Economics 492d (3/6)

The Economics of Sustainable Development:
Communities, Markets and Technology

January – October, 2018
(Draft – some readings and assignments may change prior to the commencement of class).

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Office Hours: TBC

Description of the Course:

Students of economics are provided with a strong grounding in formal reasoning and technical methods as part of their undergraduate education, a foundation that aims to provide them with the skills and knowledge to tackle economic problems. This course builds upon that tradition of rigor and research-based analysis. It does so though by starting with the recognition that it can be difficult to gain a realistic understanding of the experience of people living in conditions of poverty through lectures, textbooks and journal articles alone. Pedagogical research suggests that this knowledge gap can be bridged through student involvement in Community Based Experiential Learning and, in particular, International Service Learning. Such experiential learning complements classroom teaching and disciplinary research by providing students with an enriched education, one that enables students to be better equipped to comprehend the reality of a complex world where the problems faced by individuals and communities cannot be easily resolved.

The aim of this course then is to both deepen and broaden students’ understanding of the process of sustainable economic development as it affects poor communities through student participation in applied community-based research and International Service Learning. The course has been developed in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts Office for Regional and International Community Engagement. It will involve a twelve-week field component during which students will take on a long-term volunteer placement focused on a specific project of concern to a community organization in Africa, Latin America or India. The placement itself does not contribute to the students’ credits, but rather complements and enriches the intellectual and disciplinary content that is at the heart of the course.

Prior to the experiential component, students will undertake a major research project related to problems and debates in economics with a focus on sustainable economic development. Students will have an option to undertake a community-based research (CBR) project that responds to a problem identified by a community partner here in our own region whose work is focused either in the local community or on global issues.
Additionally, students will participate in a series of seminars, lectures, and activities aimed at developing capacity in relation to their role as contributors to the creation and flows of knowledge in the discipline of Economics. In particular, in the first half of the course, students will learn about relevant theoretical approaches and research methodology to prepare them for their major research essay due in early April. During the second half of the course, we will explore the problems and concerns of developing countries in relation to ways that resilient, healthy communities are able to create sustainable livelihoods, to support rather than deplete the local or regional environment, and to build economies that ensure the well-being of all community members. Seminars, discussion and community engagement activities will be more field oriented, with content that integrates applied theory and methods in the context of effective development practice. The course will also explore obstacles that may inhibit the capacity for such sustainable development.

The pre-departure research project, assignments and seminars will provide students with the background and intellectual tools to be able to reflect deeply about their experience with the community partners. This reflective practice serves to integrate experiential learning with disciplinary theories and methods to bring new understanding to the discipline about the problems faced by poor communities in Latin America, India, and Africa. Post – placement seminars will facilitate integration and knowledge sharing. Students will be expected to contribute to the disciplinary discourse through a presentation of their work at a community-engaged conference on global poverty and development to be held in the October following their international service placement.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Engage with disciplinary research and debates associated with sustainable economic development;
- Identify and apply economic concepts associated with sustainability and economic development;
- Identify and understand the relevance of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals;
- Understand the development process and global poverty alleviation in light of impacts on the environment;
- Apply research methodologies used by economists to assess impacts of policies aimed at both reducing poverty and minimizing environmental degradation arising from economic activity;
- Understand and critically assess the debates about the role of markets in supporting or thwarting environmental sustainability;
- Understand why sustainable practices and livelihoods may be elusive in poor communities;
- Understand and apply the Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness to economic theory and methodology where relevant;
- Consider the development process from the perspective of The Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness, and to be able to identify whether these principles are relevant to the community organization they will be serving;
- Identify the kinds of technologies that are important to communities, how they may promote sustainability and whether there are obstacles to the adoption of sustainable technologies;
- Apply critical thinking skills beyond those associated with their economic course work. For example,
  - Identify relevant problems and concerns
  - Identify both the needs and assets of a developing community
  - Critically assess their own preconceptions and beliefs about the causes of poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and other problems in development
Approach complex problems from the perspective of a wider range of approaches

Identify and articulate the extent to which the theories and methods in the scholarly literature are supported, contrasted or even contradicted by the reality experienced and observed during the ISL assignment

Identify and evaluate the outcomes of decisions made in the community in relation to sustainable practices

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Course Reading Package available in UBC Bookstore.

**Required Texts and Reports:**

http://webcat2.library.ubc.ca/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=52328&recCount=10&recPointer=0&bibId=6603192


Moyo, Dambisa (2009) *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa* (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre).


BCCIC (2016) *Keeping Track: Measuring Progress Toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (Vancouver, URL:).

**GRADING**

**Module 1** (January to April - 13 weeks of applied economic research, seminars, lab sessions, community engagement activities, presentations)

**Assignments and Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Percentage of Overall Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal (If CBR, project proposal): (Due TBC)</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Assignments I (January to March)</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Presentation: (March/April)</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay/Group Report/Community Based Research: (Due TBC)</td>
<td>25 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer/Community Partner Review</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (Module 1)</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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Module 2
(May seminars – four weeks. Two post-placement seminars in September and October, community engagement event and presentations)

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Country Research Brief</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Project Proposal</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Due pre-departure in May)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Journaling</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3 during ISL placement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Service Learning Project Report</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Due September 28th)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Service Learning Presentations</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Symposium draft due early October)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (Module 2)</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<td>100 %</td>
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COURSE PLAN

Module I: Applied Economics (January to April)

1. Introduction to the Course: The Economics of Sustainability and Applied Economics (Weeks 1 - 2)
   - Introduction and overview
   - Overview of perspectives on economic growth and development
   - Alternative definitions and concepts of sustainability; views about the relationship between economic activity and the environment; the concept of sustainable livelihoods, historical perspectives
   - Choosing a research topic; reading scholarly sources in economics
   - Introduction to reflection in Economics

Readings:
- Lecture notes, supplementary and resources

2. The Economics of Sustainability (Weeks 3 – 4)
   - The view from economics and from other disciplines; theories of economic growth; identifying the constraints to sustainable economic development; the role of community in development; further views of effective development practice
The is the problem with “Aid” – when is it problematic for development
Principles of effective aid, effective development
Empowering girls and women as agents of development

Lecture/Seminars
Readings:
Moyo, Dambisa (2009) Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre)

Resources:

3. Applied Methods in Economics (Week 2 - 6)
   Empirical approaches in economics; developing a research project; identifying and evaluating data sources; scholarly writing in economics; distinguishing between community based research and other research projects or reporting methods.

Lecture/Seminars
Lab Sessions
Readings:

4. Independent or Group Research/Community Based Research (Weeks 3 – 13)
   Individual and group weekly meetings to discuss progress during class time and office hours

5. Student Research Presentations and Workshops in class (Weeks 10 – 13)

Module II: The Practice of Sustainable Economic Development: Case Studies (May)

1. Models of Sustainable Development: Balancing human development and environmental sustainability (Weeks 1 – 2)
   Valuing nature: environmental and economic perspectives; sustainable livelihoods: balancing environmental protection and employment; markets and market failure; asset based community development; evaluating the evidence

Readings:
Banerjee, A. V. and Duflo, E. (2011) Recap, Online Resources

2. **Sustainable Economic Development: Case Studies (Weeks 2 – 5) TBC**
   - Wild-life habitat protection
     - Poaching: enforcement, punishment and incentives
     - Community engagement and socio-economic development
   - Rural Livelihoods 1: agricultural employment and global markets
   - Rural Livelihoods 2: rural opportunities for non-migrants
   - Livelihoods in Urban Slums: Bolivia, India, Indonesia and South Africa
   - Income generation and social enterprise for community organizations

**Readings and Resources 92cd:**

3. **Integrating experiential and “classroom” learning: the role of reflection (Week 11)**
   **Lecture/Seminar**

4. **Post-placement Seminars (September – early October)**
   - Lessons learned from International Service Learning internship placement
     - Country-team presentations
     - Integrating experiential and academic learning
     - Economic insights: What can you contribute to disciplinary understanding of the development process?
   - Preparation for October conference
     - Designing a scholarly presentation
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grades will reflect the extent to which students show evidence that their work corresponds to the detailed assignment expectations in relation to critical thinking standards and writing style, format, mechanics and referencing. Specific expectations and grading guidelines will be provided with each assignment.

Faculty of Arts Grading Guidelines* Grading policies aim to ensure that all students are assessed fairly in relation to other students in the same class, other students in the course, and other students in other courses. These guidelines establish a framework for the fair treatment of students in Arts courses.

Grading practices and standards
UBC courses are graded on a percentage basis (or pass/fail if the course is so designated).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Level of Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-75</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-71</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-67</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F(Fail)</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The grading criteria for this course are based upon the following general criteria.

80 % to 100 % (A- to A+)
- Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

68% to 79% (B- to B+)
- Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.

50% to 67% (D to C+)
- Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the course material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style, vigor and sufficient critical analysis.

0% to 49% (F)
- Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of an understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. As a university student, you are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas.”

(Source: http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/)

Unfortunately, plagiarism is a reality. Plagiarism is essentially the representation of the ideas of another as your own. It may be accidental or purposeful, but in either case is unacceptable in an academic environment. While plagiarism is limited to a small minority of students, there is considerable concern about it amongst faculty, students and the University. Intentional academic dishonesty is considered a major offense by the scholarly community, whether intended or not, and any instances of plagiarism in this course will be taken very seriously. I have a very active interest in detecting plagiarism and will not hesitate to pass along those who plagiarize to the University authorities. Please familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on plagiarism by reading the documents on the following websites and the resources at the link cited above:

http://www.library.ubc.ca/home/plagiarism/welcome.html
http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0

“The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.” (See the following site for more extensive guidelines www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/?tree=3,54,111,0)

Any assignments found to include plagiarized content will be given an automatic zero and will be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with Faculty of Arts and Vancouver School of Economics policies.