

Microeconomics of Development

Topics

Our approach to choosing topics in this course will be somewhat unusual. Rather than providing a broad survey of development economics in general, or a detailed treatment of my own idiosyncratic research agenda, my aim for this course is to acquaint you with the research frontier in some areas of particular interest to people in this class. Accordingly, we need to collectively choose some areas to examine where interesting research is being conducted.

Since I don't know what areas you may find particularly interesting, my approach is going to be to specify a set of researchers who I think are doing unusually interesting or important frontier research, and let you choose from among the recent papers written by these people. Here's my list (numerous wonderful people left out; don't be offended if you're one of these!):

Orazio Attanasio	Marcel Fafchamps	Rinku Murgai
Abhijit Banerjee	Ray Fisman	Rohini Pande
Jere Behrman	Garance Genicot	Mark Pitt
Tim Besley	John Giles	Martin Ravallion
Pierre Dubois	Hanan Jacoby	Mark Rosenzweig
Andrew Foster	Michael Kremer	Duncan Thomas
Stefan Dercon	Dilip Mookherjee	Robert Townsend
Esther Duflo	Kaivan Munshi	Chris Udry

I'd like each of you to find a recent working paper from one of these authors; scholar.google.com is your friend. The paper you choose should satisfy the following criteria:

1. It should be on a development topic (broadly construed);
2. It should have an explicit economic model (note that this does *not* mean that it can't be an empirical paper);
3. You should find it interesting.

Please email me regarding your choice of paper before next tuesday (September 6th). You should also find time to read the paper carefully. Construct answers to the following questions about the paper:

1. What is the most important antecedent to the paper, or, roughly, what is the most recent paper cited by the author(s) which had to be written before the paper you've chosen could have been written?
2. In one sentence, what is the research question of your chosen paper? How does it relate to the research question of the antecedent you've identified?
3. In one sentence, what is the chief contribution of your chosen paper?
4. What research questions are raised (perhaps implicitly) but not answered by your chosen paper? Or, put differently, if one was to write a paper for which this was the most important antecedent, what would the research question of that paper be?