In this course, we will study different facets of human development at both the microeconomic and macroeconomic level. The two big themes we will explore are: (1) Why are some countries poor and (2) What can be done about this poverty? Emphasis will be placed on relating theory to empirical evidence. You will learn how to evaluate arguments and evidence.

The course prerequisites listed on the catalog are Econ 103 or Econ 104. If you have not taken either of these classes please speak to me on the first day of class. This course assumes basic knowledge of microeconomics, macroeconomics, and statistics. You will have to be able to read and understand papers that will contain statistical analysis and a little bit of mathematical analysis. I will teach you the basics of it, but you must be willing to devote extra time in learning the techniques. If you are not comfortable with this, consider taking an alternative Section of Econ 360.

You will read a lot, write a lot and debate a lot. In exchange for all your hard work (and because of it, too) I promise we will have a rewarding and fulfilling class.

Course Materials:

We will be reading four core books:


We will also be reading many articles which are available for download on the class Dropbox folder (I will send you an invitation to access it). In addition, most of the readings can be downloaded from either JSTOR, the NBER Working Papers archive, or EconLit through the GMU libraries research databases page. You are required to acquire these papers and read them before the class in which they are covered. You are expected to know the readings for the exams. If you would like more material on the empirical methods we cover, an excellent source is:


Grading Policy:
Table 1: Grading Scale (As Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A +</td>
<td>100-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A -</td>
<td>92-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B +</td>
<td>89-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>82-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Weekly Written Assignments (40%)
- Participation (15%)
- Student Presentation (15%)
- Final Exam (30%)

Assignments:

- **Written Assignment:** The student must read at least one of the extra (non-core) readings assigned each week and write a small report about it. Thus, you are expected to think critically about the readings. In class, we will devote time to general discussion, and the points you formulated in advance will help to ensure a good discussion.

- **Student Presentation:** Students will lead discussion on some of the readings. When you lead discussion, you will present the paper in summary form, highlight its main interest for our purposes, and lead open discussion of the reading.

- **Exams:** The final will be given during the university assigned final exam time. If you miss the Final without a university sanctioned excuse (I will ask for documentation), then you will receive an F for the course.

Course Policies:

- **Class registration:** Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their own schedules. Students need to check PatriotWeb regularly to verify that they are registered for the classes that they think they are. This is particularly important since students are no longer dropped for nonpayment. Faculty may not allow a student who is not registered to continue to attend class and may not grade the work of students who do not appear on the official class roster. Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar’s Web Site registrar.gmu.edu. After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.
• **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:** George Mason University has an Honor Code which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See honorcode.gmu.edu for more detailed information.

• **Important Information:** 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.

**Course outline:** (Subject to change)

1. **Introduction** (Week 1)

   **Core:**

   **Extra:**

2. **Poverty Traps and the idea of the Big Push** (Week 2)

   **Core:**

   **Extra:**
   - Esther Duflo (2012). “Human values and the design of the fight against poverty”. Tanner Lectures. MIT
3. Capital Accumulation and the standard theories of economic growth (Week 3)

Core:
- Marginal Revolution University: Solow Model

Extra:

4. Education: The Role of Human Capital (Week 4)

Core:

Extra:

5. Population Control and the Malthusian Arguments (Week 5)

Core:

Extra:
6. Technology and the relevance of knowledge spillovers (Week 6)

Core:

Extra:

7. Trade and Complexity (Week 7)

Core:

Extra:

8. Geography and Natural Resources (Week 8)

Core:
9. Institutions  (Week 9)

Core:

Extra:

10. Role of Culture  (Week 10)

Core:
- Nathan Nunn (2012). “Culture and the Historical Process”. In: Economic History of Developing Regions 27 (sup1), S108–S126

Extra:

11. State and Policymaking in a Complex World  (Week 11)

Core:

Extra:

12. Examining Chinese Development  (Week 12)

Core:

13. Examining Chinese Development II (Week 13)

Extra: