

Development Economics

Summer term 2026

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and
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Course Meeting Time and Place:

Monday, 10:00 – 12:00 o'clock in room A05 1-159
Starts: 13th April 2026, ends: 6th July 2026.

Seminar (block seminar): Discussion of topics and date: Monday, 13th April 2026, during the first lecture.

Content

“Why are some countries rich and others poor?” is the question at the heart of the research on economic growth and development. The module introduces the students to the current challenges of developing countries and the strategies to overcome them. The module will focus on the empirical research on developing countries, addressing the reasons for the sluggish development as well as the applied approaches to foster economic development. The course covers critical insights on the micro- and macroeconomic challenges of successful economic development policy and programs across the developing world. Due to the interdisciplinary subject of development policy, the course brings together insights from economics, geography, health sciences, political sciences, psychology, and sociology. These insights are complemented with the most recent research practice through the exposition and discussion of leading academic articles in the field.

Structure of the course and prerequisites

The lecture is mainly devoted to the empirical findings on the determinants of economic growth and follows largely the book of Todaro and Smith (2020).

The seminar complements the lecture by providing an in-depth exploration of key indicators used to measure and analyze development. These could be, but are not limited to, variables and indicators employed for the measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Students will select a specific development indicator, investigate its data collection methodologies, analyze its trends and variations across countries and time, and critically assess its strengths and limitations (see, for example, Hughes et al., 2017, or Ayaburi et al., 2020). Furthermore, students have to carry out a simple OLS panel regression with the chosen indicator as dependent variable. For this, explanatory variables have to be identified and the mechanism how they determine the dependent variable have to be discussed.

Through presentations and a written elaboration on the data analysis, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the empirical foundations of development economics and the ways in which these indicators are employed in scholarly work.

Each student has to present a paper on a self-chosen indicator of development. The topics are distributed within the seminar.

Upon successful completion of this seminar, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe key development indicators.
- Critically evaluate the data collection methodologies and reliability of development indicators.
- Analyze trends and variations in development indicators across countries and time.
- Apply basic data analysis techniques (e.g., visualization, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, OLS regression) to development data.
- Present research findings effectively in oral and written formats.
- Develop a critical understanding of the strengths and limitations of quantitative approaches in development economics.
- Commenting on a research paper.

Grading

The final grade consists of a formal presentation with written elaboration.

- Presentation (15 minutes) and discussion opener for a presentation of another participant (3 minutes)
- Written elaboration (up to 12 pages; including, references, tables, etc.)
- Code files for reproducing the data analysis (No specific formatting required)

The overall grade is made up as follows: Presentation and discussion opener together 50%, written elaboration 50%. **All parts must be passed.**

Literature for the lecture

Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith (2020): *Economic Development*, 13th Edition, Pearson: New York.

The book is available as an e-book from this [link](#). You can access the e-book from outside the campus while connected to the campus via VPN.

Further literature on economic growth

Acemoglu, Daron (2009): *Introduction to Modern Economic Growth*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

de Janvry, Alain and Elisabeth Sadoulet (2021): *Development Economics: Theory and Practice*, 2nd Edition, Routledge: New York.

Söderbom, Måns, Francis Teal, Markus Eberhardt, Simon Quinn and Andrew Zeitlin (2015): *Empirical Development Economics*, Routledge: New York.

Literature for the seminar

Wickham, Hadley, Çetinkaya-Rundeland, Mine and Garrett Grolemund: *R for Data Science* (2e). O'Reilly: Sebastopol, CA, 2017.

The book is available as an e-book from this [link](#).

Hughes, Michelle M., Robert E. Black, and Joanne Katz: 2500-g low birth weight cutoff: history and implications for future research and policy. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 21 (2017): 283-289.

Ayaburi, John, Bazilian, Morgan, Kincer, Jacob and Moss, Todd: Measuring “Reasonably Reliable” access to electricity services. *The Electricity Journal* 33 (2020) 106828