Global Poverty
Econ 173S

University of California, Riverside
Department of Economics
Spring, 2019

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Office Hours: Tue&Thur 11-12
or by appointment

Course Description:
This class will study poverty around the world in a comparative perspective. The focus will be on concepts and measurement of poverty, causes of poverty, and policies that are intended to reduce poverty. The class will have three main parts. The first part will examine alternative concepts of poverty and how they have evolved over time. It also will explore approaches to the measurement of poverty. The next two parts of the class will study poverty in the U.S. and in developing countries.

Requirements and Grading:
- Daily clicker questions based on assigned readings 15%
- Section attendance 5%
- Quiz (Thursday of week 3) 10%
- Poverty data project (Thursday of week 7) 10%
- Mid-term exam (Thursday of week 5) 20%
- Final exam (cumulative) 40%

Readings: Students are expected to read one chapter or article per class, and to come to class prepared to discuss the material.

Daily clicker questions: At the beginning of each class, I will ask several multiple choice questions related to the readings for that day. There will also be occasional clicker questions during lecture. Your two lowest daily scores will be dropped. No exceptions will be made.

Discussion section: I will run a discussion section so that we can have an opportunity to discuss the material in more depth and to see a couple of documentaries. I will not lecture. Attendance is required, and you must bring a typed question with your name and student I.D. to each class.

Poverty data project: Students will be expected to assemble data on poverty in a single country, present it in tables and graphs, and write a brief description of the data. Guidelines will be distributed in advance.

Exams and Quiz: A quiz is scheduled for Thursday of week 3 (April 18). The mid-term exam is scheduled for Thursday of week 5 (May 2). The final exam will be cumulative, and will be held on Thursday, June 13, 8-11am.
Academic Honesty: Any student found committing plagiarism, not handing in original work of his/her own, or cheating in any way, will be given an F in the course and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

Course Outline

1. Introduction and Overview (0.5 weeks)
2. Concepts and Measurement of Poverty (3 weeks)
   2.1 The Distribution of Income, Inequality and Poverty
   2.2 Absolute Poverty and Poverty Lines
   2.3 Other Poverty Concepts and Measures
   2.4 Capabilities and Multi-Dimensional Poverty
3. Poverty in The U.S. (3 weeks)
   3.1 History of Ideas in the U.S. and the Supplemental Measure
   3.2 Description and Explanation of Poverty in the U.S.
   3.3 Anti-Poverty Policies in the U.S.
   3.4 Dynamics of Poverty: Spells, Life Cycle, and Intergenerational Transmission
   3.5 The U.S. in Comparative Perspective
4. Poverty in Developing Countries (3 weeks)
   4.1 Poverty in LDCs
   4.2 Causes of Poverty in LDCs
   4.3 Policies to Reduce Poverty in LDCs

Required Books
Boo, Katherine, Behind the Beautiful Forevers, New York: Random House, 2012. ($10)

Strongly Suggested

Valuable References
1. Introduction and Overview (0.5 weeks)

https://ourworldindata.org/

2. Concepts and Measurement of Poverty (3 weeks)

2.1 The Distribution of Income, Inequality and Poverty

2.2 Absolute Poverty and Poverty Lines

2.3 Other Poverty Concepts and Measures

2.4 Capabilities and Multi-Dimensional Poverty

2.5 History of Ideas about Poverty (will skip, but worth reading)

3. Poverty in The U.S. (3 weeks)


3.1 History of Ideas in the U.S. and the Supplemental Measure
3.2 Description and Explanation of Poverty in the U.S.

Description

Explanation

3.3 Anti-Poverty Policies in the U.S.

3.4 Dynamics of Poverty: Spells, Life Cycle, and Intergenerational Transmission

3.5 The U.S. in Comparative Perspective


“Poverty in OECD Countries: An Assessment Based on Static Income,” Chapter 5.


4. Poverty in Developing Countries (3 weeks)

4.1 Poverty in LDCs


4.2 Causes of Poverty in LDCs


Banerjee and Duflo (2011), on the topics of health, education, and demography. Chapter 3, 4, and 5: “Low-Hanging Fruit for Better (Global) Health,” “Top of the Class,” and “Pak Sudarno’s Big Family.”


4.3 Policies to Reduce Poverty in LDCs (we will choose from the topics below)

Guest Lecture: Poverty and Mobility in Mexico

Graciela Teruel Belismelis

Professor of Economics at the Ibero-American University, Mexico

Transfers: Social Insurance and Social Assistance


Microfinance
Banerjee and Duflo (2011), on the topics of health, education, and demography. Chapter 7, The Men from Kabul and Eunuchs of India: The (Not So) Simple Economics of Lending to the Poor.”

Education

Aid and Assistance

Child Labor

Agriculture and Rural Poverty