AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES M200D / PUBLIC POLICY M270
Economic Principles and Economic Development
in Indigenous Communities

Winter 2015
American Indian Studies
UCLA

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Class Meetings: Wednesday 3:00-5:50 pm, Public Affairs Room 3343
Office Hours: By Appointment, Public Affairs room 6367

Course Description: This course will familiarize students with the fundamental concepts, themes and principles of economic development. The setting will focus on indigenous communities broadly and will be contrasted (where appropriate) with other regions, countries and communities. Important concepts such as opportunity cost, economic trade-offs, adverse selection, moral hazard, and discount rates will be introduced through the use of existing research and case studies. These basic concepts are important for graduate students who will be analyzing and evaluating research conducted on and for indigenous peoples and governments. Students that successfully complete the course will be familiar with these economic concepts and their correct usage.

The course will also provide a broad overview of the current standing of indigenous communities (primarily in the US) in terms of microeconomic and macroeconomic development. Specifically, at the microeconomic level we will investigate the development of individuals, households and communities over time. At the macroeconomic level, we will look at the various channels through which economic development occurs at the tribal level; we will focus on jurisdictional, legal and political aspects of tribal economic development. The course will briefly touch on different economic systems and economic history of American Indian tribes and reservations. We will focus on some of the large changes that have occurred in the past century on reservations and the effects that have resulted. We will use the latest research and US Census data in this part of the course. Students will become familiar with and be able to access existing socio-economic data on indigenous peoples using publicly available sources.

Grading:

Your final grade will be based on three items: 1) class participation, 2) eight (8) weekly discussion papers based on a current reading for that week (either book chapters or research articles), and 3) a final project—paper and oral presentation.

The elements will be weighted as follows:

Class participation: 20%

Class Participation: Full participation by all students is critical to developing understanding about these topics and examples. Participation means regular attendance, knowledge of the reading assignments, and participation in class discussions. Additionally, each student will be required to lead the discussion of a particular paper three times in the quarter. This may coincide with the selected
paper for the weekly discussion paper (see below).

**Discussion Papers: 30%**

**Discussion Papers:** These **one page** write-ups (**hard copy** due at the beginning of each class) will include a brief summary of a research paper or article assigned for that class. It will then include additional points of commentary by the student. These items should include questions about importance of the question/research, methodology, suitability of data and additional concerns or research possibilities. These papers will be graded based on the quality and depth of analysis. A total of **8** discussion papers are required; one for each class not including week 1 or week 8.

**Final Project: 50%**

**Final Project:** The final project will be a research project that provides some policy analysis on an economic development-related topic using models or theories, data and evidence. Students are encouraged to go beyond the articles, books and examples used in class for their analysis. I am interested in students providing a brief background of their specific topic. Second, there should be a clear discussion of the state of research and information on the area as it stands today. Finally, the paper should provide some ideas and questions about where and how this topic area could be expanded in the future through further research, theory or economic modeling. All projects must be original and engage some aspect of economic development.

A paper proposal will be **due on the 4th week** of class (in class) and will count for 10% of the overall grade for the course. I will detail the requirements for the proposal in a separate handout. I will provide you with written feedback on this proposal.

The paper will be due on the final day of class (30% of the course grade) **in class**. There will also be in-class presentations of no more than 15 minutes each that will be graded as part of the final project (10% of the course grade) on **February 25**.

**Readings:** You should read all of the assigned readings prior to the class. We will be discussing the research, the findings, and their implications in class. Therefore, it is important that you have an understanding of the main results of the chapters and the journal articles prior to the class period. Some of the readings will be very technical and you are not responsible for understanding all of the methods, however, you should understand the main research questions, framework and findings of each reading. We will discuss the appropriateness of the methods, research situations and data in class and the importance of the findings. Readings are available on JSTOR for the journal articles.

**Book:**

COURSE SCHEDULE:

**Week 1, January 7, 2015**
2. Current Economic Conditions, Data Sources Discussion.
   - Measures of Economic Development, GDP, Inequality, Econ Growth
   - Data Sources
   - Previous Measures, Relation to Economic Development elsewhere
   - Persistent questions and hypotheses.


Henson et al (2007) Chapters 1,2, and 3.


**Week 2, January 14, 2015**
1. Political and Legal issues and evidence in economic development.
   - What are existing issues and obstacles?
   - What are emerging issues? Are there solutions to these problems? Preview these topics that will be handled in the coming weeks.


Henson et al (2007) Chapters 1,2, and 3.


**Week 3, January 21, 2015 continued**

1. Political and Legal issues and evidence in economic development.
   - What are existing issues and obstacles?
   - What are emerging issues? Are there solutions to these problems? Preview these topics that will be handled in the coming weeks.

See readings from Week 2 above.
Week 4, January 28, 2015

Paper proposal due in class

   - How do tribal governments raise revenues?
   - Public Law 638
   - Tribally-owned business ventures. Examples.
   - Gaming Operations and the impact of the industry; IGRA.
   - Separation of Government and Business Decisions


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Public Transit Awardee. www.umatilla.nsn.us


Week 5, February 4, 2015

1. Human Capital and Skills.
   - What is the state of educational attainment and skills on American Indian reservations and other Indigenous communities?
   - How do these skills translate into wages and employment?


**Week 6, February 11, 2015**

1. Economic Development and Health outcomes
   - Are there other measures of well-being other than employment and income?
   - How are these changing over time with economic development?


and Health Effects of Tribal Casino Gaming on American Indians.” *Demography* 49 (2): 499–524.

**Week 7, February 18, 2015**

1. Business investment and entrepreneurship
   - Obstacles to business development on American Indian reservations
   - Asset Accumulation, Access to Capital
   - Uniform Commercial Codes.

Akee, Randall and Miriam Jorgensen. 2014. “Property Institutions and Business Investment on American Indian Reservations” *forthcoming in Regional Science and Urban Economics.*


**Week 8, February 25, 2015**

*Research Presentations During Class*

**Week 9, March 4, 2015**

*[No Class]*


First Peoples Worldwide, March 15, 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPVrr44KHI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPVrr44KHI)

**Week 10, March 11, 2015**

*Final Paper Due in Class*

1. Natural Resource Valuation; Non-Market Based Economic systems
   - How do natural resources affect economic development?
   - How are natural resources viewed in these indigenous communities?
   - What types of management plans exist which differ from standard economic models?


Henson et al. (2007) Chapters 9 and 10.


