

Development Economics

field course

Simon Heß

Summer 25

What is (low) development?

A household in Japan and a household in Mali (Peter Menzel - *Material World*)



before we look at data for the remaining 99% of this class, let's look at these family photos and discuss what we see

Guiding questions in development microeconomics

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- how do lives differ between the global poor (e.g., most Malians) and the global rich (e.g., most Japanese and Austrians)?
- what challenges are faced by poor people and poor countries?
- what causes poverty, and what strategies exist to alleviate it? do they work?

this course is concerned with how (micro)economists study these questions

- theory:
 - frameworks/models to understand the problem
- empirics:
 - to evaluate effects of interventions and policies
 - to improve theory

This course

We look at development from a microeconomic perspective — Covered topics:

- methods:
 - theories of comparative development
 - how to conduct surveys to measure poverty and inequality
 - causal inference
- applications:
 - poverty and poverty traps
 - aid and cash
 - microfinance
 - social networks
 - gender
 - democracy and political accountability
 - education
 - climate change, health, environment

the topics covered in a course is necessarily reductive, additional topics can be covered (please approach me early enough)

Expectations and grading

skills:

- the course's focus is on empirics, requiring a good working knowledge of econometrics
 - students should have a solid understanding of the material on cross-section econometrics
 - knowledge of causal inference and statistical programming (R) are a plus

reading:

- many sections will focus on empirical papers, which will be discussed in class, you are expected to read the papers before class and to actively participate in the discussion

assignment and grading:

- *active* in-class participation (10%)
- practice-oriented report/presentation-style homework assignment (40%)
- an final exam (50%)