



Ben Gurion University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Economics

Name of course Economic Development in Africa (BA)

Course number 0-142-1-88

Name and contact details of lecturer

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Course objectives

The students will learn about central topics in the study of developing countries and poverty, with a regional focus on Africa. Although the course focuses on Africa, it is suitable for any student interested in development. The course is offered to students from the economics department and students from the African studies program jointly. Students will:

- Gain an overview of the field of development economics and major topics in policy and research within the field.
- Learn the intuition between the most common statistical methods used in the empirical study of development economics.
- Learn about ways to measure and define poverty, and the main explanations highlighted in the field of economics for gaps in growth and income levels between rich and poor countries.

N.B. The course will be taught in Hebrew

Course outline

The course will consist of lectures and classroom discussions around central topics in research and policy issues in development economics. Some of the themes covered will be (1) the life and livelihood of the poor; how to measure poverty; (2) Health; (3) Education; (4) Small businesses and microfinance; (5) Aid and intervention policies; (6) Impact evaluation; (7) Growth theories; (8) Accountability and “Community Driven Development”. The course will also give an introduction to the fundamental theoretical concepts of microeconomics, aimed at the students with no background in economics.

The course grade is based on a classroom presentation (in groups) about a topic related to economic development in Africa (15%), a homework assignment in the form of a written report about a research paper in development economics (15%) and a final exam (70%). The course is taught in Hebrew but assignment as well as the exam can be written in Hebrew or English.

Course and grade requirements

Homework assignments:	15%
Presentation:	15%
Exam:	70%
Total:	100%

Bibliography:

General reading:

Banerjee A.V., Duflo, E. (2011). Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty. New York, Public Affairs. (selected chapters)

Roland, G. Development Economics, Pearson, 2013. (selected chapters)

Part 1: Life and livelihoods of the poor & intro to empirical methods in economics

Introduction: What is poverty and how can it be measured? What is development? Why should we care about Africa?

Lecture notes based on statistics from The World Bank, The UN, OECD, Our World in Data.

(***) Banerjee A.V., Duflo, E. (2011). Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty. New York, Public Affairs. (Foreword pages 7-14) **on moodle**

(***) Banerjee, A.V. and Duflo, E., 2007. The economic lives of the poor. *The journal of economic perspectives*, 21(1), pp.141-167. [link](#)

Health and Education

(***) Banerjee, A.V. and Duflo, E., 2007. The economic lives of the poor. *The journal of economic perspectives*, 21(1), **Pages 8-9 section “The Pursuit of Health and Well-being”** [link](#)

Banerjee A.V., Duflo, E. (2011). Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty. New York, Public Affairs. **(Chapter 3) on moodle**

Miguel, E., and Kremer, M. (2004). Worms: identifying impacts on education and health in the presence of treatment externalities. *Econometrica*, 72(1), 159-217.

Kremer, M. and Miguel, E., 2007. The illusion of sustainability. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3), pp.1007-1065.

Impact Evaluation; methodology in modern development economics

Clemens, M.A. and Demombynes, G., 2013. The new transparency in development economics: Lessons from the millennium villages controversy. cgdev Working paper 343 [link](#)

Small Firms, Financial inclusion and Microfinance

Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., Glennerster, R. and Kinnan, C., 2015. The miracle of microfinance? Evidence from a randomized evaluation. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 7(1), pp.22-53.

(***) Banerjee, A.V. and Duflo, E., 2007. The economic lives of the poor. *The journal of economic perspectives*, 21(1), **Pages 10-13 about “How the Poor Earn their Money”** [link](#)

Nathan Fiala (2014) Stimulating Microenterprise Growth: Results from a Loans, Grants and Training Experiment in Uganda, Working Paper. **(Sections 1, 2 and 7 only)** [link](#)

(***) Barak-Weekes, Reut and Stryjan, Miri (2018) Microfinance, saving groups and inclusive development, forthcoming book chapter.

Part 2: Explaining gaps between rich and poor countries

Theories of Growth and Development

Roland, G. Development Economics, Pearson, 2013. (chapters 4 and 5)

Geographical explanations for poverty

(***) Banerjee A.V., Duflo, E. (2011). Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty. New York, Public Affairs. **(chapter 1, especially section: "Trapped in Poverty") on moodle**

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. (2002). "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117:4, pp. 1231-94. [link](#)

Legacies of historical institutions

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson. "The Colonial Origins Of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review*, 2001, v91(5,Dec), 1369-1401

(***) Nunn, N. 2008. The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(1), pp.139-176.

Aid and intervention policies:

Easterly (2009): "Can the West Save Africa?", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 47(2)

Accountability and local decision making about development programs

Avdeenko, A. and Gilligan, M.J., 2015. International interventions to build social capital: evidence from a field experiment in Sudan. *American Political Science Review*, 109(3), pp.427-449.

Svensson, J. and Björkman, M., 2009. Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment of a Community-Based Monitoring Project in Uganda. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(2), pp.735-769.

Mansuri, G. and V. Rao, 2012. Localizing development: does participation work? World Bank Publications.

Olken, B.A., 2010. Direct democracy and local public goods: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia. *American political science review*, 104(02), pp.243-267.

Corruption and accountability:

Olken and Pande 2012 Corruption in Developing Countries. [link](#)

Conflict:

Blattman C and Miguel E. Civil War, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 2010, 48(1).

Bonnier E., J. Poulsen, T. Rogall and M. Stryjan: Preparing for Genocide: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Rwanda. SITE Working paper no 31, January 2015. [link](#)

Jakiela, P. and Ozier, O., 2016. The Impact of Violence on Individual Risk Preferences: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. Working Paper. [link](#)

More titles and (*) to be added/updated later**