



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,284: Development Economics: Past and Present

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written examination, Analog, Individual work individual grade (50%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Quiz, Digital, Individual work individual grade (50%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,284,1.00 Development Economics: Past and Present](#) -- English -- [Caprettini Bruno](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

A good knowledge of microeconomics and applied econometrics is required.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students will be acquainted with some of the major challenges facing people living in developing countries and will be able to evaluate market-based and non-market-based solutions to these problems. In addition, discussions of recent empirical papers will teach them to evaluate critically empirical research in the field.

Course content

During most recorded history - and during all the unrecorded - the lives of most people were miserable: short, brutish and topped off with a violent death. Occasionally some society would manage to pull ahead and raise the standards of living for a few generations. Until 1600 however, each of these experiments failed. When they did, a few decades of chaos were sufficient to drag these societies back to square zero. What made these experiments fail? And what made England, the West and eventually parts of Asia escape poverty since 1600? What keeps Africa behind today? The course tries to answer these questions by looking at development experiences that happened both in the past and in recent decades.

The course looks at the following topics:

- Technology adoption
- Fertility
- Education
- Health
- Labor markets
- Credit markets
- Institutions
- Aid

I teach a related course in the Master of International Affairs (8,383 Fighting Global Poverty). While few of the topics overlap, this MEcon course is slightly more technical in its use of quantitative methods and economic models. It is also more concerned with the long-run perspective of development, as it draws parallels between historical episodes and more recent experience of growth. Students wishing to have a more rigorous treatment of the topics of development, and those interested in both history and development may prefer to sit this MEcon course.



Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

There will be one lecture per week throughout the Spring semester (unless the university is closed on the day of the class). Grading will depend on a final in-class, closed books exam (50%) and short questions to be solved at home before each lecture (50%).

Course literature

A detailed reading list consisting of mostly research papers will be provided during the course.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written examination
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written exam
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Synchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	90 mins.

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

Traditional, in-class written exam.

Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled "Supplementary aids" of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

Supplementary aids

Pen, paper and analog calculator. No mobiles.



2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Quiz
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written exam
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

Quiz posted every week on Canvas.

Examination-aid rule

Open Book

Students are free to choose aids, apart from the following restrictions:

- pocket calculator models which are not part of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series, as well as any programmable electronic devices that are capable of communication such as electronic dictionaries, notebooks, tablets, smartphones, headsets, additional screens, etc. are not admissible;
- there is an option for faculty members to explicitly define exceptions under supplementary aids.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

1) Exam. There will be a decentralized written exam during the last lecture of the course. The exam will cover all topics studied in the lectures, including: technology adoption, fertility, education, health, labor markets, credit markets, institutions and aid. The exam counts 50% of the final grade.

2) Short questions. Each week I will post 2-3 short questions about the readings which will be covered in the following class. Students have one week to study these readings and answers the questions before we discuss the readings during the lecture. Taken together, these weekly short questions count for 50% of the grade.

Examination relevant literature

Compulsory readings will be announced before every class.



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).