

# Introduction to the Economics of Development

## 1. Intro and structure

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# The team

- Lecturer: Me :) (Luke Milsom)
- Teaching assistants: Justin Mutambeshya
- Office hours: After lectures
- First point of contact: [justin.mutambeshya@student.kuleuven.be](mailto:justin.mutambeshya@student.kuleuven.be)

## Assessment

- 60% Exam. Closed book. Examinable = slides + readings.
  - 30% Paper. In groups.
  - 10% Weekly Quizzes.
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- Total grade is out of 20.
  - Can resit the exam if achieved  $< 10/20$  on that component.
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- Exam, paper, and course are in English only.
  - Exam **must** be taken during the main exam periods.

## Resources

- These slides!
- Readings.
- A weekly list of readings/topics, and some general resources can be found [here](#).

Come to the lecturers having completed the readings ( “Main paper(s)” ).

# Course aims

Bring you to the forefront of development economics research and thinking.

- Without assuming any prior knowledge.
- Ambitious...

1. Know core development “facts”.
2. Be conversant in the key intuition of (some) standard development models.
3. Be able to critically analyse modern empirical development economics papers.

# Structure

- 8 weeks of 2 times (1h to 2h) lectures on Tuesday and Friday.
  - Tuesday, 4pm-6pm, MSI1 00.28
  - Friday, 11am-1pm, AGOR 00.E20
- Question-based and paper-based course.
- Each week we will tackle a key question in development economics.
- This is a third-year course — we will critically engage with the literature from day 1.
- There will be maths, there will be econometrics, there will be tables and graphs.

# Content

Questions:

1. Why do people stay poor?
2. Are natural resources a solution, or a trap?
3. Can we manufacture prosperity?
4. Are institutions key?
5. Are credit constraints constraining development?
6. Humanities greatest invention? Is urbanization the only route to development?
7. How will climate change interact with the development challenge?

# Schedule

Week	Lecture
W1 (24.9)	Introduction and big facts.
W1 (27.9)	How to answer questions like a (development) economist.
W2 (1.10)	Why do people stay poor?
W2 (4.10)	Why do people stay poor?
W3 (8.10)	Are natural resources a solution or a trap?
W3 (11.10)	Are natural resources a solution or a trap?
W4 (15.10)	Can we manufacture prosperity?
W4 (18.10)	Can we manufacture prosperity?
W5 (22.10)	Are institutions key?
W5 (25.10)	Are institutions key?
W6 (29.10)	Are credit constraints constraining development?
W6 (1.11)	Holiday
W7 (5.11)	Humanities greatest invention? Is urbanisation the only route to development?
W7 (8.11)	Humanities greatest invention? Is urbanisation the only route to development?
W8 (12.11)	How will climate change interact with the development challenge?
W8 (15.11)	How will climate change interact with the development challenge?
W9	Small group project. During this period you will meet with me and with Justin once each.
W10	
W11	
W12	
W13	



## Lecture recordings

- Lectures will be recorded **but** recordings will only be released before the exam.

## The exam (60%)

- Not reading comprehension.
- Will require you to critically engage with the material.
- You will not be asked to do any high-level maths. You may be asked to formalise problems and highlight the key intuition of common models.
- Practice exam questions will be available before the exam.
- Use the exam to show off!

## The Paper (30%)

- Small groups of 3 to 5.
- Pick one of the 7 questions covered in the lectures.
- You have 4 weeks to write and submit a small research project  $\sim$  2000words
- Key things I will be looking for:
  - Clearly defined research question.
  - A well thought out and somewhat comprehensive review of the relevant literature.
  - Construction and defence of an argument. Can use data, can just argue discursively, can even try to formalise your argument mathematically.
- We will talk more about the paper on Friday.

## The quizzes (10%)

- Weekly (almost) quiz posted after Friday's lecture. Must be handed in before next Tuesday's lecture.
- Multiple choice questions not exam-style.
- There will be 6 quizzes overall, the average over your best 5 quizzes counts for 10% of your overall grade.

## Structure of each topic/ question

- We will focus the discussion on one or two key papers.
  - You are expected to read the introduction of each paper before the lectures — but don't worry if you don't understand most of it!
- In each section we will cover some economic theory and some empirical methodology as well as discuss empirical results critically.
- We will attempt to conclude by forming some answer to the question posed.

## Lecture style

- Lectures will be 1 to 2 hours long, in any remaining time I will hang around for informal office hours.
- Lectures aim to be engaging and participatory.
  - Will include me asking questions that you will answer live using your phones.
  - May include small group discussions/ work during lectures.
- Asking questions throughout is highly encouraged! If you have a question I guarantee many others do too and will be very appreciative if you ask it!

## In class questions

Answer questions using this link: [PollEv.com/lukeheathmilsom201](https://poll-ev.com/lukeheathmilsom201)

1. Which country has the highest GDP per capita?

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4. What do you think is the biggest challenge for development in the coming decades?