

African Economic Development
Lecture (075 030) and Seminar (075 031)
Winter Term 2021/22

Course description

This course aims to increase the capacity of students to use their knowledge of economic theory and development economics in rigorous analysis of a subset of the critical issues facing policymakers in sub-Saharan Africa. The focus is on both microeconomic and macroeconomic issues in Africa. "African Economic Development", consisting of a lecture (incl. a tutorial) and a seminar, intends to explain the reasons for the continued widespread poverty throughout the continent. The heterogeneity of African economies is stressed, and students are expected to focus their written work (i.e., the seminar paper) on particular countries and issues. The course also emphasises the importance of a detailed grasp of economic history as a basis for critically assessing generalised debates on the determinants of recent economic performance.

Enrolment

Enrolment is open to Master students only. While we recommend that students enrol in both the lecture and seminar, you may prefer to only enrol in the lecture. Participation in the seminar requires enrolment in the lecture too. For both parts, the lecture and the seminar, students may obtain five (ECTS) credit points each. Enrolment will be limited.

Prerequisites

While we highly recommend that you have taken some introductory courses in development economics and econometrics, either at the bachelor or master level, you may enrol in the lecture without previous coursework in these areas. Since enrolment will be limited, we give preference to students with a knowledge of econometrics in the lecture. For enrolling in the seminar, you will need sufficient knowledge of econometrics (at least one econometrics course at the bachelor or master level).

Attendance

Note that all course components (lecture, tutorial, and seminar) will be face-to-face. We will not record any session. Attendance of all sessions will be in line with the so-called "3G" rule, that is, you have to be vaccinated, recovered or tested. In line with the university's regulations, we will check that in every session before you enter the room.

A. Lecture

Class times: Wednesdays, 8.30-12.00 noon, GD 03/218, from 13 October to 1 December 2021. Important note: Enrolment for this course will occur in the first session (13 October 2021). All students that are interested in this course have to show up on that day! There will be no pre-enrolment.

Topics covered

Big picture: becoming familiar with African economic development
Economic growth
Geography, health and development
Human capital
Trade and foreign direct investment
Historical legacies of slavery and colonialism
Ethnic and linguistic divisions
Violence and conflicts
Institutions and Good Governance
Culture
Foreign aid

Tutorial: There will be a tutorial for a brief introduction to the concepts of econometrics and a recap of the main issues of both the lecture and the mandatory literature. Nina Kupzig is the teaching assistant in charge. Tutorial time: Tuesdays, 2-4 pm (GD 02/236), starting 16 October 2021.

Literature and lecture slides: We will post all papers, slides and additional material in Moodle. To obtain the password for the Moodle course, please contact the FSI Student Council (Fachschaftsinitiative) at <https://www.fsi-wiwi.de/tools/passwortverteiler/>.

Contact person for all inquiries regarding the lecture: Nina Kupzig (GD 03/329, nina.kupzig@rub.de), Office Hours: by appointment only.

Grading: The final exam (90 minutes), which makes up 100% of the grade, will be on 8 December 2021 (10-12 noon). You may obtain bonus points in the tutorial (details to be announced in the first session of the tutorial).

B. Seminar

Class times:

Wednesday, 20 October 2021, at the end of the lecture, GD 03/218 (Introductory session and enrolment)

Friday, 22 October 2021, 12-4 pm, GD 03/218, and Friday, 29 October 2021, 12-4 pm, GD 03/218 (Tutorial on scientific methods, not compulsory but recommended for students that have not participated before)

Wednesdays, 12 January 2022 to 26 January 2022, 8.30-12.00 am, GD 03/218 (Presentation of papers)

Seminar topics

1. The Resource Curse in Nigeria
2. Implementing Good Governance in Botswana
3. The Effects of Black Economic Empowerment Policies in South Africa
4. Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo
5. The Impact of Structural Adjustment Programs in Zambia
6. The Effects of Foreign Direct Investment in Ghana

Note that the effects/impact to be analysed should refer to economic issues. Students may either write their term paper alone or in a group (max. two students). Each student/group will be responsible for writing a term paper (12-15 pages in length (including tables and figures), 2.5 cm margins top/bottom/left/right, 1.5 line spacing, Times New Roman 12 point font) and a presentation. Papers are due on Monday, 10 January 2022, 9 am). Please submit the paper electronically via e-mail to Jan Wüstenfeld, the teaching assistant in charge.

Grading: The term paper and your presentation each make up 50 % of the total grade. You may improve your grade by active class participation.

Contact person for inquiries regarding the seminar: Jan Wüstenfeld (GD 03/319, e-mail jan.wuestenfeld@rub.de) Office Hours: by appointment only).