

EC140: Economic Development Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Emily Beam

E-mail: emily.beam@uvm.edu

Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00pm.

<https://calendly.com/emily-a-beam>

Office: 233 Old Mill

Class: MW 3:30-4:20

You can book an appointment then or other times here:

Fall 2020 will be a strange semester. My operating principle is that we are all trying our best. I will work to accommodate personal emergencies, unpredictable schedules, general chaos as best I can.

Course Description

Worldwide, 767 million people live on less than \$2/day. Yet, that number is basically half of what it was in 1990. The purpose of this course is to understand the nature of global poverty and the role of economic development. What has driven the massive reductions in global poverty? What challenges remain, and can policy make a difference?

There are lots of ways to approach development economics, and this class begins places poverty at the center. Causes of poverty, policies to reduce poverty, and how we generate knowledge about what works and what doesn't. Our class will consider the topics of institutions, foreign aid, poverty traps, health, education, household decisions making, labor markets, migration, and climate change. We will learn about the lives of the poor, and how they vary within and across countries. We will examine the problems people face in developing countries, the successes, and how we can learn what works and what doesn't.

We'll tackle three big questions:

1. What is poverty? Why are some countries poor?
2. What do we know about reducing poverty? How do we know it?
3. How can economics help confront big challenges in development?

Day to day, there will be a bit of lecturing and a lot of class discussion, usually in small groups or pairs. You'll read about 60-90 pages per week and complete sets of reading responses before most class periods (about 30 total). You'll also be evaluated on your class participation and your performance on three capstones.

The prerequisites are EC011 and EC012.

Learning Objectives

- To apply economic theory to themes in development economics and to critically evaluate media and academic literature.
- To develop confidence and expertise in reading and analyzing academic economic articles.
- To communicate complicated issues clearly and concisely in the form of reflections, essays, and presentations.

Required Materials

One book: Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. **Poor economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty**. ISBN-13: 978-1610390934.

We will read the entire book, so buy whatever version is most convenient for you (e-book, paperback, etc.) It does look pretty classy on your bookshelf.

The reading list provides the set of other required readings. These include book excerpts, academic articles, newspaper stories, and videos. All are available on Blackboard.

Two friends: You will get the most out of this class if you have people to work and study with. You need at least two buddies. Find a buddy. Get his/her name, phone number, e-mail address, etc. Then find another buddy. Now you have two friends! Great work!

Technology

We will be using MS Teams, Blackboard, and Google docs. Nothing too fancy.

Please read this **technology check list** to make sure you are ready for classes. You can contact the Helpline (802-656-2604) for support with technical issues.

Our Monday sessions will be recorded and made available to members of the class. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the “chat” feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Class flow

Monday	Wed/Fri	Asynchronous	
Reading response due	Reading response due	RR/assignments due	
before class	before your section	Friday	
@ 3:30 pm	@ 3:30 pm	@ 11:59pm	
Class meeting 3:30 MS Teams	Section meeting 3:30 MS Teams		EC140 FALL 2020

Meeting Mondays

On Mondays, we will meet as a whole class on MS Teams. I will lecture, with opportunities to participate/engage. I will make these recordings available on Teams.

Small group Wednesday/Fridays

I'll assign you to a Wednesday or Friday section. On your section day, we'll meet and spend most of the time discussing as a half class or breaking out into even smaller groups. These days will not be recorded.

Asynchronous

There will be weekly asynchronous content or assignments that you can complete at a time that works best for you. These will usually be done independently.

Grading

Participation	20%
Reading responses	35%
Capstone	45%

Range	Grade	Range	Grade
93.0 - 100.0	A/A+	73.0 - 76.99	C
90.0 - 92.99	A-	70.0 - 72.99	C-
87.0 - 89.99	B+	67.0 - 69.99	D+
83.0 - 86.99	B	63.0 - 66.99	D
80.0 - 82.99	B-	60.0 - 62.99	D-
77.0 - 79.99	C+	< 60.0	F

Grades are determined by threshold. For example, a 92.97 is an A-, and a 93.01 is an A.

Participation

Our class activities involve only a modest amount of lecture and quite a lot of discussion in small groups. There are several ways you can be a good class participant: joining class, answering/asking questions, helping a classmate, and working actively in groups. You'll submit a "participation log" for each unit. That, plus my own class notes/observations, will form your participation grade for that period.

What if I miss class?

There are many reasons you might need to miss class, especially this semester! You're responsible for making sure you catch up on any material you miss. See the separate "missed class" policy on Blackboard.

Reading responses

This class requires you to keep up with the reading and think critically about what you've read. The week prior to each class, I will post a set of questions on Blackboard that will help to guide your reading and reflect on the material. These questions will also inform our next in-class discussion.

These are graded based on completing them with a reasonable effort. While I would appreciate your favorite gazpacho recipe, you won't get credit for that. You'll receive 2 points if you complete all of the reading responses, 1 point if at least 50% are complete, and 0 points for incomplete responses.

I'll indicate an approximate word count, but in general, expect that reading responses will require about 300-500 words of writing total and will speak only to the readings we will discuss in class.

Your response must be submitted by the time class begins: if it's late, it doesn't count. I will drop your three lowest reading responses throughout the semester.

Capstones

Each unit has a capstone: a take-home exam, an RCT proposal, and a policy brief. Each will be done independently and will be worth 15% of your grade. Details to follow.

Deadlines

My general policy regarding deadlines:

- Reading responses must be submitted before class begins.
- I will grant extensions on other assignments when feasible so long as you approach me before the due date. I cannot grant extensions on peer review activities, because it jams up the system.

If something is going on with you that means you're going to have a larger or more persistent problem with deadlines, please reach out! We can make a plan that balances the demands of the course with the reality that EC140 isn't the only thing happening in your life.

General problems you might face this semester

Sometimes you get sick. Or awful things happen. You're not alone, and UVM has support for you.¹

I'm not feeling well

Stay home or in your room and call **Student Health Services** (802-656-3350). They'll talk you through next steps. If it turns out it's just a cold, get better and get some sleep. Skip class and rest. No matter what grade you're going for, everyone can miss a few classes with no penalty. Your groupmates will catch you up on what you miss, and if you're worried, you can always sign up for <https://calendly.com/emily-a-beam/15min> and talk to me.

I might have COVID

If you live on-campus and you've either tested positive for COVID or you're awaiting results for COVID-like symptoms, you'll be moved into isolation housing. If you live off-campus, **Student Health Services** will give you guidance about how to isolate safely. Wherever you live, Student Health Services will notify me (and you can also notify me), and we'll make a plan.

I don't have COVID, but I do have another serious illness or injury

Please reach out to Student Services at your college. They will help you! A very common thing that happens is that you document your medical emergency with Student Services, and they contact all your professors for you. Then, your professors can make accommodations to help you. You can reach out to me before or after you get in touch with Student Services.

I'm experiencing a family emergency

Same as above. Reach out to your college's Student Services office. They're here to help you.

I'm struggling with my mental health

Please consider reaching out to **Counseling and Psychiatry Services** (802-656-3340). They are free and confidential, and they have tele-health appointments for all students, including at-home students. If you need a same-day appointment, tell them, and they will help you right away. If you're worried your mental health is affecting your school performance, your college's Student Services office can help you arrange accommodations with your professors. This is very common!

I'm experiencing food/housing insecurity

If you are facing problems securing food or housing, I strongly encourage you to contact your college's Student Services office. You can also talk to me if you feel comfortable. UVM's **Swipe Out Hunger** program provides short-term help with food in the form of 14 free meal swipes at the dining halls. You can't self-refer into the program, but I can put through the request (as can any other UVM faculty/staff).

¹I collaborated on this guide with UVM English professor Holly Painter. This stuff is generally true for all of your classes. Everyone here wants you to succeed.

I'm worried about a friend

Call the [Dean of Students Office](#) (802-656-3380). If you'd like to stay anonymous, you can submit a [C.A.R.E. form](#) online and the C.A.R.E. team will follow up with your friend. If it's an emergency, call 911 off campus or 802-656-3473 on campus.

Someone has sexually assaulted or harassed me

This is not your fault. UVM resources include [Student Health Services](#), [Campus Victim's Advocate](#), [Counseling and Psychiatry Services](#), and the [Women & Gender Equity Center](#). If you prefer to get support off campus, reach out to [HOPE Works](#). You don't need to report assault or harassment to access medical or support services, but if you decide to report it, you can do so anytime. To file a criminal report, contact [UVM Police](#) (802-656-3473). To start an internal (non-criminal) investigation of harassment, [use this form](#). Please note that I am a mandated reporter, meaning that, if you write about or tell me about a sexual assault, I am legally required to report it to UVM Police Services, though I can do so without your name.

UVM is sending everyone home

If this happens, I will send out a plan by email. Although this is a remote class, so not much would change for the remainder of the semester, the process of moving back home is hugely disruptive, so I'll build in a pause in the course while everyone gets settled.

I'm falling behind academically

Sign up for [office hours](#) and talk to me or your other professors or TAs!

The [Tutoring Center](#) offers free tutoring in learning skills, subject area tutoring, and supplemental instruction.

The [Writing Center](#) provides free writing support and feedback at any point in the writing process for any class and any type of assignment.

The research databases at [Howe Library](#) are invaluable resources. If you need research help in any course, [UVM research librarians](#) are at the ready.

If you have a documented disability and you're interested in utilizing accommodations, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#). You're also strongly encouraged to discuss with your professors the accommodations you plan to use in each course.

For many of these situations, your first contact will be Student Services in your college:

CALS (Agriculture & Life Sciences)

email: calsstudentservices@uvm.edu

CAS (Arts & Sciences)

email: cas@uvm.edu

CEMS (Engineering & Mathematical Sciences)

email: cems.student.services@uvm.edu

CESS (Education & Social Services)

email: cessstsv@uvm.edu

CNHS (Nursing & Health Sciences)

email: cnhs@uvm.edu

Rubenstein (Environment / Nat. Resources)

email: marie.vea@uvm.edu (Asst. Dean)

Grossman (Business)

email: gsbcss@uvm.edu

Student Responsibilities and Rights

Ch-ch-changes The University of Vermont reserves the right to make changes in the course offerings, mode of delivery, degree requirements, charges, regulations, and procedures contained herein as educational, financial, and health, safety, and welfare considerations require, or as necessary to be compliant with governmental, accreditation, or public health directives.

Student learning accommodations: In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students to create reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to their professors as early as possible each semester.

Contact **ACCESS**: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu;

UVM's policy on disability certification and student support

Religious holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Please submit, by e-mail, your documented religious holiday schedule for the semester by the end of the second full week of classes in order for us to make appropriate arrangements.

Prohibition on Sharing Academic Materials: Please don't post class materials on websites. To be more formal, students are prohibited from publicly sharing or selling academic materials that they did not author (for example: class syllabus, outlines or class presentations authored by the professor, practice questions, text from the textbook or other copyrighted class materials, etc.); and students are prohibited from sharing assessments (for example homework or a take-home examination). Violations will be handled under UVM's Intellectual Property policy and **Code of Academic Integrity**.

Academic integrity Don't plagiarize. This policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating:

Grade appeals: If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities: So many rights! And responsibilities!

FERPA rights disclosure The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.