Overview

In this course we study economic development at the scale of the economy as a whole. Our goal is to understand economic growth and development in low and middle-income economies, especially as affected by their interactions with the global system of international trade and factor flows.

We begin by reviewing standard models of aggregate economic growth, structural change, and the distribution of income, with particular focus on these processes as they occur in small, open, low-income economies. Given the initial dependence of many such countries on the exploitation and export of agricultural and natural resource wealth, we devote substantial attention to the so-called “curse” of natural resource wealth and the macroeconomic and sectoral effects of resource export booms and busts. Subsequently, we address international integration and sectoral growth, especially agricultural development and industrialization; labor markets and migration, and the acquisition of human capital.

The scope of development economics as a field is vast, so achieving depth in any sub-field requires the sacrifice of some breadth. We focus on the application of analytical general equilibrium models, an approach that yields important insights but which requires a sacrifice of time spent on statistical hypothesis-testing. Empirically, the tradeoff between ex ante theory and examination of evidence will be finessed in part by concentrating on theory in class, while providing the opportunity to examine evidence from a developing country or countries through short assignments and a term paper.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the general equilibrium approach to problems of economic growth and development. They should have a good understanding of intersectoral linkages in factor and product markets as well as the constraints imposed by resource endowments, international markets, and domestic technology and preferences. They should be able to parse the economic effects of exogenous events such as resource export booms, world market shocks and domestic policy innovations on prices, sectoral production, investment incentives, incomes and income distribution, and key measures of poverty and household welfare. They should be able to interpret the implications of these results for long-run economic growth and development, including some political economy aspects. Finally, they should be able to understand and work creatively with models of international trade and globalization insofar as they inform the development process.

Getting started

The course makes extensive use of neoclassical trade theory to motivate and construct general equilibrium models. To work with these, I assume familiarity with the dual approach to optimization, especially the derivation and properties of cost and revenue functions (revenue functions, also known GDP functions or restricted profit functions). If you need to brush up on these, consult Varian: Microeconomic Analysis. The basics of trade models will be covered in class, but if you haven't taken at least an intermediate course in international economics, then it will help to study Dixit and Norman, Theory of International Trade (1980, Ch. 2), and/or R. Feenstra, Advanced International Trade (2004, Ch. 1 and 3). They cover the basic theorems upon which neoclassical trade theory is built.

M. Soderbom and F. Teal (2015): Empirical Development Economics is a great new reference for applied development economists. Its focus on econometric methods complements more model-based coverage in this class.

Ultimately, the only way to acquire familiarity with development economics as a field is to read—a lot. The North-Holland Handbook of Development Economics is a great introduction to the literature, as are parts of the North-Holland Handbook of Economic Growth. These can be accessed electronically through the UW library system. You should also subscribe to both the Development Economics and International Trade series at ssrn.com; this will result in almost daily emails containing titles and abstracts of newly released papers in these fields.

Prerequisites

Econ 709 and 711 or equivalent, and AAE642. If you haven’t completed these courses, you need my consent to register for the course.
Texts
There is no single textbook. The course will draw on a variety of papers, journal articles and excerpts from books, all of which will be assigned at varying levels of ‘requiredness’ during the semester. Nearly all are readily accessible as electronic documents either directly or through the UW library system. I’ll provide links where possible, but tracking down material is your responsibility.

Assessment
Assessment will consist of a mix of short assignments combining in-class oral presentations accompanied by written reports, a substantive midterm problem set, attendance and general in-class participation, and a research paper, which you will be expected to present in class in the last part of the semester. The paper will be due for submission on

- In-class presentations and short written reports (3 @ 10) 30
- Problem set 20
- Attendance and participation 10
- Research paper draft and presentation 10
- Final research paper 30
- Total 100

Grading will follow the scale A=93-100%, AB=88-92%, B=83-87%, BC=78-82%, C=70-77%, D=60-69%, F=0-59%.

Consultation
My office is at 417 Taylor Hall. If my door is open, I am usually available to answer quick questions at any time. Alternatively, stop by or email me at ian.coxhead@wisc.edu to make an appointment.

Policy on Student Concerns/Complaints
Any student who has a concern or complaint specific to an experience in this course should first talk with the instructor. If the solution is still not satisfactory, you should follow the UW grievance procedures.

Policy on Academic Integrity
We all make mistakes sometimes, but plagiarism—the deliberate appropriation of another’s work without due citation and acknowledgment—counts as academic misconduct and attracts a mandatory penalty. It’s also really dumb, mainly because when you copy the work of others you deprive yourself of a learning opportunity. Because plagiarism is an act of laziness, it is almost always super-easy to detect. So engaging in plagiarism is like saying “I’m lazy, you’re stupid.” Of course, with more time and effort you could conceal it better, but in that case why not spend the time doing original work instead?

If you have any questions about appropriate conduct, please see me and/or and refer to the complete UW statute on academic misconduct.

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs
The McBurney Disability Resource Center, 263-6393, provides academic support services to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation should contact the center and request assistance as early as possible, preferably at least eight weeks prior to the date of anticipated need. It is your responsibility to inform me, in a timely manner, of any request for accommodation.
Readings by Topic

I will indicate primary readings, which you should study before the relevant class. Other references are "recommended," or will serve as sources for background/broader reading. If you have trouble finding or accessing any reference let me know.

Fun and/or useful reading - any time


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<td>Growth, trade and development: theory and evidence</td>
<td>Sep. 11 – Oct. 2</td>
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<td>Aggregate growth and productivity</td>
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<td>Trade-theoretic approach to development issues</td>
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GROWTH, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Aggregate growth models and evidence

Growth models


Evidence


Broader reading:


Structural change and development


Broader reading:


Development in open economies: resources, trade and development

Building blocks: basic trade models and core theorems


Broader reading


**CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES**

Note: these readings will be revised prior to our starting this part of the course

**Globalization**


**Industrialization and global production systems**


**Labor, human capital and migration**


