

TWENTY- FIFTH SUMMER SCHOOL IN INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

Economic Development in the Age of Big Data and AI

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and CEPR

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Tuesday 1st to Friday 4th September 2026
Castello di Gargonza, Tuscany, Italy

Preliminary Syllabus

New Frontiers in Development Economics

Lecture 1 (Professor Asher): Doing impactful research in Development Economics

- New data from digital exhaust and LLMs
- Frontier topics: cities, culture, macro development and structural change
- Measuring growth using new data and methods
- Starting a research agenda that will have an impact

Lecture 2 (Professor Novosad)

- Nature of urbanization in LMICs

Lectures 3/4 (Professors Asher and Novosad): Differences in opportunity within cities

- Impacts of neighborhoods
- Residential segregation and upward mobility
- Migration and slums

Lectures 5/6 (Professors Asher and Novosad): Cities and land

- Measuring the built environment
- How the built up environment shapes economic activity
- Regulatory barriers and land use
- The land assembly problem
- Infrastructure and public service effectiveness

Lectures 7/8 (Professors Asher and Novosad): Culture and Development

- Gender norms
- Deep roots of culture and development
- Measuring cultural change in the long run

Lecture 9: Cultural capital (Professor Asher)

- Inequality, social capital, and cultural capital
- Individualism and universalism

Lecture 10 (Professor Novosad)

- Descriptive work in economics
- Frontiers opened by AI and using AI in research

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