

## **EC140: Economic Development Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Dr. Emily Beam

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**Office Hours:** MW 3:30-4:30 (in-person or by Teams)

**Office:** 233 Old Mill

**Class:** MWF 1:10-2:00pm

### **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). It's a lot! You'll also be evaluated on your class participation and your performance on three capstone assignments.

The prerequisites are EC011 and EC012.

## Learning Objectives

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<b>LO1</b>	To synthesize a range of voices and perspectives and develop a broad understanding of the determinants of poverty and economic growth.
<b>LO2</b>	To use economic theory to understand barriers to economic growth, challenges and trade-offs that individuals and governments in low and middle-income countries face, and the effectiveness of small and large-scale interventions to reduce poverty.
<b>LO3</b>	To understand how economists generate rigorous knowledge, to interpret quantitative results, and to critically examine strategies and assumptions underlying measurement of causal impacts.
<b>LO4</b>	To communicate economic issues clearly and concisely in multiple forms of writing.

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## 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.

**A group:** You will get the most out of this class if you have people to work and study with. You'll be assigned to a small group that will stay constant through the semester. Don't just introduce yourself to your groupmates, but also get their contact info. Hurrah! The beginning of beautiful friendships.

## Class engagement and attendance

There are several ways you can be a good class participant: coming to class, answering/asking questions, helping a classmate, and working actively in groups. Expect fairly little lecture from me, and quite a lot of discussion in small groups or as an entire class.

Three times during the semester—about every four weeks—you'll submit a "participation log." That, plus my own classroom notes/observations, will form your grade for the four-week period.

You are responsible for finding a classmate or checking Blackboard for any content you may miss during class.

**What about attendance?** I will take attendance. If you miss one class in a "participation period," it will not affect your participation grade. If you miss more than one, it will. You can "make up" a missed class by completing a bonus pack writing assignment (see BB).

## 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 with reasonable effort, 1 point if at least 50% are complete with reasonable effort, 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: an policy memo, an RCT proposal, and a policy brief. They are weighted 10%, 20%, and 20%, respectively, for a total 50% of your grade. Details to follow.

## Grading

Participation	20%
Reading responses	30%
Capstone	50%

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.

## Deadlines

My *general* policy regarding deadlines:

- Reading responses must be submitted before class begins. Late work will not be accepted.
- Any other assignments have a 10-minute grace period. Beyond that, I will accept late work with a 10% per day penalty. I will not accept anything more than 5 days late.

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.<sup>1</sup>

### 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 join me at office hours.

### 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](#)

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<sup>1</sup>I 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.

**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).

### **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.

### **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](mailto: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.