

## **FDS Project – Final Report**

### **Course Development Project Final Report**

student achievement of learning outcomes, and steps planned or taken to improve teaching and learning. These can be addressed in any order. Write in a style and format that works best for you. The guidelines below provide specific points to include in each area.

#### **Course Background**

Economics 431 (Economic Development) is an upper-level undergraduate field course offered in the Economics department. Most of the students who take the class are economics majors nearing their graduation. The remaining students are either International Relations (IR) or International development majors. I am the only one in the department teaching this course.

Course description (from the syllabus): This course examines the theory and empirics of economic development. It attempts to answer questions like why some countries are rich and others poor, why some countries grow faster than others, and what the future of economic development is. In this course, we apply careful analytical thinking to these questions and examine theoretical models used to analyze development and growth. By working through a variety of issues, you will learn to critique these models and see what questions they can answer and what questions they cannot.

We will also focus on diagnosing problems that occur in developing countries, trying to understand their causes and analyzing potential solutions. Some issues we will focus on include market failures, government failures, and issues relating to health, education, families, gender, inequality, the environment, and technological progress.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Course learning outcomes include:

1. Understand and critique existing theoretical models and explain what questions they can and cannot answer;
2. Be able to evaluate empirical literature in development and assess whether and how it supports theoretical findings;
3. Learn to diagnose specific problems that occur in developing economies, understand their fundamental causes and potential solutions.

#### **Course Activities**

Describe the course activities and how they relate to the learning outcomes. Course activities are anything you have students do to achieve the learning outcomes. Thus, class discussion, homework, group work, projects, papers, etc. are all activities. Some of these activities will also be used to assess student

learning. Show how course activities are designed to best facilitate student achievement of the learning outcomes.

1. Describe how the course activities provide sufficient practice, guidance, and feedback to facilitate student learning.
2. Show how course activities are aligned with course learning outcomes and assessments.
3. Explain why course activities and content represent the most current thinking and information in the field.

### **Assessments of Student Learning**

Student learning in this course is assessed through Problem Sets, Quizzes, Class presentation, Exams, and a Class Paper, as described below (taken from the syllabus):

<b>Problem Sets &amp; Quizzes</b>	15%
<b>Class paper</b>	10%
<b>Exams (3)</b>	25% each

**Problem sets** will be assigned about once a week and will focus on the readings and class discussions. You are encouraged to work in groups but each assignment should be submitted independently. Late work will not be accepted. A portion of your problem set score will be comprised of your score on the class quiz. The quizzes will test your knowledge on the assigned article reading. The problem sets are due by 4:00PM on the date listed on the schedule.

**Quizzes** will be given on some of the articles before the article is presented in class. The lowest quiz score can be dropped. An average of all the quiz scores will count for one PS assignment. There will be no make up quizzes for any reason as quizzes are given to reward class participation.

**Class presentation** will be given by a group of 2 students on an assigned article. The presentation should be 5-7 min long and should summarize the paper's 1) research question(s); 2) methodology; and 3) key findings. You should also be prepared to discuss the paper and answer questions as part of your presentation. Each group/student will be assigned a grade on a 5-point scale worth 2.5 percentage points of the final grade.

**Class paper.** You are to read a book on economic development and then discuss 3-4 examples of market or government failures which are covered in the book (with specific examples). The report should be 3-4 pages long (double spaced). You may read any book on the following list that you have not read before and are not reading for another class this semester. We'll discuss this requirement in more detail in class.

### **Acceptable Books**

*More Than Good Intentions* by Dean Karlan  
*The Elusive Quest for Growth* by William Easterly  
*The Other Path* by Hernando De Soto, any edition.  
*Development as Freedom* by Amartya Sen.

*Globalization and Its Discontents* by Joseph Stiglitz.  
*The Bottom Billion* by Paul Collier.  
*Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo  
*Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond

**Exams** will draw heavily from the readings and class discussion. We will have two midterms and one final exam. No make up exams will be given, unless you have a university-approved reason. Note the dates on the schedule and make sure that you can attend.

### **Student Achievement of Learning Outcomes**

1. Learning outcomes 1 (Understand and critique existing theoretical models and explain what questions they can and cannot answer) and 2 (Be able to evaluate empirical literature in development and assess whether and how it supports theoretical findings) are carefully assessed through students' performance on the exams. Each of the three exams covers the theoretical and empirical material covered in class. I test students' understanding of the material through open-ended questions, which require them to replicate the models we study and critically assess them. The students are also tested on their understanding of the academic articles that were covered in class. The average of the three exams scores in my classes has been around 78%, which is an indication that the students are achieving these learning outcomes).

Additionally, students' responses on end-of-semester teaching evaluations suggest that these learning outcomes are achieved successfully. I include several examples below:

“Professor Stoddard really explained in detail important concepts that we needed to understand while providing meaningful, real world context. Loved this class and felt like I learned a lot about how to live my life and make a difference going forward.”

“Professor Stoddard was able to string together the literature of this field into a coherent and logical curriculum. The articles we read provided different views and greatly complemented the textbook. Her breadth of knowledge and her passion for economic development helped me (and I'm sure my classmates) develop a greater interest in the field.”

“I thought the articles she had us read were great, the tests were fair, she asked good questions, and was clearly passionate about the subject. I felt like I learned a lot in the course and would take another class from Professor Stoddard in a second, she's one of my favorite professors I've had at BYU.”

2. Learn to diagnose specific problems that occur in developing economies, understand their fundamental causes and potential solutions.

While many of students' responses on the teaching evaluations suggest that this objective is largely achieved for them, overall I believe that there is sufficient evidence to fully determine if students achieved the outcome." I will provide several conflicting examples below.

On the one hand:

"[This class] did more to open my mind than any other econ class. The class was inspiring and engaging."

"Dr. Stoddard does a good job explaining things simply. I also like the emphasis on empirical studies as well as the required readings before class. This made the class more interesting, even though it was time consuming."

On the other hand:

"I was hoping this course would be more about the problems and hypothetical solutions to developing nations, as is implied in the course description. However it ended up being a class about regurgitating useless information from otherwise interesting articles, and memorizing basic mathematical formulas. I think the tests should have more long answer questions focusing on various countries problems and possible solutions."

"Dr. Stoddard is a great professor. I just wish we didn't spend so much time on models and math (there are plenty of other Econ classes for that). I like math and it makes the tests easier, but I just wish we talked more about what's going on in the world right now with development (the latest theories and actual processes being implemented). Closer to the end of the course we finally got some good discussions about what works and what doesn't (microfinance and government debates). I wish we could spend more time doing that - talking about the latest research and what the UN, the World Bank, etc. are actually doing now in countries and if they are being effective or not. I LOVED being able to read a book for the class and got a lot out of it. It would be cool to shorten the model & math sections and replace it with more reading/discussions about the latest books. Overall, the class was great!"

### **Steps Planned or Taken to Improve Teaching and Student Learning**

Based on my assessment of student performance and the feedback I have received from student ratings, there are two main areas in which my teaching needs to be improved: course organization and questions on the problem sets/exams.

#### Course organization.

The feedback that I have received from the students points to necessary changes in the course structure. In particular, the students consistently complain about the amount of reading required in the class:

“If you ask me, I think reading articles is very effective. I think this semester, there may have been too many of them. That combined with the textbook reading and the book report reading seemed to be a little too much. Maybe it was a class size thing, but I would love to see some DEBATE! I think this would inject some motivation to read the articles thoroughly. (Again, if there were fewer to read, along with an open debate, I think students would respond positively.)”

“I felt like the required reading for this class was a little too heavy for what was gained from the readings. I think the reading portion of the course could be a little bit more organized to make it more valuable to the students.”

In addition, the students report the lectures to be often redundant as the class material mirrors the textbook too closely:

“I did not enjoy taking this course very much. The lecture exactly mirrored the readings (and were apparently made by whoever made the textbook), which made it very redundant (and consequently rather boring and predictable) to both read and pay attention to the lectures. I did really enjoy the articles that were assigned and felt that those were edifying, but that's about the only element of the class that I feel like I gained from.”

To improve this aspect of the class, I plan to significantly revise class content to replace most of the textbook chapters with relevant academic articles on the topics. Essentially, I will only use the textbook material for 2-3 classes during the semester. The rest of the class time will be spent having students present the articles, discussing the assigned articles in depth and connecting the articles to the broader literature in development economics. Currently, student presentations of the articles are about 5-10 minutes long and are often rushed and not detailed enough. I plan to increase the time allotted for these presentations to 15 minutes with 10-15 minutes of subsequent class discussion of the findings and their policy implications.

One step that I have already taken to improve this aspect of the course is to develop a question sheet for each of the articles assigned in class. Essentially, this will be a document containing two-three questions about the research question(s), methodology, and findings of the assigned articles. The document is provided to help the students know which aspects of the articles to focus on and to come to class prepared to discuss the articles along with the presenters. Students will turn in the question sheet at the beginning of each class and it will be graded on completion (0/1).

#### Problem sets/exam questions

“The questions on the problem sets could be confusing; I didn't always know what the question was asking.”

“Exams wanted specific answers, but the questions weren't directed enough to lead me to produce the correct response (which I knew more often than not). Everything else in the course was wonderful!”

“Something that might need improving is questions on tests and homework that were sometimes ambiguous and could leave the student confused at what the question was really asking.”

To improve this aspect of the course, I plan on revising the exam questions and providing students with a practice exam containing sample questions. In addition, for each article that is assigned for reading, I will provide a question sheet - a list of 3-4 open-questions to help the students know what to focus on when reading the articles. Students will turn in the question sheet at the beginning of each class and it will be graded on completion (0/1). This will replace the quizzes that are currently being administered for each of the articles.

## Scholarship Strategies Project— Final Report

### Scholarship program

My research focuses on applying experimental economics methodology to topics in behavioral and public economics. In what follows, I will describe my research agenda in each area more specifically.

### Behavioral economics

I use both laboratory and field experimental methods to study issues of coordination and cooperation in demographically diverse groups. I focus primarily on gender diversity and study gender underrepresentation in traditionally male-dominated fields.

I have five published articles in this field, including:

- “Run, Jane, Run! Gendered Responses to Political Party Recruitment” (with Jessica Preece). *Political Behavior*, 38(3), 561-577, 2016.
- “Why women don’t run: Experimental evidence on gender differences in competition aversion” (with Jessica Preece). *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 117: 296-308, 2015.
- “Does the message matter? A field experiment on political party recruitment” (with Jessica Preece). *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 2:1-10, 2015.
- “An Experimental Study on the Relevance and Scope of Nationality as a Coordination Device” (with Andreas Leibbrandt). *Economic Inquiry*, 52:4, 1392-1407, 2014.
- “On estimation of interval response data in experimental economics” (with James McDonalds and Daniel Walton). *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*, 72, 9-16, 2018.

I have five additional working papers in this field and three ongoing research projects in this field, at varying stages, as described below.

### *Working papers:*

- “Leaning back: an experiment on collaboration and communication in mixed-gender teams” (with Rebecca Jack and Joseph Price). About ready to submit to *Economic Letters*.
- “Increasing workplace diversity: Evidence from a recruiting experiment at a Fortune-500 company” (with Jeffrey Flory, Andreas Leibbrandt, and Christina Rott). About ready to submit to *Economic Journal*.

- “Gender quotas, stigma, and symbolic representation: experimental evidence from Uganda” (with Jessica Preece).
- “Sharing as risk pooling in a social dilemma experiment: evidence from Kamchatka, Russia” (with Lance Howe and Jim Murphy).
- “Utility maximization with sensory limitations: theory and evidence” (with Lars Lefgren and John Stovall).

*Ongoing projects:*

- “The effects of group gender composition on group performance and dynamics” (with Chris Karpowiz and Jessica Preece);
- “Attracting minority candidates to jobs in the finance sector: Evidence from a recruiting experiment at a Fortune-500 company” (with Jeffrey Flory, Andreas Leibbrandt, and Christina Rott).
- “Racial bias in the criminal justice system: Field experiment with public defenders” (with Emily Leslie).

*Public economics*

I also use both laboratory and online experimental methods to study preferences for redistribution. In particular, I am interested in whether and how the recipients’ level of deservedness affects voting for redistribution by the rich.

I have one published article in this field:

- “Effort, luck, and voting for redistribution” (with Lars Lefgren and David Sims). *Journal of Public Economics*, 143, 89-97. 2016.

In addition, I have one article that I am about ready to submit to the *Journal of Public Economics*:

- “The other 1%: class leavening, contamination and voting for redistribution” (with Lars Lefgren and David Sims).

I also have a working paper in this field assessing the effects of the prospect of upward economic mobility on individual preferences for redistribution through a laboratory experiment.

- “Prospect of upward economic mobility and preferences for redistribution” (with Lars Lefgren and David Sims).

*Scholarship Development Goals*

I outline my specific development goals related to scholarship below:

- Regularly discuss my research (especially at early stages) with my colleagues and proactively invite feedback on my work;
- Read at least one article in my field from one of the top five economic journals;
- Present at at least three academic conferences a year (AEAs, NBER, ESA, AFE);
- Present my research at the department seminar at least once a year;
- Submit at least three new manuscripts for publication each year;
- Have an article accepted at a top-five economics journal by my third year review;
- Have two articles accepted in at least a top field journal by my third year review.

## **Citizenship Project Final Report**

I am committed to being a productive citizen by contributing my unique strengths and perspectives to my department, college, and university.

In my time at BYU, I have strived to magnify every assignment given to me by the department chair. In particular, on the department level, I have served as an Honors and Internship coordinator, as well as been a member of the ESA and Social committees. On the college level, I have served as a member of both Space committee and International Development committee. I have also been actively involved with the ESA “Women in Economics” group, frequently presenting at their events and providing individual mentoring and support to group members. In addition, I have spoken at several other college- and university-level events, including the FHSS Spring seminar teaching panel on women in academia, Kennedy Center panel on women and graduate school, and the ESA event on development economics research.

I strive to actively look for opportunities to interact with colleagues inside and outside the department, and I always welcome feedback on my research. I have presented my research at the department R<sup>2</sup> seminars at least once every year and have been an active participant at both the department visiting scholar seminars as well as the department junior faculty seminars. In addition, I have participated in weekly Experimental research brown bag seminar, hosted by the Marriott school faculty. As much as possible, I join department lunch and dinner groups and participate in department social activities.

I have also worked hard to represent BYU and the department well at invited conferences and workshop presentations. I have given over fifteen invited talks at various universities and academic and professional conferences over the last three years, including twice at prestigious NBER meetings. Similarly, at least once a year, I have invited and hosted a scholar in my field to give a seminar in the department.

Among my other contributions to the economics profession are my affiliation with the American Economic Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (as a BYU liaison) and a researcher with the Science of Diversity Initiative (SODI) as well as the Bias Interrupters Working Group.