

# Poverty, Growth & Inequality

**Basics** Georgetown University Qatar Spring 2020  
ECON 256: Poverty, Growth & Inequality

Class location: OA13      Lecture time: 10:00–11:15am (Su/Tu)  
Course website: <http://rossbach.georgetown.domains/econ256.html>

**Instructor** Jack Rossbach      Office hours: By Appointment  
jack.rossbach@georgetown.edu      Office location: 0D25

**Course Description** This class will explore inequality within and across countries, how poverty is defined and measured, and what strategies countries might be able to follow to stimulate economic growth. Our focus will be on the theoretical, quantitative, and empirical aspects of these questions, with a significant portion of the course devoted to working with data to better understand these topics and how they are interrelated. We will discuss and apply methods for measuring poverty and inequality and cover methodological issues related to measuring the effectiveness of economic policy reforms. We will also touch on historical approaches to development and explore why some countries have experienced growth while others have remained stagnant.

**Assessment Methods**

<b>Assignments &amp; Problem Sets</b>	<b>30%</b>
There will be short Canvas assignments based off lectures most weeks (15%). In addition, there will be two major problem sets (15%) assigned over the semester.	
<b>In-Class Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>
Everybody will be expected to participate in in-class exercises and discussions. Attendance will be taken on days where we have discussions, labs, or worksheets.	
<b>Exams</b>	<b>30%</b>
There will be two exams over the semester, a midterm (15%) and an in-class non-cumulative final exam (15%).	
<b>Case Study</b>	<b>15%</b>
Everybody will work in teams to deliver a case study for their chosen country. Teams will deliver an in-class presentation of their findings and submit a short report.	
<b>Final Report</b>	<b>15%</b>
Students will be asked to write a short report either discussing a research paper or the literature surrounding a policy. Tentatively due April 15.	

**Grading Scale** A-F with standard cutoffs: A = 93, A- = 90, B+ = 87, B = 83, B- = 80, C+ = 77, C = 73, C- = 70, D+ = 67, D = 63, D- = 60, F = Below 60.

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<b>Course Materials</b>	This course will not follow a specific textbook. Selected readings will be provided. Lecture notes and slides will be made available on the course website.
<b>Topics</b>	<p><b>Historical Perspectives on Poverty &amp; Inequality</b> Measures of welfare and inequality, the development gap</p> <p><b>Theories of Economic Growth</b> Growth models, total factor productivity, population growth</p> <p><b>International Aspects of Development</b> International trade, economic specialization, protectionism vs export-led growth</p> <p><b>Policy Evaluation</b> Correlation vs causation, instrumental variables, natural experiments</p> <p><b>Institutions &amp; Political Economy</b> Democracy, corruption, markets and regulation, political implications of inequality</p> <p><b>Poverty Reduction Strategies</b> Microfinance, randomized controlled trials, agricultural support</p> <p><b>Education and Intergenerational Mobility</b> Education and development, equality of opportunity</p>
<b>Course Goals</b>	Following the completion of this course students should -Understand modern and historic perspectives on poverty, growth, and inequality -Gain familiarity with data sources available for studying economic development -Have the tools and knowledge to manipulate and interpret data through the lens of the economic models and theories studied in this course
<b>Computation</b>	This course will involve a significant amount of computational work and data manipulation. Software used in this course will include Excel, Stata, and R. No prior experience with Stata or R is assumed or required.
<b>Additional Policies</b>	Late submissions will be penalized 10% plus 5% per day late. No late work will be accepted following the last day of class. Exams will be rescheduled for individuals only for university approved reasons.
<b>Absences</b>	Four unexcused absences will lead to a one letter drop in your final grade. Every absence after that will lead to an additional grade deduction (e.g. B+ to B) <a href="https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/academic-affairs-policies">https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/academic-affairs-policies</a>
<b>Academic Integrity</b>	<a href="https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/honor-system/sfs-q-honor-system">https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/honor-system/sfs-q-honor-system</a>
<b>Title IX Information</b>	<a href="https://www.qatar.georgetown.edu/campus-life/title-ix">https://www.qatar.georgetown.edu/campus-life/title-ix</a>