

## International economic development

### **PADM-GP 2203**

Spring 2014

NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  
New York University

### **Jonathan Morduch**

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Office time: 5 - 6 p.m. Wednesday

**Section 1:** Wed. 11:00 – 12: 40pm, Global Center for Academic & Spiritual Life, room 369

**Section 2:** Wed. 6:45 - 8:25 pm, Global Center 369

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How can the economies of the world become richer? Fairer? More open to opportunity?

This course takes up issues of economic growth and social change in a comparative perspective. The course begins by reviewing the relationships between poverty, inequality, and economic growth. In that context, attention then turns to the role of markets, with a focus on local financial markets. In the second part of the semester, we turn to policy interventions to improve education, confront rapid population growth, reduce the burden of disease, and confront corruption.

We will use the following texts:

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. 2009. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Princeton University Press.

Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics*. PublicAffairs, 2011.

Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch, *The Economics of Microfinance*, MIT Press, 2005.

Plus additional readings.

## Course Requirements

The course requirements are a mid-term examination, a final examination, and two problem sets. Grades will be calculated according to:

Class Participation	10%
Problem sets	10%
Mid-Term Exam	35%
Final Examination	45%

## Schedule

1. 1/29: Introduction to development economics
  2. 2/5: Foreign Aid
  3. 2/12: Poverty, inequality, and economic growth
  4. 2/19: Coping with risk
  5. 2/26: Informal markets: Access to finance **Problem set due**
  6. 3/5: Microfinance
  7. 3/12: Saving and asset-building
  - 3/19: Spring break
  8. **3/26: Mid-term exam (in class)**
  9. 4/2: Social Business, User Fees, and Organizations
  10. 4/9: Corruption
  11. 4/16 : Gender and discrimination
  12. 4/23: Population, the demographic transition, and norms
  13. 4/30: Delivering Healthcare **Problem set due**
  14. 5/7: Delivering Education. Retrospective and review
- 5/14: Final exam (in class)**

## Readings

> *Recommended reading*

### 1. Introduction to development economics

Development Economics is a relatively young field, arising just after World War II, as many colonies were gaining independence from Europe. We begin by setting out early strategies and evidence on some of the current challenges and possibilities.

Daron Acemoglu, 2012. "The World Our Grandchildren Will Inherit." In Ignacio Palacios-Huerta, ed., *Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. *Pages 1-13 required.*

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 1, all.

*Recommended:* Videos from 2012 NYU Development Research Institute Conference: Debates in Development, especially Banerjee and Deaton. The focus is on evidence, and randomized control trials specifically.

<http://nyudri.org/events/past-events/annual-conference-2012-debates-in-development/>

### 2. Foreign Aid

Why do some countries grow richer while others don't? Historically, patterns of economic growth have been driven by much more than just levels of investments and human resources. Recent evidence shows the roles of legal systems, political institutions, trade and tax policy, and geography, among other forces.

William Easterly, "The Quest for Growth: How we wandered the tropics trying to figure out how to make poor countries rich,"

William Easterly, 2003. "Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (3), Summer: 23–4.

The class website has additional readings on aid, some critical of Easterly's position, some supportive. Also see the Sachs-Easterly debate in *The Washington Post*.

### 3. Poverty, inequality, and economic growth

Before considering the relationship between economic growth and poverty, we need to be clearer about measurement issues. There is no “perfect” way to measure poverty and inequality, but there is consensus about key principles. The most appropriate method will often depend on the questions that we are asking. *Portfolios of the Poor* yields quite different answers about what it means to be poor.

#### **Measuring poverty**

Jonathan Morduch, “Concepts of Poverty,” chapter 2 of *United Nations Handbook of Poverty Statistics*. New York: United Nations.

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World’s Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Chapter 1

> Jonathan Morduch, “Poverty Measures,” forthcoming as chapter 3 of *United Nations Handbook of Poverty Statistics*. New York: United Nations.

#### **Poverty and growth**

Does economic growth come at the expense of the poor? How does economic growth affect poverty and inequality? How can patterns of inequality affect levels of growth? The World Bank’s *World Development Report* highlights the translation of debate into action, but *The Economist* faults it for papering over Dollar’s and Kraay’s findings.

Besley, Timothy and Robin Burgess, 2003. “Halving Global Poverty.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (3), Summer: 3-22.

#### **Recommended**

> David Dollar and Aart Kraay, “Growth is good for the poor,” The World Bank, working paper. [[http://econ.worldbank.org/files/1696\\_wps2587.pdf](http://econ.worldbank.org/files/1696_wps2587.pdf)]

> Angus Deaton, “Is World Poverty Falling?” *Finance and Development* 39 (2), June 2002. [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/06/deaton.htm>]. For a related interview with Deaton see <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/2002/070802.pdf>.

> The class website also has short pieces on poverty measurement.

### 4. Coping with risk

Can informal insurance effectively patch the safety net? Can private insurance be viable in poorer communities? Some argue that the lack of good ways to save and insure are as critical as difficulties in borrowing.

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World’s Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Chapter 3.

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 6.

Jonathan Morduch (1998), "Between the State and the Market: Can Informal Insurance Patch the Safety Net?" *World Bank Research Observer* 14(2), August, 187- 202.

Jonathan Morduch, "Microinsurance: The Next Revolution?" in *Understanding Poverty*, edited by Abhijit Banerjee, Roland Benabou, and Dilip Mookherjee. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Shawn Cole, Xavier Giné, Jeremy Tobacman, Petia Topalova, Robert Townsend, and James Vickery. 2013. "Barriers to Household Risk Management: Evidence from India." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5 (1): 104-135.

## **5. Access to financial services**

Lack of insurance is part of a broader lack of access to financial services. This section shows how informational problems limit the scope of credit markets and restrict the role that the price mechanism plays to ration demand. This provides a framework with which to reevaluate standard policy prescriptions.

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Chapter 2.

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 7.

Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2003), *The Economics of Microfinance*:  
Chapter 1: "Rethinking banking"

Chapter 2: "Why intervene in credit markets?"

> Rutherford, Stuart (1998), *The Poor and their Money*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, chapters 1 and 2.

## **6. Microfinance**

The root of credit market failures is lack of collateral. But new institutions like Bangladesh's Grameen Bank and Bolivia's BancoSol have shown that it is possible to secure high rates of repayment while lending to poor households. The key is a series of new mechanisms, most famously "group-lending" with joint liability. Yunus describes the early experience with Grameen, and Morduch's papers describe a range of other programs, as well as emerging opportunities and tensions in the movement.

Mohammad Yunus (1995), *The Grameen Bank: Experiences and Reflections*. Dhaka: Grameen Bank.

Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2010), *The Economics of Microfinance*:  
Chapter 4: “Group lending”  
Chapter 5: “Beyond group lending”  
Chapter 7: “Gender”  
Chapter 10: “Subsidy and sustainability”

> Jonathan Morduch (2013), “How Microfinance Really Works. *Milken Institute Review*.

CGAP, “Microcredit Interest Rates,” *Occasional Paper* Number 1, August 1996 [Extract].

Robert Cull, Asli Demirgüç-Kunt, and Jonathan Morduch. 2009. “Microfinance Meets the Market.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 23(1), Winter: 167-192.

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World’s Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Chapter 6.

> Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 9.

> Jonathan Morduch (2000), “The Microfinance Schism,” *World Development*, April.

> Freedom from Hunger: [www.freefromhunger.org](http://www.freefromhunger.org)

> Pro Mujer: [www.promujer.org](http://www.promujer.org)

> ACCION International: [www.accion.org](http://www.accion.org)

> Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest: [www.cgap.org](http://www.cgap.org)

## **7. Saving and Asset Accumulation**

Households use a great variety of strategies to cope with misfortune and build assets for the future. Some are very effective, while others are less so – and none are costless.

Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World’s Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Chapter 4.

Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2010), *The Economics of Microfinance*:  
Chapter 6: “Saving and insurance”

Pasaline Dupas and Jonathan Robinson. 2013. “Savings Constraints and Microenterprise Development: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Kenya.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5(1), pp. 163-92, January 2013

Pasaline Dupas and Jonathan Robinson. 2011. “Why Don’t the Poor Save More? Evidence from Health Savings Experiments.” *American Economic Review*.

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 8.

## 8. Mid-term exam (In class)

### 9. Social Business, User Fees, and Organizations

Many argue that the solution for service delivery is to tap the private sector, or at least to incorporate ideas from the market into nonprofit activities. Microfinance is a leading edge for that push, but the microfinance story is more complicated than it might seem at first. Two healthcare studies are discussed, in which the evidence for charging user fees is weak.

Werker, Eric, and Faisal Z. Ahmed. 2008. "What Do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(2): 73–92.

Jonathan Conning and Jonathan Morduch. 2011. "Microfinance and Social Investment" *Annual Review of Financial Economics*, vol. 3, ed. Robert Merton and Andrew Lo: 407-434.

Kremer, Michael and Edward Miguel. 2007. "The Illusion of Sustainability." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August: 1007-1065.

Jessica Cohen and Pascaline Dupas. 2010. "Free Distribution or Cost-Sharing? Evidence from a Randomized Malaria Prevention Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* CXXV (1), February.

### 10. Corruption

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 10.

Jakob Svensson. 2005. "Eight Questions About Corruption." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19 (3).

Bertrand, Marianne, Simeon Djankov, Rema Hanna and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2007. "Obtaining a Driving License in India: An Experimental Approach to Studying Corruption." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November.

Olken, Ben, 2007. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia", *Journal of Political Economy* 115 (2): 200-249.

### 11. Gender and discrimination

Esther Duflo, "Gender Equality in Development." MIT Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

Jensen, Robert and Emily Oster (2009). "The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women's Status in India," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(3), p. 1057-1094.

> Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2003), *The Economics of Microfinance*: Chapter 7: "Gender"

## 12. Population growth, the demographic transition, and social norms

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 5.

Grant Miller. 2010. "Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia." *Economic Journal*, Volume 120, Issue 545, pages 709–736, June.

La Ferrara, Eliana, Alberto Chong, and Suzanne Duryea. 2012. "Soap Operas and Fertility: Evidence from Brazil." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(4): 1-31.

> The Population Council: [www.popcouncil.org/](http://www.popcouncil.org/)

## 13. Delivering Healthcare

[New readings to be added.]

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 2 and 3.

Jishnu Das, Jeffrey Hammer, and Kenneth Leonard. 2008. "The Quality of Medical Advice in Low-Income Countries." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22 (2). Spring: 93-114.

>Deon Filmer, Jeffrey Hammer, and Lant Pritchett, "Health Policy in Poor Countries: Weak Links in the Chain," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 1874, January 98, pp. 1 – 63.

>Deon Filmer, Jeffrey S. Hammer, and Lant H. Pritchett (2002). "Weak Links in the Chain II: A Prescription for Health Policy in Poor Countries," *World Bank Research Observer* 2002 17: 47-66. [<http://wbro.oupjournals.org/cgi/reprint/17/1/47.pdf>]

>Miguel,Edward and Kremer,Michael (2004). "Worms: Identifying Impacts on Education and Health in the Presence of Treatment Externalities," *Econometrica*, pp 159-217.

>Abhijit Banerjee, Angus Deaton, and Esther Duflo, 2004. "Wealth, health, and health services in rural Rajasthan," Poverty Action Lab Paper No. 8, May. Abhijit Banerjee, Angus Deaton, and Esther Duflo. [http://www.povertyactionlab.com/papers/banerjee\\_deaton\\_duflo\\_2.pdf](http://www.povertyactionlab.com/papers/banerjee_deaton_duflo_2.pdf)

## 14. Delivering Education

Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*. Chapter 4.

Esther Duflo. "Schooling and Labor Market Consequences of School Construction in Indonesia: Evidence from an Unusual Policy Experiment," *American Economic Review* 91(4), 2001, pp. 795-813



Esther Duflo, Rema Hanna, and Stephen Ryan. 2011. "Incentives Work: Getting Teachers to Come to School," *American Economic Review*.

Jensen, Robert (2010). "The (Perceived) Returns to Education and the Demand for Schooling," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 125(2), p. 515-548.

>Banerjee, Abhijit V., Shawn Cole, Esther Duflo, Leigh Linden "Remedying Education: Evidence from Two Randomized Experiments in India" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 2007 122:3, 1235-1264