

Poverty, Growth & Inequality

Basics Georgetown University Qatar Spring 2017
ECON 256: Poverty, Growth & Inequality

Class time: 2:55–4:10pm Sun, Tues.
Class location: LA12

Course website: <http://rossbach.georgetown.domains/econ256.html>

Instructor Jack Rossbach Office hours: 1:45-2:45pm Tues
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Course Description This class will explore inequality within and across countries, what poverty means for a country's citizens, 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 **Assignments & Problem Sets** **50%**
There will be short assignments based off lectures most weeks (25%). In addition, there will be two major problem sets (25%) assigned over the semester. **PROBLEM SETS MUST BE TYPED** (word, latex, mathtype, lyx, etc) and be submitted online. Problem sets will be penalized 10 points each week they are late, and penalized 15 points if they are not typed (out of 100).

In Class Participation **20%**
Students will also be expected to participate in in-class discussions and exercises. Attendance will be taken on days where we have discussions, labs, or worksheets.

Exams **30%**
There will be a midterm (15%) and a non-cumulative final exam (15%). Students must make arrangements at least a week in advance if they require an alternative time.

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.

Course Materials 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.

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- Topics**
- Historical Perspectives on Poverty & Inequality**
Measures of welfare and inequality, the development gap
 - Theories of Economic Growth**
Growth models, total factor productivity, population growth
 - International Aspects of Development**
International trade, economic specialization, protectionism vs export-led growth
 - Policy Evaluation**
Correlation vs causation, instrumental variables, natural experiments
 - Institutions & Political Economy**
Democracy, corruption, markets and regulation, political implications of inequality
 - Poverty Reduction Strategies**
Microfinance, randomized controlled trials, agricultural support
 - Education and Intergenerational Mobility**
Education and development, equality of opportunity

Course Goals 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

Computation 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.

Additional Policies No late work will be accepted following the last day of class. Exams will be rescheduled for individuals only for university approved reasons.

Absences <https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/academic-affairs-policies>

Academic Integrity <https://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/programs/honor-system/sfs-q-honor-system>