

Development Economics

field course and seminar

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Summer 26

What is (low) development?

A household in Japan and a household in Mali (Peter Menzel - *Material World*)



before we look at data for the remaining 99% of this class, let's look at these family photos and discuss what we see

Guiding questions in development microeconomics

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- how do lives differ between
 - the global poor (e.g., most Malians) and
 - the global rich (e.g., most Japanese and Austrians)?
- what challenges are faced by poor people and poor countries?
- what causes poverty, and what strategies exist to alleviate it? do they work?
- (how) do poor states operate differently from rich states?

this course is concerned with how (micro)economists study these questions

- theory:
 - frameworks/models to understand the problem
- empirics:
 - to evaluate effects of interventions and policies
 - to improve theory

This course

We look at development from a microeconomic perspective — covered topics:

- methods:
 - theories of comparative development
 - how to conduct surveys to measure poverty and inequality
 - causal inference
- applications:
 - poverty measurement and poverty traps
 - aid, transfers, and credit
 - public economics in developing countries
 - microfinance
 - social networks
 - gender
 - education

the list of topics covered in a course is necessarily reductive, additional topics can be covered
(please approach me early enough)

Expectations and grading

expected skills:

- the course's focus is on empirics, requiring a good working knowledge of econometrics
 - students should have a solid understanding of the material on cross-section econometrics
 - knowledge of causal inference and statistical programming (R) are a plus

reading:

- many sections will focus on empirical papers, which will be discussed in class, you are expected to read the papers before class and to actively participate in the discussion

assignment and grading:

course/lecture:

- *active* in-class participation - 10%
- practice-oriented homework assignment - 40%
- an final exam - 50%

seminar:

- initial presentation – 33%
- final presentation – 33%
- write-up – 34%