
March 5 th	Group 3: Blog Post (Peer-Reviewed Journal)
March 7th	****Midterm Exam****
March 12 th	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
March 21st	Paper Proposal Due
March 26 th	Group 1: Blog Post (Economic Report)
April 2 nd	Group 2: Blog Post (Economic Report)
April 9 th	Group 3: Blog Post (Economic Report)
April 16 th	Make-Up Blog Post (Self-select source type)
April 23rd	Paper Draft Due
May 7th	Final Paper is Due
May 14th (Section 002)	***Final Exam*** 10:30 am – 1:15 pm

Group Assignments:

GROUP 1 : Foreign Aid/Capital Accumulation

GROUP 2 : Trade Policy and Development

GROUP 3 : Human Capital and Development (Education and Health Policy)

IV. Course Policies:

Course Expectations: It is expected that all readings will be complete by the start of class and that you come to class ready to participate. *In addition, this class requires significant writing assignments as well as familiarity with graphing and algebraic computations.* If you find yourself struggling with the material at any time, please make an appointment to talk with me as soon as possible. I have strategies that might be helpful.

Class Participation: Attendance and class participation are necessary to have a successful experience in this course. **In addition, I cannot offer a make-up exam without a valid excused absence.** If you are unable to attend class for an excusable reason, please contact me *before* the start of class and for a missed exam please provide proper documentation.

Electronic Devices: Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism. If disruptions are interrupting other students' learning, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

Communication: Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Honor Code: Students are expected to abide by the Honor Code in its entirety in completing all requirements for this course. The Honor Code parameters will differ depending on the assignment and will be clearly explained for each assignment. If at any time you are unsure about the Honor Code implications for a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

Important: No person should be denied educational access because of a disability. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

V. Classmate Contact Information & Presentation Date:

Contact #1: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Contact #2: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

My NGO Presentation date is:

Date: _____