"The principal enemy is orthodoxy: to use the same recipe, administer the same therapy, to resolve the most various types of problems; never to admit complexity and try to reduce it as much as possible, while ignoring that things are always more complicated in reality."


"Economists cannot make use of controlled experiments to settle their differences; they have to appeal to historical evidence, and evidence can always be read both ways. The laboratory sciences proceed by isolating a question and testing hypotheses about possible answers to it, one by one. In economics, questions cannot be isolated because every aspect of human society interacts with every other; hypotheses can be put forward only in the form of a "model" of the whole economy."

Robinson, Joan, 1977, 'What are the Questions?' Journal of Economic Literature, Vol.15:4, 1318-1339

"All too often development policy is based on fads, and randomized evaluation could allow it to be based on evidence."


"The dramatic growth rates of China, India, and the rest of the Asian countries from the 1970s meant that the incomes of three to four billion people started to converge to those of the OECD. This reduced worldwide income inequality for the first time in centuries because it more than offset the divergent incomes of 608 million Africans. The problem now is, therefore, that unless the incomes of these African citizens start growing fast, world income inequality will start rising again."


Where ECO311 Fits at Smith
ECO311 complements Smith College’s other offerings in economics, development economics and African Studies. It requires a student to have taken Intermediate Microeconomics (ECO250) and Macroeconomics (ECO253). A student must be either a senior or a junior to qualify to take the course. Courses such as The World Food System (ECO 213) and Development Economics (ECO211) will be especially useful when completing ECO311, but they are not required. ECO/MTH/SDS220, which covers basic statistics and regression analysis, is required else you may struggle to understand some of the papers. Also, having taken Econometrics (ECO240) or Multiple Regression (MTH/SDS214) would be very beneficial.
My evolution teaching ECO311
I have taught ECO311 twice at Smith. The first time, I had an idea of what I wanted to teach, covering some ‘big questions’ in African development. However, I realized while teaching that course how ill-equipped some students were to answer empirical questions in economics by themselves (call this the “transition to a new country and new education system” syndrome). So I substantially revised the course and added Stata Labs to supplement the materials we dealt with in class, though maintaining a similar reading list to the initial iteration. The second time, many students produced much better research papers because of the Stata labs, but they were still not sure about some of the motivation for the microeconometric work they wanted to do. Also, many weren’t sure about what a good econometric method was for them to try to replicate. So, I have tried to update the course again as I continue to learn what students need most to write a research paper linked to African Political Economy and Development and so they are able to do the best work that it is feasible for them to do.

Your contribution
You’ll notice that the end of the course does not having any readings prescribed. I intended this. The idea is that you and I will collaborate to decide on readings based on topics that you are interested in. I’ll provide suggestions of both topics and papers we can read, but I’ll want your input. Do you want to spend a session taking about ethnic differences and whether they promote or undermine productivity? Are you interested in infrastructure, such as cell phone networks, mobile money and how they affect poverty and productivity? Maybe you want to know about technology adoption and agriculture, such as the pretty important innovations that happened in fertilizer use and how the innovations affect power and institutions. There are many, many topics that cannot be fit into one course, so I ask you to help me in guiding the course towards its conclusion.

Method of Instruction
The course is a seminar based on collaborative discussions between all students and facilitated by the professor. Students are expected to prepare the readings for each session and to be able to answer questions about the readings to produce a high quality discussion. Each student is expected to contribute to the discussion. Every so often, furthermore, you will need to lead the discussion with a partner. That is, you and another person in the class will guide the class as a whole in the discussion of the papers (as someone leading the discussion, you will also meet with me beforehand to check in about your having read the paper). You will need to sign up with me (on a Google Spreadsheet) to confirm your leadership of different discussions.

If you do not contribute, I shall encourage you to do so; if you contribute substantially more than anyone else, then I may ask you rather to encourage the engagement of others. The course will also incorporate pairing up and discussing in groups. We shall also employ peer evaluation, though the professor will award grades.

The Point of the Course
There are many approaches to development economics. First, there are many attempts to explain international differences in economic development – the ‘macro’ development problem. Second, there are many differences between the ways in which individuals, firms and states can respond to the challenges of development – the ‘micro’ development problem. The microeconomics of development informs the macroeconomics of development. From micro work we may gain insight into the specific individual-, family-, village- and firm-level institutions and constraints that shape decisions. As we try to
understand how micro-level results permeate through an economy, that is, we try to understand the general equilibrium effects of a policy, so may we gain insight into macro-level differences. Micro and macro tie together closely.

Assessment
There is no written exam for this course. The course assessment is based on the following breakdown. You will have approximately one assignment due every two weeks.

- 10% Participation – in class participation, contributions to discussion, consultation with professor
- 10% Response papers – 200-300 word responses to readings. You will write 3 and be graded on the best 2 of 3
- 10% Book report
- 5% Country fact sheet – a building block for your term paper
- 10% Term paper proposal – research question, problem statement, preliminary reference list; presented in class
- 15% Term paper draft
- 35% Term paper & response to draft report

Provisional Course Calendar (subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/08</td>
<td>1.1: Intro</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13-15</td>
<td>1.2: Methods 1</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20-22</td>
<td>1.3: Methods &amp; Development</td>
<td>Lab &amp; Response Paper 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/27-29</td>
<td>2.1: Micro: Anti-poverty policy</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4-6</td>
<td>2.2: Micro: Education</td>
<td>Lab &amp; Book Report &amp; Fact Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Autumn Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11-13</td>
<td>2.3: Micro: Health &amp; Worm Wars</td>
<td>Lab &amp; Response Paper 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/18-20</td>
<td>2.4: Micro: Gender and Household decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25-27</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Term paper proposal &amp; 3-slide-3- minute presentations with discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1-3</td>
<td>3.1: Macro: The Slave Trades &amp; Colonial History</td>
<td>Lit Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8-10</td>
<td>3.2: Macro: Geography vs. Institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15-17</td>
<td>3.3: Macro: Aid &amp; Development</td>
<td>Initial Draft Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>4.1 TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29-12/1</td>
<td>4.2: TBD</td>
<td>Response Paper 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/6-8</td>
<td>4.3: TBD &amp; Presentations on Thurs</td>
<td>Potluck at Prof. Halliday’s Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13-15</td>
<td>Presentations Tues &amp; Thurs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar Paper Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moodle
We have a Moodle site for the course that should be available through your Smith Moodle Login details. Specific readings, the course outline, gradebook and other resources will be available on Moodle.

Five Colleges African Studies Certificate
By taking this course, you have fulfilled one course requirement for the Five Colleges African Studies Certificate. Find out more about the certificate and other Five College African Studies courses, events, and programs at: https://www.fivecolleges.edu/african. To register to receive more information on the certificate and Africa themed events please go to: https://www.fivecolleges.edu/african/certificate

Tardiness and Conduct in Class
Please do not arrive late. I shall do my best always to arrive early enough to answer questions before we begin the seminar. If you must arrive late, please alert me in advance. If you cannot let me know, then please do your best not to make a fuss when you do arrive tardily. You are permitted to use laptops and tablets in class. I expect you to use them to take notes or for other class functions. Please refrain from using them for social media, email, etc.

Readings
Each week, you will have required readings and others that are recommended. You should also read the core text. The recommended texts are for you to consult for reference.

Core Text:

Recommended Texts for your reference only
• Angrist, Joshua D. and Jörn-Steffen Pischke, 2015, Mastering ’Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Course Outline
We deal with a variety of topics in the course. In particular we examine the microeconometric evidence from household surveys, randomized controlled trials, and carefully collected economic history data. To do this, though, we need to review some basics of methodology to make sure that everyone is on the same page with how to understand economic evidence. We shall deal broadly with the following ideas:
1. Intro & Methods for understanding economic development
2. Micro development
3. Macro development
4. To be decided
5. Where to from here? Africa’s future development

Labs
During the first half of the course we will work on cross-sectional data during the Thursday sessions. During these labs we will deal with basic commands in Stata that you will use for your term papers.
**Provisional Outline**

**Week 1**
*Thursday:*
- Lab: Intro to Stata

[I recommend you start reading Moss’s *African Development* as soon as possible to get yourself up to speed]

**Week 2: Intro & Methods 1.1**
*Tuesday:*
- Wainaina, Binyavanga, ‘How to write about Africa’, *Granta* Vol. 92

[Self-study] AD Chs 1 to 7 (to be discussed during week 2 and subsequently when relevant).

*Thursday:*
- Lab: Stata Basics

**Week 3: Intro & Methods 1.2**
*Tuesday:*

[Self-study] AD Chs 8 to 14

**Recommended**

**Suggestion:** Read the Angrist & Pischke BEFORE you read the Ravallion. The Ravallion piece takes a lot of the ideas that come up in the A&P article and shows the methods behind them (including math) as well as providing a variety of examples from development. **DO NOT READ THE RAVALLION FIRST** – it’s also not compulsory, though I strongly recommend it.

*Thursday:*
- Lab: Regressions and Visualization in Stata

**Topic 2 – Microeconomics of Development – Weeks 4-7**

**Week 4: Micro 2.1: Anti-poverty policy**
*Tuesday*

**Brief discussion of Moss’s *African Development***
• Faye, Paul, Michael Niehaus and Christopher Blattman, 2014, ....

Thursday
• Lab: Weights and Survey Commands

Week 5: Micro 2.2: Education
Tuesday
• Rosenzweig, Mark R., 2010, Microeconomic Approaches to Development: Schooling, Learning, and Growth, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Volume 24, Number 3: 81–96

Note: Everyone will read the Rosenzweig, but then half of you will read the Duflo et al and half the Kremer et al. We’ll split them up in class or on Moodle.

Recommended

Thursday
• Lab: Analysis of Poverty and Inequality in Stata

Week 6: Micro 2.3: Health: The Worm Wars
Tuesday
• Then look here: http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/worm-wars-anthology and read some of the blog posts on the replication (we’ll assign who reads which blog post before this class)

Recommended (and could be a TBD day as “Health 2” or even over two TBD sessions):
• Kremer, Michael and Rachel Glennerster, 2011, Chapter Four – Improving Health in Developing Countries: Evidence from Randomized Evaluations, in Handbook of Health Economics, Volume 2, 2011, pages 201–315

Thursday
• Lab: Transparency in Research: Reproducing Case and Deaton, 1998.

Week 7: Micro 2.4: Gender and intra-household bargaining

Tuesday

Recommended:

Thursday
• Lab: Working on your paper

Week 8: Macro 3.1: The Slave Trades and Colonialism

Tuesday

Recommended
• Robinson, James, Institutions and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, Oxford Companion to the Economics of Africa, pp. 201-207

Week 9: Macro 3.2: Geography and Institutions

• Sachs, Jeffrey, Andrew D. Mellinger, and John L. Gallup, 2001, The Geography of Poverty and Wealth, Scientific American, March, pp 70-75
• Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James Robinson, ‘Disease and Development in Historical Perspective,’ Journal of the European Economic Association, 1(2-3), 397-405
Recommended:


Week 10: Macro 3.3: Aid


Week 11: TBD1

Week 12: TBD2

Week 13: TBD3

Week 14: TBD4 & Presentations

Week 15: Presentations

Concluding thoughts?


Potential To Be Decided Topics

*plus whatever you suggest, these are just ideas I’m throwing out*

TBD? Structural Adjustment and Trade

- Rodrik Dani, 1997, Why is trade reform so difficult in Africa?

TBD? Prescribing Policy and Scaling Up:

- ‘One Size Doesn’t Fit All,’ Lawrence MacDonald interviews Lant Pritchett, 08/13/2012, *The Global Prosperity Wonkcast*, The Center for Global Development, accessed on 07/30/2013


TBD? Land and Agriculture:


TBD? Infrastructure and Mobile Tech


TBD? Credit and Finance


TBD? Firms and Markets


• Rahul Deb, Tavneet Suri, Endogenous emergence of credit markets: Contracting in response to a new technology in Ghana, Journal of Development Economics, Volume
Illness and Family Emergencies
If you are ill and must miss a class or if you have a family emergency, please email me, send me a text message or call on +1413-570-3031 (Google). Please only use this number for emergencies.

Additional Resources
Open Data for Africa
A recent project that gathers open data sources for a variety of African countries:
http://opendataforafrica.org/

World Bank
Each year the World Bank issues a World Development Report. Below I link to the most recent few reports.

- World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development
- World Development Report 2013: Jobs and Development
- World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society and Behavior

Independently of the WDRs, the World Bank is a valuable resource for a variety of data on African countries. Though we discuss in the course how poor African data is, even from ‘official’ sources, it might be the case that using some of this data helps us to understand particular cases within countries, rather than for cross country analysis.

African Politics
If you have no background in African politics, I recommend using some political science texts to check the country-specific or regional aspects of your research. The following books might be a good place to start.

- Jeffrey Herbst, 2014, States and Power in Africa.

Acknowledgments
I owe a debt to several people who unknowingly helped while I designed this course. I liberally pilfered ideas for the reading list from Christopher Blattman, Kim Dionne, Morten Jerven, Debraj Ray, Jorge Agüero, Léonce Ndikumana, Nicoli Nattrass, Malcolm Keswell, Justine Burns and Daron Acemoglu. I greatly appreciate their sharing course outlines on African development online. Alternatively, my records of some instructors’ courses from when I took them provided many ideas for ECO311.

This course outline is preliminary and subject to change.