

**Education and Economic Development: Advanced Topics
EDPE 6050**

Version date: 2021-01-06

NOTE: Syllabus subject to change.

Changes made from February 1 onward will appear in bold, red, italic font

**The most recent version of this will always be published on
the course's home page on canvas**

*Economics is about providing the most benefit to humanity given our current knowhow
and resources*

– Atif Mian

Class details:

Time: Wednesdays 11:00am-12:51pm

Office hours: Wednesdays 4:00pm-5:30pm and by request. Book at
alexeble.youcanbook.me

Course overview:

This course will give students a deep understanding of frontier economics research on education in developing countries. It will also train students how to critically read and assess the contribution of this research. Finally, it will train students in how to generate, present, and assess the potential of their own research in this field.

Prerequisites:

- A course in microeconomic theory at the MA-level or higher (such as TC's EDPE 4056 or EDPE 6151).
- A good understanding of causal inference, ideally through coursework (EDPE 6002 or equivalent desirable)
- A strong desire to learn how to create research

Course objectives:

At the end of the course, students will have

1. A deep understanding of 24 key papers in the economics of education in developing countries
2. Training in how to conceive and execute research in this and related fields
3. A deep understanding of how papers are received in the discipline, both in the peer-review process as well as afterwards
4. Practical skills related to presenting and critiquing others' work

Course requirements and evaluation:

- 10%: Attendance and participation in class
 - 10%: Completion of 12 pre-class quizzes (I drop the lowest grade)
 - 15%: Three short (10 minute) presentations of papers in the reading
 - 15%: Three short (10 minute) presentations of your own research ideas
 - 30%: Submitting a final research proposal, roughly 15 pages in length (further details discussed in class)
 - 20%: One long (25 minute) presentation of your final research proposal
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Here is a rough schedule of the class (subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction to course, research

Week 2: Broad papers on education from the demand and supply side

- Albornoz, Facundo, Samuel Berlinski, and Antonio Cabrales. "Motivation, resources, and the organization of the school system." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 16.1 (2018): 199-231.

- Attanasio, Orazio P. "The determinants of human capital formation during the early years of life: Theory, measurement, and policies." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 13.6 (2015): 949-997.

Demand-side papers:

Week 3: Information and beliefs

- Dizon-Ross, Rebecca. "Parents' beliefs about their children's academic ability: Implications for educational investments." *American Economic Review* 109.8 (2019): 2728-65.
- Andrabi, Tahir, Jishnu Das, and Asim Ijaz Khwaja. "Report Cards: The Impact of Providing School and Child Test Scores on Educational Markets." *American Economic Review* 107.6 (2017): 1535-63.

Week 4: Child labor / opportunity cost

- Bau, Natalie, Martin Rotemberg, Manisha Shah, and Bryce Steinberg. "Human Capital Investment in the Presence of Child Labor." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper* No. w27241, 2020.
- Jensen, Robert. "Do labor market opportunities affect young women's work and family decisions? Experimental evidence from India." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127.2 (2012): 753-792

Week 5: Family resources

- Baird, Sarah, Craig McIntosh, and Berk Özler. "Cash or condition? Evidence from a cash transfer experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126.4 (2011): 1709-1753.
- Jayachandran, Seema, and Rohini Pande. "Why are Indian children so short? The role of birth order and son preference." *American Economic Review* 107.9 (2017): 2600-2629.

Week 6: Social norms

- Jakiela, Pamela, and Owen Ozier. "Does Africa need a rotten kin theorem? Experimental evidence from village economies." *The Review of Economic Studies* 83.1 (2016): 231-268.

- Bau, Natalie. "Can policy change culture? Government pension plans and traditional kinship practices." (2019). Find most recent version on her website: <https://sites.google.com/site/nataliebau/>

Supply-side papers:

Week 7: Classroom-level inputs

- Muralidharan, Karthik, Abhijeet Singh, and Alejandro J. Ganimian. "Disrupting education? Experimental evidence on technology-aided instruction in India." *American Economic Review* 109.4 (2019): 1426-60
- Loyalka, Prashant, Anna Popova, Guirong Li, and Zhaolei Shi. "Does teacher training actually work? Evidence from a large-scale randomized evaluation of a national teacher training program." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 11.3 (2019): 128-54.

Week 8: Private schools

- Neilson, Christopher. "Targeted vouchers, competition among schools, and the academic achievement of poor students." (working paper: read most recent, March 2020 version on his website: <https://christopherneilson.github.io/work/targeted-vouchers.html>)
- Muralidharan, Karthik, and Venkatesh Sundararaman. "The aggregate effect of school choice: Evidence from a two-stage experiment in India." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130.3 (2015): 1011-1066.

Week 9: Government resources

- de Ree, Joppe, Karthik Muralidharan, Menno Pradhan, and Halsey Rogers. "Double for nothing? experimental evidence on an unconditional teacher salary increase in Indonesia." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 133.2 (2018).
- Mbiti, Isaac, Karthik Muralidharan, Mauricio Romero, Youdi Schipper, Constantine Manda, and Rakesh Rajani. "Inputs, incentives, and complementarities in education: Experimental evidence from Tanzania." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 134.3 (2019): 1627-1673.

Week 10: External intervention

- Romero, Mauricio, Justin Sandefur, and Wayne Aaron Sandholtz. "Outsourcing education: Experimental evidence from Liberia." *American Economic Review* 110.2 (2020): 364-400.
- Fazzio, Ila, Alex Eble, Robin L. Lumsdaine, Peter Boone, Baboucarr Bouy, Pei-Tseng Jenny Hsieh, Chitra Jayanty, Simon Johnson, and Ana Filipa Silva. "Large Learning Gains in Pockets of Extreme Poverty: Experimental Evidence from Guinea Bissau." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. w27799*, 2020.

Papers on measurement:

Week 11: Scalability

- Bold, Tessa, Mwangi Kimenyi, Germano Mwabu, and Justin Sandefur. "Experimental evidence on scaling up education reforms in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics* 168 (2018): 1-20.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, Rukmini Banerji, James Berry, Esther Duflo, Harini Kannan, Shobhini Mukerji, Marc Shotland, and Michael Walton. "From proof of concept to scalable policies: Challenges and solutions, with an application." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31.4 (2017): 73-102.

Week 12: Measuring learning

- Singh, Abhijeet. "Learning more with every year: School year productivity and international learning divergence." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 18.4 (2020): 1770-1813.
- Filmer, Deon, Halsey Rogers, Noam Angrist, and Shwetlena Sabarwal. "Learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS): Defining a new macro measure of education." *Economics of Education Review* (2020): 101971.

Week 13: Estimating the human capital production function

- Attanasio, Orazio, Costas Meghir, and Emily Nix. "Human capital development and parental investment in India." *Review of Economic Studies* 87.6 (2020): 2511-2541.
- Attanasio, Orazio, Sarah Cattan, Emla Fitzsimons, Costas Meghir, and Marta Rubio-Codina. "Estimating the production function for human capital: results from a randomized controlled trial in Colombia." *American Economic Review* 110.1 (2020): 48-85.

Week 14: Final presentations

Administrative details:

Canvas: Most material regarding this course (including the most updated version of this syllabus) will be posted on Canvas – <https://tc.instructure.com/>. Additionally, the class discussion board on Canvas will be a great resource for students to check in on questions from classmates and see answers from the instructors that may be of help to them.

Make sure you change the settings on Canvas so that you receive emails at least once per day with any updates from the course. I will expect all students to be aware of any changes made on Canvas within 24 hours (e.g., a change in the quiz dates, new readings, an update to a problem set).

E-mail: Teachers College students have the responsibility for activating the Columbia University Network ID (UNI), which includes a free Columbia email account. As official communications from the College – e.g., information on graduation, announcements of closing due to severe storm, flu epidemic, transportation disruption, etc. -- will be sent to the student's Columbia email account, students are responsible for either reading email there, or, for utilizing the mail forwarding option to forward mail from their Columbia account to an email address which they will monitor.

As with Canvas, I will expect you to check email at least once per day and respond to any email I send within 48 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances. I will try my best to hold myself to this policy as well. If you think you will be away from email for longer than 48 hours, I suggest putting up a vacation responder so that people know when to expect a response.

Academic integrity: Students who intentionally submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to the original source, fabricate data or other information, engage in cheating, or misrepresentation of academic records may be subject to serious penalties. Sanctions may include course failure and dismissal from the college for violation of the TC principles of academic and professional integrity fundamental to the purpose of the College.

Late policy: Late assignments will not be accepted. Instead, I drop the lowest score on the problem sets, so if you miss/forget a homework deadline, it does not harm your

grade. Please come talk to me as soon as possible if extenuating circumstances arise which affect your ability to meet class requirements.

Grades: Grades are (loosely) on a curve though I do not set quotas/limits on specific grades. I follow the TC Catalogue in setting my grading standards:

- A+ Rare performance. Reserved for highly exceptional, rare achievement.
- A Excellent. Outstanding achievement.
- A- Excellent work, but not quite outstanding.
- B+ Very good. Solid achievement expected of most graduate students.
- B Good. Acceptable achievement.
- B- Acceptable achievement, but below what is generally expected of graduate students
- C+ Fair achievement, above minimally acceptable level.
- C Fair achievement, but only minimally acceptable.
- C- Very low performance. The records of students receiving such grades are subject to review.

Services for students with disabilities: Teachers College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration for these services (166 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only for students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation.

Religious holidays: It is the policy of Teachers College to respect its members' observance of their major religious holidays. Students should notify instructors at the beginning of the semester about their wishes to observe holidays on days when class sessions are scheduled. Where academic scheduling conflicts prove unavoidable, no student will be penalized for absence due to religious reasons, and alternative means will be sought for satisfying the academic requirements involved. If a suitable arrangement cannot be worked out between the student and the instructor, students and instructors should consult the appropriate department chair or director. If an additional appeal is needed, it may be taken to the Provost.

Students with disabilities: The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration (166 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only to students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation. I am happy to discuss specific needs with you as well.

Incompletes: The grade of Incomplete is to be assigned only when the course attendance requirement has been met but, for reasons satisfactory to the instructor, the granting of a final grade has been postponed because certain course assignments are outstanding. If the outstanding assignments are completed within one calendar year from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received and a final grade submitted, the final grade will be recorded on the permanent transcript, replacing the grade of Incomplete, with a transcript notation indicating the date that the grade of Incomplete was replaced by a final grade. If the outstanding work is not completed within one calendar year from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received, the grade will remain as a permanent Incomplete on the transcript. In such instances, if the course is a required course or part of an approved program of study, students will be required to re-enroll in the course including repayment of all tuition and fee charges for the new registration and satisfactorily complete all course requirements. If the required course is not offered in subsequent terms, the student should speak with the faculty advisor or Program Coordinator about their options for fulfilling the degree requirement. Doctoral students with six or more credits with grades of Incomplete included on their program of study will not be allowed to sit for the certification exam.

Syllabus: This is a guideline. The material we cover week-by-week may change based on the speed we progress through the material. Also, I will add additional readings to the assigned book chapter(s) on a week-by-week basis depending on how the first few weeks of the class go. The most up-to-date version will be posted on Canvas and I will alert you through email to any changes.

Also, this syllabus may change based on the feedback I get from you all. I will make any changes **in bold red, underlined font** so you can easily find them. Particularly toward the end of the course, adjustments may be made (e.g., adding or removing material from the course) depending on applications of particular interest.