Making Poverty History?

Module Code: ECO00016I  Credits: 10  Year: 2  Terms: 2
Contact Hours: 8 Lectures, 4 Seminars (12 contact hours)
Module Organiser: Prof S Bowden

Overview:
This ten credit module explores the human face of the development problem. The development problem is not just a problem for economies. It is a problem which impinges on peoples. What do we mean by poverty? How can poverty be defined and measured? Is poverty the result of economic systems? Or is poverty the necessary result and reflection of the stage of economic growth and development? How and why would a capability approach as presented by the United Nations affect our understanding of the nature of and causes of poverty as it affects people?

In this module, we explore what is meant by poverty and then proceed to consider how and why health, education, population change, child labour and gender issues impinge on human poverty; are these issues a cause or a reflection of poverty? How do we measure inequality and what effect does this have on growth and development. What is pro-poor growth and how will such strategies affect both economic growth and poverty. This module addresses these questions and, via its lecture and in particular its seminar programme, invites students to engage in and study these important topics. As such, this module provides a ‘human’ complement to the module Development Economics (ECO00006I). The module is an applied not a theory module. Theories are used to shed insights and to suggest explanations for given phenomena, but the emphasis throughout is on applied evidence in relation to a variety of topics. A critical element of the module is that students are introduced to and expected to use up to date and relevant qualitative and quantitative information available on a variety of non governmental websites.

Aims:
To introduce students to:
- The variety of approaches used in defining and measuring poverty and inequality
- The capability approach to poverty as embodied in the multidimensional poverty index of the UNDP.
- The principal causes that can lead to poverty
- The interaction between poverty and a range of variables including child labour, education, health, population and gender
- The debates on the inter relationships between inequality and growth and poverty and growth.
- The current debate on pro-poor growth

And hence overall, a greater appreciation of the human face of the development problem.

Objectives:
Having taken the module students should be able to:
- Understand the variety of approaches used in defining and measuring poverty and inequality
- Have a greater understanding of the principal causes of poverty
- Assess the interaction between poverty and a range of variables including child labour, education, health, population and gender

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• Appreciate the inter relationships between poverty and growth and development, and inequality and growth and development.
• Have a greater understanding of the multi-faceted issues behind pro-poor growth strategies

Students should also have acquired a familiarity and confidence in using and analysing the variety of information (qualitative and quantitative) contained in the key websites of inter alia, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the Human Development Programme, etc.

Through work for the seminars, students should also have acquired familiarity with essay work and what is required for good grades. Acquired experience of team based work as both team leaders and team members

Assessment:
There will be a 2-hour unseen examination in the Summer Term.

Pre-requisites:
• Historical Perspectives on Long-Run Economic Growth 1800-1939 (ECO00007C)
• Economics 1 (ECO00001C)
• Economic Policy (ECO00002C)
• Introductory Statistics (ECO00005C) Or Introduction to Statistical Theory (ECO00006C)

Main References: