



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

PADM-GP-2203

Economics of International Development Spring 2024

Course Details

Instructors

Kathleen Wetzel Apltauer

kwapltauer@nyu.edu

Jonathan Morduch

The Puck Building, Room 3028, (212) 998-7515

jonathan.morduch@nyu.edu

Wednesday session: Wednesday 4:55-6:35pm

Location: Silver 403

Friday session: Friday 5:30-6:30pm

Location: Online

Office hours time

Apltauer: By appointment

Morduch: By appointment

Course overview

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

We will investigate economic growth, poverty, inequality, and the sources of economic change.

The course begins by reviewing global relationships and then we'll turn attention to households—how they earn, spend, and cope with uncertainty.

Learning objectives

Students will be able to...

Synthesize complex concepts and evidence to understand the context and mechanisms of international development and poverty.

Understand how economic principles and tools can be used to craft better solutions for individuals and communities.

Assess the quality and reliability of evidence presented by proponents of interventions and policy, including statistical evidence.

Friday sessions are not recitations. They complement and add to what can be covered during Wednesday sessions. Fridays include new material, assignments and participatory discussions. We often explore more deeply into issues and concepts raised during a Wednesday session. Other times they are to build skills, including the comprehension of the data analysis and statistics essential to evaluating the evidence offered as part of our course and in life.

In short, in addition to building your knowledge and understanding of development concerns, we hope our course gives you tools to evaluate and construct better programs, policies and interventions, whether these are to address development or to address other issue and policy areas in which you will work.

Books to purchase

Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2011. Poor Economics. PublicAffairs. (~USD12)

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. (~USD15)

Charles Wheelan. 2014. Naked Statistics. Norton. (~USD15)

The books to buy are available through the NYU Bookstore and many other bookstores, large and small.

Course Requirements

Course requirements are a mid-term examination, a final examination, and three problem sets. Also required is full participation in course activities. Grades will be calculated according to:

Class Participation	20% (participating and contributing thoughtfully to discussions and assigned activities – See rubric below for expectations)
Problem Sets	20% (2 problem sets + policy memo)
Mid-Term Exam	25%
Final Examination	35%

Participation Rubric

Participation will count for 20% of the grade for the semester.

Participation happens in various ways.

1. **Prepare before class** so you're ready to engage on Wednesdays and on Fridays. This includes completing assignments like "reflections," developing your answers to "When preparing" questions posted to Brightspace, and other activities. In class, we may "cold

call" on students, and we expect you to be ready to discuss the topics.

2. **Engage during class** on Wednesdays and Fridays. We expect:
 - a. Active engagement
 - b. Listening to others
 - c. Responding constructively
 - d. Taking responsibility to teach others, share what you've learned, and raise pertinent questions.

Participation grades will reflect:

Do you meaningfully prepare for class?

Are you present—physically and intellectually—in class?

Do you actively contribute to discussion?

Do your comments actively engage with the material and discussion by others?

NYU Wagner Policies on Academic Honesty and Grading

We follow the NYU Wagner School general policy guidelines on academic honesty and grading (including incomplete grades).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to us. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with us. **We ask each student to become familiar with these policies.**

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify us in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with class assignments to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Important NYU Wagner policies

Please see the NYU Wagner website for information on academic policies and procedures, including the academic code and grading:

1. Academic Policies and Procedures
2. Academic Code
3. Grading
4. Incomplete Grades
5. Wagner online class policy: You are expected to participate in each class with your Zoom audio and video on. Please review Wagner's Zoom in the Classroom series about classroom etiquette, participation, and more. If you are unable to participate with video on, please contact us. Students may not share the Zoom classroom recordings. The recordings are kept within the NYU Brightspace site and are for students enrolled in this course only. If you do not have the appropriate hardware technology nor financial resources to purchase the technology, please consider applying for the NYU Emergency Relief Grant.

Late Policy

Extensions on assignments will be granted only in case of emergency or special circumstances. This policy is adopted out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally demanding schedules. Assignments handed in late without authorized extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Policy on ChatGPT and other AI tools

The policies of Wagner require that you complete and submit your own work. **You may not use ChatGPT, Bard, and other generative AI tools on exams.**

We recognize, however, that AI tools can be useful for research and background, so, in other work submitted for the course, if you use ChatGPT, Bard, and other generative AI tools in your work, you must cite them, and you should describe how they were used. All writing produced and submitted for the course should be yours, not generated by AI. Please note that citing AI tools does not substitute for the necessary citations to the evidence and ideas that may have been generated by AI. Those original sources must be cited and failure to do so will affect grades. You are responsible for all errors or incomplete/off-topic responses, including those generated by AI tools. It is a violation of the school's norms if you fail to properly and fully cite original sources, and you will be held to the guidance outlined in [Wagner's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Overview of the semester

1. Wed 1/24: Introduction to development economics. Development and inequality
Fri 1/26: Evaluating evidence and the RCT debate (deeper dive)
2. Wed 1/31: **Demographics and migration**
Fri 2/2: How to read an economic paper: Just what do all those numbers in the tables mean? (skill building)
3. Wed 2/7: **Climate change, growth, and poverty**
Fri 2/9: Theories of economic growth (deeper dive)
4. Wed 2/14: **Health in a global context**
Fri 2/17: Help with questions on problem set 1 (skill building, attendance optional)
5. Wed 2/21: **Education and learning.**
Fri 2/23: A role for social business in education?: Liberia case study (deeper dive).
Problem set 1 due on Monday, February 26 at 9am
6. Wed 2/28: **Social business: band-aid or solution?**
Fri 3/1: Tackling the Liberia case study from a stakeholder perspective (deeper dive)
Problem set 2 (Liberia memo) due on Monday March 4 at 9am
7. Wed 3/6: **Women and Development.**
Fri 3/8: Help with midterm preparation (skill building, attendance optional)
8. Wed 3/13: **Mid-term exam** (in class)
Fri 3/15: No Friday session this week

SPRING BREAK: No classes March 20 or March 22.

9. Wed 3/27 **What is poverty? (Insufficiency, instability, illiquidity)**
Fri 3/29 Poverty as measured compared to poverty as lived (deeper dive)
Wed 4/3 **Markets and market failure. Informal finance**
Fri 4/5 Population, context & generalizability (deeper dive)
10. Wed 4/10 **Microcredit and market-based financial innovation**
Tues 4/12 Proof of concept? What concept? Among whom? (deeper dive)
11. Wed 4/17 **Saving and investment (short-term vs long-term)**
Fri 4/19: Help with questions on problem set 3 (skill building, attendance optional)
12. Wed 4/24 **Risk and resilience**
Fri 4/26 Identifying impact without an experiment (deeper dive)
Problem set 3 due on Monday, April 29 at 9am
13. Wed 5/1 **Just give people money? Final reflections**
Fri 5/3 Help with final preparation (skill building, attendance optional)
14. Wed 5/8 **Final exam (in class)**

Detailed syllabus for the semester

NOTE: This syllabus provides only an outline of course content. Our NYU Brightspace site holds additional material, instructions and assignments. Any adjustments to content, assignments and timing will be posted there instead of in the syllabus. **Please use the Brightspace site** for the specific assignments and expectations tied to each session and to the course more broadly.

The following designations identify which readings and materials are required and which are recommended:

> Recommended reading (Resources listed with > in front of the citation indicates a recommended reading. Those without a > indicate a required reading.)

► **Watch:** Required videos

(recommended) ► **Watch:** Recommended videos

1. Introduction to development economics. Development and inequality.

The past few years have raised concerns with widening inequality – both within countries and globally. Inequalities matter in themselves, and they also tell us about how economies are evolving. We start with global inequalities and situate the course in that context. Development Economics is a relatively young field, arising just after World War II as many countries that had been colonized gained independence from Europe. Since the early 1970s, a focus has been on extreme poverty, but progress in reducing extreme poverty and widening inequalities are reshaping conversations.

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

Branko Milanovic. 2023. [The Great Convergence: Global Equality and Its Discontents](#). *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2023. Ungated:

Martin Ravallion. [Income inequality in the developing world](#). *Science* 344 (61862014), May 23 2014.

► **Watch** Sabine Alkire. "What is the capability approach to development?"

(recommended) ► **Listen** to Banerjee on poverty and poor people (3:06 minutes):

(recommended) ► **Watch** Thomas Piketty's TED Talk on increasing inequality

Silver, Marc (January 4, 2015) "If You Shouldn't Call It The Third World, What Should You Call It?" *Goats and Soda*, National Public Radio. (After events in Washington DC on January 6, 2021, NPR's *Goats and Soda* re-sent this 2015 blog, linking to it with this phrase: "it's an insulting way to classify countries." We ask you for similar introspection regarding the designation "developing countries.")

> Silver, Marc (January 8, 2021) "[Memo to People of Earth: 'Third World' Is an Offensive Term!](#)" *Goats & Soda*, NPR (Updated conversation with the article above)

> Deaton, Angus. "Introduction." *The Great Escape*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

There are several short videos posted to Brightspace assigned as part of prep for week 1.

Friday session. Evaluating evidence and the RCT debate (deeper dive)

► **Listen** Esther Duflo. 2019, November 11. NPR interview with Brian Lehrer. Please pay special attention to Esther Duflo's explanation of RCTs role in evidence and achieving change – their experimental mindset – and how she defines poverty (program minutes 3:30-10:45).

► **Watch** UNICEF Innocenti – Randomized Controlled Design. (8 min).

Carroll, Aaron E. 2018, August 6. "Workplace Wellness Programs Don't Work Well. Why Some Studies Show Otherwise. Randomized controlled trials, despite their flaws, remain a powerful tool." *New York Times*, 6 August 2018.

Drèze, Jean. 2018. "Evidence, policy, and politics." *Ideas for India*, 3 August 2018.

> Deaton, Angus and Nancy Cartwright. 2018. "Understanding and misunderstanding randomized controlled trials." *Social Science and Medicine* 210: 2-21.

> Jonathan Morduch. "The disruptive power of RCTs." (July 30, 2019).

Harris, Richard. "[Researchers Show Parachutes Don't Work, But There's A Catch.](#)" NPR 22 December 2018.

> Yeh, Robert W. et al. "[Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma when jumping from aircraft: randomized controlled trial.](#)" *British Medical Journal*, 22 November 2018. (This is the article cited in the Harris piece.)

(recommended) ► **Watch** Esther Duflo: TED Talk "Social experiments to fight poverty." (17 minutes) (Required content for next week but useful here too.)

2. Demographics and migration

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

William Easterly, "Review: Going Beyond the Limits of the Earth With 'The Wizard and the Prophet'; The population catastrophe so often predicted never occurred, for a single reason: human ingenuity." Wall Street Journal. January 19, 2018.

► **Watch** Hans Rosling's TED Talk on Global Population (10 minutes)

Danzer, Alexander M. and Lennard Zyska. 2023. "[Pensions and Fertility: Microeconomic Evidence](#)." American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 15(2): 126–165.

Clemens, Michael A. 2011. "Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?" Journal of Economic Perspectives 25 (3): 83–106.

Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, Iffath Sharif, and Maheshwor Shrestha. 2023. "Returns to International Migration: Evidence from a Bangladesh-Malaysia Visa Lottery." American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 15 (4) October: pp 353-88.

> World Bank, "Migrants, Refugees, and Societies" (World Development Report 2023). Chapter 1: The Match and Motive Matrix.

> Banerjee and Duflo, 2019. Good Economics for Hard Times, Chapter 2 "[From the Mouth of the Shark](#)," pp 10-50.

> Lee, Jean, Jonathan Morduch, Saravana Ravindran, Abu Shonchoy, and Hassan Zaman. 2021. "Poverty and Migration in the Digital Age: Experimental Evidence on Mobile Banking in Bangladesh," American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 13, 38–71.

Friday session. (skill building) How to read an economic paper: Just what do all those numbers in the tables mean?

► **Watch** ColumbiaLearn How to Activate Your Reading (10 minutes)

Charles Wheelan, Naked Statistics, Chapters 8, 9 & 11.

Danzer, Alexander M. and Lennard Zyska. 2023. "[Pensions and Fertility: Microeconomic Evidence](#)." American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 15(2): 126–165.

3. Climate change, growth, and poverty

As climate change creates global challenges that lead some people to argue for slowing down economic growth, countries need to address poverty, unemployment, and ambitions to boost productivity.

Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg. 2023. "[The Climate Elephants in the Room](#)." Project Syndicate. May 19, 2023.

Vinod Thomas. 2023. "[The truth about climate action versus economic growth](#)." Brookings Future Tense. May 3, 2023.

Rachel Glennerster and Seema Jayachandran. 2023. "[Think Globally, Act Globally: Opportunities to Mitigate Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#)". Journal of Economic Perspectives 37 (3): 111–136.

► **Watch:** video for Allan Hsiao. 2022. "Coordination and Commitment in International Climate Action: Evidence from Palm Oil." Working paper, downloaded March 2022. [Video](#). Created by Hoai-Luu Nguyen

> Maggie Liu, Yogita Shamdasani, and Vis Taraz. 2023. "[Climate Change and Labor Reallocation: Evidence from Six Decades of the Indian Census](#)." American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 15(2): 395–423.

Friday session (deeper dive) Theories of economic growth underlie most development efforts since World War II. How did these theories shape past interventions and foreign aid strategies? Where do we stand today?

Banerjee & Duflo, Poor Economics, Chapter 1.

Economic growth models:

> Lewis, Arthur. "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor." The Manchester School vol 22, no. 2 (1954), pp 139-181, especially pp 139-141; 146 paragraph 1; 157; 189-191.

> Solow, Robert M. "A Contribution to the Theory of Economic Growth." Quarterly Journal of Economics vol. 70, no. 1. (Feb 1956), pp. 65-94, especially pp 65-66, 70-72.

Sachs, Jeffrey et al (2004) "Ending Africa's Poverty Trap." Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, pp. 117-240, in particular pp. 123-128 and 144-147.

Income & nutrition thresholds tied to "poverty traps":

> Banerjee & Duflo Poor Economics, pp 22-40

> Aart Kraay and David McKenzie. 2014. "Do Poverty Traps Exist? Assessing the Evidence." Journal of Economic Perspectives 28 (3). Summer: 127–148.

4. Health in a global context

(recommended) ► **Watch** Sendhil Mullainathan's TED Talk on health and nudges

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

Pascaline Dupas. 2011. "Health Behavior in Developing Countries." *Annual Review of Economics* 3:425–49.

Melody Schreiber. "What Kills 5 Million People A Year? It's Not Just Disease." NPR Goats and Soda. September 5, 2018.

> Margaret E Kruk, Anna D Gage, Naima T Joseph, Goodarz Danaei, Sebastián García-Saisó, Joshua A Salomon. 2018. "Mortality due to low-quality health systems in the universal health coverage era: a systematic analysis of amenable deaths in 137 countries." *Lancet* 2018; 392: 2203–12. (This is the research paper from which the Schrieber piece was drawn.)

Di Giorgio, Laura, David K. Evans, Magnus Lindelow, Son Nam Nguyen, Jakob Svensson, Waly Wane, and Anna Welander Tärneberg. "An Analysis of Clinical Knowledge, Absenteeism, and Availability of Resources for Maternal and Child Health: A Cross-Sectional Quality of Care Study in 10 African Countries." *BMJ Global Health* vol 5, no 2 (December 2020): 1-31.

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.

> Nyqvist, Martina, et al. "Reducing Child Mortality in the Last Mile: Experimental Evidence on Community Health Promoters in Uganda" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2019, 11(3): 155–192.

> Castro-Leal, F., Dayton, J., Demery, L. and Mehra, K. (2000). "Public Spending on Healthcare in Africa: Do the Poor Benefit?" *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 78(1), 66-74.

> Abhijit Banerjee, Angus Deaton, and Esther Duflo (2004). "Wealth, health, and health services in rural Rajasthan," *Poverty Action Lab Paper No. 8*, May.

> Abhijit V. Banerjee, Rachel Glennerster, Esther Duflo (2008). "Putting A Band-Aid on a Corpse: Incentives for Nurses in the Indian Public Health Care System." *Journal of European Economic Association* 6(2-3): pp 487-500.

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

> Jean N. Lee, Mahreen Mahmud, Jonathan Morduch, Saravana Ravindran, Abu Shonchoy. 2021. "[Migration, externalities, and the diffusion of COVID-19 in South Asia](#)." *Journal of Public Economics* 193: 104312.

Friday session. Help with questions on problem set 1 (skill building, attendance optional)

5. Education and learning

The readings focus on practical, concrete steps to improve the quantity and quality of schooling. Some of the papers are long and technical. Read them to understand the motivation and main results. We'll discuss the methodology & results in class.

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

Esther Duflo. 2011. "Schooling and Labor Market Consequences of School Construction in Indonesia: Evidence from an Unusual Policy Experiment," *American Economic Review* 91(4): 795-813.

> Richard Akresh, Daniel Halim, Marieke Kleemans. Long-term and intergenerational effects of education. *VoxEU*. 18 May 2019.

> Monica Martinez-Bravo. "The Local Political Economy Effects of School Construction in Indonesia." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2017, 9(2): 256–289.

(recommended) ► **Watch** Animation on education and local politics in Indonesia (2:19 minutes)

Esther Duflo, Rema Hanna, and Stephen Ryan. 2012. "Incentives Work: Getting Teachers to Come to School." *American Economic Review*, 102(4): 1241–1278

Karthik Muralidharan and Nishith Prakash. 2017. "Cycling to School: Increasing Secondary School Enrollment for Girls in India." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 9(3), pp. 321–350.

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

> Dizon-Ross, Rebecca. 2019. "Parents' Belief about their Children's Academic Ability: Implications for Educational Investments." *American Economic Review* 109(8): 2728-2765.

> Afridi, Farzana; Bidisha Barooah; Rohini Somanathan. 2020. "Improving learning outcomes through information provision: Experimental evidence from Indian villages." *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 146, September, pp 1-11.

> Le Nestour, Alexis, Laura Moscoviz, and Justin Sandefur. "[The Long-Run Decline of Education Quality in the Developing World](#)." Center for Global Development, Working Paper 608, February 2022. URL.

Research on a remedial education intervention progressively applied in new settings:

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

> Duflo, Esther, Pascaline Dupas and Michael Kremer. 2015. "School governance, teacher incentives, and pupil–teacher ratios: Experimental evidence from Kenyan primary schools." *Journal of Public Economics* 123: 92–110.

> Bold, Tessa, Mwangi Kimenyi, Germano Mwabu, Alice Ng'ang'a, and Justin Sandefur. 2018. "Experimental evidence on scaling up education reforms in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics* 168: 1-20.

Recent research on interventions to improve teacher quality:

> Stern, Jonathan et al. "[Learning at scale: Interim report.](#)" RTI International for the Center for Global Development, October 2021.

> Ashraf, Nava, Abhijit Banerjee and Vesall Nourani. "[Learning to teach by learning to learn.](#)" October 2021.

Friday session. (deeper dive) A role for social business in education?: Liberia case study. Are social enterprises the tool to fill in gaps in service delivery left by markets and government. Are social enterprises a reliable choice in all settings, especially for essential services? We use delivery of education in Liberia as a case study of these questions. Pay attention to the details and constraints that are barriers to effective delivery of Liberia's education needs.

See detailed instructions on Brightspace. Advance group-work required as prep.

Werner, George K. "Liberia has to work with international private school companies if we want to protect our children's future." *Quartz Africa*, 03 January, 2017.

► **Watch** George Werner, Liberian Minister of Education, explaining his support of Bridge International Academies (14 mins)

Bold, Tessa, et al. Enrollment without Learning: Teacher Effort, Knowledge, and Skill in Primary Schools in Africa. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* vol. 31, no. 4 (Fall 2017): pp 185–204.

FrontPageAfrica. Liberia: Legislators Want LEAP Program Extended to All Public Schools at Education Officers Summit. 18 September 2018.

Complete instructions for the session, background documents and optional reading list will be posted to Brightspace.

6. Social business: Band-Aid or solution?

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.

► **Watch** Acumen Fund’s Jacqueline Novogratz talk: “A third way to think about aid” (TED Talk)

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.

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

(recommended) ► **Watch** Berkeley’s Ted Miguel on Worms (3:52 minutes)

(recommended) ► **Watch** Deworm the World: A Call to Action (9:04 minutes)

> 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.

(recommended) ► **Watch** Dan Palotta argue that the way we think about charity is all wrong. (TED Talk)

Friday session. (deeper dive) Liberia case study; stakeholder perspectives. See detailed instructions on Brightspace. Advance group-work required as prep.

7. Women and development

Seema Jayachandran. 2015. “The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries.” *Annual Review of Economics* 7:63–88.

Esther Duflo, “Women Empowerment and Economic Development.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol 50, no 4, December 2012: 1051-1070.

> More on Duflo, from The Atlantic.

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.

Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo. 2004. Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India. *Econometrica*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (September, 2004), pp. 1409–1443.

> Cassan, Guilhem and Lore Vandewalle. "Political reservations for women increase the policy influence of low castes in India." VoxEu 09 December 2017. (This expands the Chattopadhyay and Duflo article, "Women as Policy Makers," to include women's caste in the assessments.)

> Friedson-Ridenour, Sophia & Rachael S. Pierotti. "Competing priorities: Women's microenterprises and household relationships." World Development vol 121 (September 2019): 53-62.

Friday session. (skill building) Help with midterm review (attendance optional)

8. Wednesday: Mid-term exam (In class)

Friday session. No Friday session this week.

9. What is poverty? (Insufficiency, instability, illiquidity)

Poverty and well-being

Jonathan Morduch. 2023. "Rethinking Poverty, Household Finance, and Microfinance." Chapter 2 in Valentina Hartarska and Robert Cull, eds., Handbook of Microfinance, Financial Inclusion and Development. Edward Elgar, 2023: 21-40.

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

> Johannes Haushofer. 2014. "The Price of Poverty: Psychology and the Cycle of Need," Foreign Affairs, July 15, 2014.

Measuring poverty

The Economist. 2015. "The tricky work of measuring falling global Poverty." October 12, 2015.

Jonathan Morduch, "Concepts of Poverty," chapter 2 of United Nations Handbook of Poverty Statistics project. New York: United Nations.

Jonathan Morduch, "Poverty Measures," chapter 3 of United Nations Handbook of Poverty Statistics project. New York: United Nations.

Annie Lowrey. "Poverty Is a Choice: Extreme poverty has declined, but the line is very low." The Atlantic, July, 2020.

> Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2019: Illuminating inequalities.

Friday session. (deeper dive) Poverty as measured compared to poverty as lived. How we measure poverty affects where we focus development efforts. This session expands on Wednesday's session. What is poverty? How is it measured? Why do the differences matter?

Amartya Sen. Poverty & Famines, pp 1-8

Amartya Sen. Development as Freedom, pp 85-93

> Amartya Sen. Development as Freedom, additional readings (posted to Brightspace)

Selections from Voices of the poor:

- Can anyone hear us? pp 184-188, starting with "Police Activities"; p 98 "Corruption"; pp 51-56 "Humiliation & Shame"
- Crying out for change p 27 "Self-Respect and Dignity"; p 189 "Respect"

Hickel, Jason & Charles Kenny. "12 Things We Can Agree On about Poverty`." Center for Global Development, 27 August 2018.

Portfolios of the poor, pp: 205 to 210, with special attention to Figure A1.1.

> Charles Kenny. "Getting better in pictures." Center for Global Development Essays, February 2011.

10. Markets and market failure. Informal finance

Formalized markets are based on impersonal legal contracts. Informal markets, in contrast, are usually based on personal relationships and (often unwritten) understandings.

As formal markets expand, informal markets rarely disappear. Sometimes they even expand. Why? Part of the answer is that informal markets deliver qualities (speed? trust? reliability?) that formal markets lack. Rather than rejecting informal institutions as "backward", we can learn from them and build on them.

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.

Morduch, Jonathan. "Rethinking Poverty, Household Finance, and Microfinance." August 2021 (unpublished).

Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2010), 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.

> Jonathan Morduch (2017). "Microfinance as a Credit Card." *Limn* Issue 9

Friday session. Population, context and generalizability: Heterogeneity of impacts... What's really being measured?

Please read the abstract of each of the following articles. See the lesson on Brightspace for your assignment:

Deworming interventions

Kremer, Michael and Edward Miguel. (2007). "The Illusion of Sustainability." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3) August: 1007-1065.

Baird, Sarah, Joan Hamory Hicks, Michael Kremer and Edward Miguel. (2016). "Worms at Work: Long-Run Impacts of a Child Health Investment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131(4): 1637–1680.

Remedial education interventions

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

Banerjee, Abhijit V., Shawn Cole, Esther Duflo and Leigh Linden. (2007). "Remedying education: Evidence from two randomized experiments in India." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3) August: 1235-1264.

Duflo, Esther, Pascaline Dupas and Michael Kremer. (2015). "School governance, teacher incentives, and pupil–teacher ratios: Experimental evidence from Kenyan primary schools." *Journal of Public Economics* 123: 92–110.

Bold, Tessa, Mwangi Kimenyi, Germano Mwabu, Alice Ng'ang'a, and Justin Sandefur. "Experimental evidence on scaling up education reforms in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics* 168: 1-20.

11. Microcredit and market-based financial innovation

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.

Field, Erica, Rohini Pande, John Papp, and Natalia Rigol. 2013. "Does the Classic Microfinance Model Discourage Entrepreneurship among the Poor? Experimental Evidence from India." *American Economic Review*, 103(6): 2196-2226.

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.

Muhammad Yunus. Interview with NBR, March 9, 2005. Wharton Business School.

[Or ► **Watch** Muhammad Yunus documentary (10 minutes)]

[Or ► **Watch** Muhammad Yunus on the Daily Show (with Jon Stewart)...content starts at 2 minutes]

CGAP, "Microcredit Interest Rates," Occasional Paper Number 1, August 1996 [Extract].

(recommended) ► **Watch** Stuart Rutherford on microfinance and talking to clients (9 minutes):

- > Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2010), *The Economics of Microfinance*:
- > Chapter 4: "Group lending"
- > Chapter 5: "Beyond group lending"
- > Chapter 10: "Subsidy and sustainability"

Friday session. (deeper dive). Proof of concept? What concept? Among whom? What are some limits to generalizability of RCT findings? How can we make use of what they do tell us? We explore these questions through evidence on microfinance interventions.

Banerjee, Abhijit, Dean Karlan, and Jonathan Zinman. "Six Randomized Evaluations of Microcredit: Introduction and Further Steps." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1–21.

Additional readings, assignments and questions posted to Brightspace.

12. Saving and investment

Households use a great variety of strategies to cope with misfortune and to build assets for the future. Some are very effective, while others are less so – and none are costless. We investigate what the data reveal on factors contributing to effectiveness, or the lack thereof.

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

Vincent Somville and Lore Vandewalle. 2023. "Access to banking, savings and consumption smoothing in rural India." *Journal of Public Economics* 223, 104900.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2023.104900>.

Pascaline Dupas and Jonathan Robinson. 2013. "Why Don't the Poor Save More? Evidence from Health Savings Experiments." *American Economic Review*.103(4): 1138–1171.

(recommended) ► **Watch** Pascaline Dupas describe her research on saving (5.5 minutes)

► **Watch** Saving in groups and out – the animated videos! (3.5 minutes each)
Intro to savings groups. Why Savings Groups work. Other ways to save

> Beatriz Armendáriz and Jonathan Morduch (2010), *The Economics of Microfinance*:
Chapter 6: "Saving and insurance."

(recommended) ► **Watch** Dean Karlan describe why commitments matter to saving (9 minutes)

(recommended) ► **Watch** Nava Ashraf describe the challenge of holding on to your money (14 minutes)

(recommended) ► **Watch** LSE's Nava Ashraf describe behavior change in saving (9 minutes)

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

(recommended) For next steps: ► **Read/Listen/Watch** Aizeman, Nurith. "Dial M For Money: Can Mobile Banking Lift People Out Of Poverty?" NPR, 9 December 2016.

Friday session. Identifying impact without an experiment: Beyond experimental evidence, what is the role of data triangulation and natural experiments in building evidence? Please see Brightspace for readings and individual assignments.

13. Risk and resilience

How do households and communities protect themselves in the face of risk? Can private insurance be commercially-viable in poorer communities? How does vulnerability constrain development?

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

(recommended) ► **Listen** Adam Davidson interviews Daryl Collins and Jonathan Morduch about *Portfolios of the Poor*. NPR Planet Money Podcast. (26 minutes)

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

► **Watch** Moral Hazard and Adverse Selection – the animated videos! (3.5 minutes each)

Shawn Cole, Xavier Giné, and James Vickery. 2017. "How Does Risk Management Influence Production Decisions? Evidence from a Field Experiment," *Review of Financial Studies* 30 (6): 1935–1970.

> 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.

> Shawn Cole and Wentao Xiong. 2017. "Agricultural Insurance and Economic Development." *Annual Review of Economics* 9: 235-262.

(recommended) ► **Watch** Shawn Cole describe the research on rainfall insurance

> 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.

Friday session. (skill building) Help with preparing for the final (Attendance optional)

14. Just give people money? Final reflections

Daniel Handel. We're finally figuring out if foreign aid is any better than handing out cash. *Vox*. Sep 5, 2023.

Haushofer, Johannes, and Jeremy Shapiro. "The Short-Term Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers to the Poor: Experimental Evidence from Kenya." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 4 (2016): 1973–2042.

Jonathan Morduch and Rachel Schneider. 2023. "Just Give People Money. But How and When?" Chapter in Ray Boshara and Ida Rademacher (eds.), *Brief Essays on the Best Ideas to Build Wealth—for Everyone*. St. Louis Federal Reserve/Aspen Institute. September 2021: 169-174.

Carolina Kansikas, Anandi Mani & Paul Niehaus. 2023. "[Customized Cash Transfers: Financial Lives and Cash-flow Preferences in Rural Kenya](#)." February 2023. NBER working paper 30930, DOI 10.3386/w30930.

> Jesse Cunha, Giacomo De Giorgi, and Seema Jayachandran. 2019. "The Price Effects of Cash Versus In-Kind Transfers" *Review of Economic Studies* 86, 240–281.

>Egger, Dennis, Johannes Haushofer, Edward Miguel, Paul Niehaus, and Michael Walker. "General Equilibrium Effects of Unconditional Cash Transfers: Experimental Evidence from Kenya." *Econometrica* 90, no. 6 (2022): 2603–2643.

Final exam (In class)