Syllabus
ECON 184: Economic Development in Africa

Jorge M. Agüero
University of California, Riverside
Spring 2009

General information
Time and location: TR 3:40-5:00p.m. ENGR2 143
Office hours: TR 10:00-11:00a.m. (4108 Sproul Hall)
Phone: 951.827.4108
E-mail: jorge[dot]aguero[at]ucr[dot]edu
Website: http://faculty.ucr.edu/~jorgea/econ184

Prerequisites
ECON 102A or ECON 103A and ECON 107 or instructor’s approval.

Course description
This course will examine major current issues in development economics with special emphasis on how they relate to Sub-Saharan Africa. The course will combine macroeconomic (e.g. growth determinants, the role of foreign aid) and microeconomic issues (e.g. health, human capital, poverty dynamics) as well as institutional explanations for the lack of economic growth in the region. The course will pay particular attention to the policy implications from each of the topics covered here.
The Contract

Requirements and grading
All assignments mentioned below must be turned in at the beginning of the class or left in my office before the class meets. Students are expected to cover, at least, 50 pages per week from the reading assignments. Only under extreme circumstances (such as medical emergencies) will late assignments be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. The dates for all exams (once established) and assignments are final.

Two problem sets 5% each.
One midterm (April 30) 25%.
One presentation 15%.
One 15-page paper due May 28 20%.
One final (Tuesday June 9, 7:00 - 9:00P.M.) 30%.

The topics and guidelines for the paper and the presentation (e.g., goals and structure) will be distributed later in the quarter.

Textbooks
Required


Suggested


**News, Journals and blogs**

For daily online news from Africa, refer to the BBC, All-Africa News or Africa Confidential. The BBC also has daily and weekly podcasts. You can subscribe to these using Google Reader or any other RSS reader. Background information for African countries is available at the World Factbook. *The Economist* also keeps a country brief including a limited number of African countries. For an economic journal on African issues visit the *Journal of African Economies*. These days there are plenty of blogs that you can read that focused mostly in Africa. Examples include

- [http://chrisblattman.blogspot.com](http://chrisblattman.blogspot.com)
- [http://africaunchained.blogspot.com/](http://africaunchained.blogspot.com/)

**Grades**

To convert your overall numeric grade to a letter grade use the following rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 or above</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-letter grades (e.g., A+, B-, C) will be determined later in the quarter but they usually correspond to breaks of the same magnitude within the bracket.

Communications

Most communication will take place during class. Otherwise, I will send an email through ilearn. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that the email listed on ilearn is valid. If you do not use your UCR account make the appropriate changes to have your UCR emails sent to your preferred account.

Plagiarism

The appropriate ways for referencing the material used to write the paper will be discussed in class. Any student found committing plagiarism, not handing in original work of his/her own, or cheating, will be given an F in the course and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

Course outline and readings

Each of the following topics should take us one week, on average. The [*] symbol indicates the required readings. All others are suggested but some/most of them will be covered in class.

I. Patterns of economic development in Africa


Statistical analysis


II. Economic growth: capital accumulation


• Easterly (2002). Chapter 3: Solow’s Surprise: Investment is Not the Key to Growth.


III. Economic growth: geography vs. institutions


• Jared Diamond (1997). Guns, Germs, and Steel. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. (Chapter 4)


IV. Agriculture and land tenure


V. Poverty and inequality


• Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05, Chapters 1-5, 6 and 11. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre.


VI. Health and education


• Easterly (2002) Chapter 4: Education for What?


VII. The Aid debate

• [*] Moss, T. (2007) Chapters 8 and 9


VIII. Economic development and conflict


IX. Corruption


Figure 1: Map of Africa