

**Econ 8784: Economic Development  
Spring 2014 Course Syllabus (Preliminary)**

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**Office Hours:** Thursday 3:15-4:45pm and by appointment

**Class Time and location:** Econ 5 Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 - 3:15pm

**Course Description**

This is a graduate course in development economics. The primary goal of this course is to prepare students for original research within the field of Development Economics. The course readings focus on empiric

identification, and any major limitations that you see in the paper. Part of this grade will come from successfully turning in a summary of each paper. The other portion will come from a review of a random sample of your summaries.

**Referee Report:** I will assign one paper during the semester. I prefer to use working papers, so I will assign one when I find an appropriate paper. You will be required to write a brief summary of the paper's topic, method and conclusions, as well as an analysis of the paper's strength and weaknesses.

**Class Presentation 1:** You will give two short presentations during the semester. The point of the first presentation is to pitch a paper idea based on data you have found. In development economics it can be hard to find data sources, so the point of this exercise is to have you find a good or multiple data sources and pitch an idea for a paper based on these data. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes including time for feedback/discussion. I will give you more instructions on the content of the presentation in class.

**Class Presentation 2:** This presentation will be based on your research proposal. More information will be given in class.



## **Useful Books and Methods Articles**

Bardhan, Pranab and Christopher Udry. 1999.

## Reading List

Along with readings for class I have provided some background readings and supplementary readings. I recommend you read the background readings. The supplementary readings are not required and are for your interest.

### **1. Randomized Experiments and the Limitations**

Banerjee, Abhijit and Esther Duflo. "The Experimental Approach to Development Economics," *Annual Review of Economics*, Vol. 1: 151-

Netherlands: North Holland.

Parker, Susan, Luis Rubalcava, Graciela Teruel. 2008. "Chapter62: Evaluating Conditional Schooling and Health Programs" in T. Paul Schutlz and John A. Strauss (eds.), *Handbook of Development Economics* vol. 4. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: North Holland.

*Supplemental Reading:*

Karen Macours, Norbert Schady and Renos Vakis. 2012. "Cash Transfers, Behavioral Changes, and Cognitive Development in Early Childhood: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment", *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(2):247-73.

Gertler, Paul. 2004. "Do Conditional Cash Transfers Improve Child Health? Evidence from PROGRESA's Controlled Randomized Experiment", *American Economic Review* 94(2): 336–41. (Impact on Health - Experimental Evidence)

Fiszbein, Ariel and Norbert Schady. 2009. *Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty*. World Bank Policy Research Report, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Barham, Tania and John Maluccio. 2009. "Eradicating Disease: The Effect of Conditional Cash Transfers on Vaccination Coverage in Rural Nicaragua," *Journal of Health Economics*, 28(3), 611-621.

Filmer, Deon, Norbert Schady. 2011. "Does More Cash in Conditional Cash Transfer Programs Always Lead to Larger Impacts on School Attendance?" *Journal of Development Economics*, 96(1): 150-157.

Gertler, Paul J., Sebastian W. Martinez, and Marta Rubio-Codina. 2012. "Investing Cash Transfers to Raise Long-Term Living Standards."

*Supplementary Reading:*

Behrman, Jere R., Susan W. Parker, and Petra E. Todd. 2009. Schooling Impacts of Conditional Cash Transfers on Young Children: Evidence from Mexico. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 57(3): 439–477.

Behrman, Jere R., Susan W. Parker, and Petra E. Todd. 2011. “Do Conditional Cash Transfers for Schooling Generate Lasting Benefits? A Five-Year Followup of Progres/Oportunidades.” *Journal of Human Resources*, 46(1): 93–122.

**C. How to design CCTs**

Baird, S. C. McIntosh, B. Ozler. 2011. “Cash or Condition? Evidence from a Cash Transfer Experiment,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(4):1709-1753. (Conditional or unconditional)

(No need to read in detail: no summary necessary)

Benhassine Najy, Florencia Devoto, Estert Duflo, Pascaline Dupas, Victor Poulouen. July 2013.” Turning a Shove into a Nudge? A “Labeled Cash Transfer” for Education,” [http://www.stanford.edu/~pdupas/Morocco\\_Tayssir\\_LCT.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/~pdupas/Morocco_Tayssir_LCT.pdf) (Mom versus Dad, and conditional versus unconditional)

*Supplemental Reading:*

Akresh, Richard, Damiem De Walque, Harounan Kazianga. 2013. “Cash Transfers and Child

Almond, Douglas; Mazumder, Bhashkar. 2011. "Health Capital and the Prenatal Environment: The Effect of Ramadan Observance during Pregnancy," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3(4): 56-85.

Heckman, James, Rodrigo Pinto and Peter Savelyev. 2013. "Understanding the Mechanisms through Which an Influential Early Childhood Program Boosted Adult Outcomes," *American Economic Review*, 103(6): 2052-86

#### **4. Health and Nutrition**

##### **A. Effect of Early Childhood Health and Nutrition on Human Capital**

Barham, Tania. 2012. "Enhancing Cognitive Functioning: Medium-Term Effects of Health and Family Planning Program in Matlab," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(1), 245-73.

Field, Erica, Omar Robles and Maximo Torero. 2009. "Iodine Deficiency and Schooling Attainment in Tanzania" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1(4): 140-169.

##### *Supplementary Reading:*

Maluccio, John, et al. 2009. "The Impact of Improving Nutrition during Early Childhood on Education among Guatemalan Adults". *Economic Journal* 119(537): 734-763.

Bharadwaj, Prashant, Katrine Vellesen Løken, and Christopher Neilson. 2013. "Early Life Health Interventions and Academic Achievement." *American Economic Review*, 103(5): 1862-91.

Jayachandran, Seema, Adriana Lleras-Muney. 2009. Life Expectancy and Human Capital Investments: Evidence from Maternal Mortality Declines *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124 (1): 349-397.





