

## Economics 881 Empirical Methods in Development

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### Goals

The primary goal of this module is to evaluate empirical approaches to the investigation of long-standing and emerging issues in the micro-economics of development and related fields. Throughout the class, emphasis will be placed on the interaction between the theoretical underpinning of behavioral models and choosing appropriate empirical methods in order to advance scientific understanding of the processes that are investigated. The course will discuss empirical methods ranging from random assignment to structural modeling, taking examples from the literature, with a substantive focus on health and human capital as well as understanding behaviors of individuals, households and families. Empirical challenges that arise with the estimation of models using complex survey and longitudinal data will be discussed along with the interplay between theory, data collection and estimation.

Examples will illustrate how economic models can provide insights into understanding behavior and how, with appropriate research design, high quality data and prudent choice of econometric methods, it is possible to assess the empirical content of those models and their contributions to understanding the world around us. These examples should provide you with the foundation to apply these kinds of models and methods to a wide range of problems in economics in the field of development and more broadly.

### Topics covered

- A. Agricultural household: households as consumers and producers;
  - Theory and evidence
  - Are rural markets complete?
  - Labor markets in rural settings
- B. Collective models of individuals, households and families
  - Individuals and households: Theory and evidence
  - Testing the unitary, bargaining and collective models of households
  - Living arrangements and family behavior
  - Testing models of family behavior
- C. Health over the life course
  - Early life health and later life outcomes: Theory, biology and evidence
  - Health and SES: Isolating causal pathways
  - Causal impact of health on labor market outcomes
  - Causal impact of income on health
- D. Education
  - Returns to education
  - Impediments to school enrolment: Information and resources
  - Returns to post school training
  - Exploiting experimental data to validate dynamic structural models
  - Education production function: Impact of inputs

## Readings

### Overview of methodological and substantive advances in development

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## A. Agricultural household models

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## C. Health over the life course

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## D. Education

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