



TWENTY- FIFTH SUMMER SCHOOL IN INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

Economic Development in the Age of Big Data and AI

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

Syllabus

New Frontiers in Development Economics

Lecture 1: Development in the Age of AI (Professors Asher and Novosad)

Required readings

- [What Remains Scarce After AGI?](#) — Interview, Alex Imas, Phil Trammell, and Dwarkesh Patel (2026).
- [The Intelligence is Plenty but the Workers are Few](#) — Substack, Daniel Björkegren (2026).
- [AI Adoption in Developing Countries: Lessons from the Adoption of Other Advanced Digital Technologies](#) — Cirera, Comin, Cruz, and Lee (2026), Working paper.

Recommended readings

- [The Economic Impacts of Artificial Intelligence: A Multidisciplinary, Multi-book Review](#) — Bryan (2026), *Journal of Economic Literature* 64:1.
- [World Development Report 2026: Decoding AI](#) — World Bank (2026), World Bank report.

Lecture 2: Urban Economics: Agglomeration Costs and the Disadvantages of Density (Professor Novosad)

Required readings

- [The Economics of Urban Density](#) — Duranton and Puga (2020), *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34:3.
- [The Fast, the Slow, and the Congested: Urban Transportation in Rich and Poor Countries](#) — Akbar, Couture, Duranton, and Storeygard (2023), NBER Working Paper No. 31642.
- [Urban Costs Around the World](#) — Rosenthal-Kay (2025), Working paper.

Recommended readings

- [The Costs of Agglomeration: House and Land Prices in French Cities](#) — Combes, Duranton, and Gobillon (2019), *Review of Economic Studies* 86:4.
- [The Growth of Cities](#) — Duranton and Puga (2014), *Handbook of Economic Growth*, Volume 2.
- [Agglomeration Economies in Developing Countries: A Meta-analysis](#) — Grover, Lall, and Timmis (2023), *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 101.
- [Measuring Urban Economic Density](#) — Henderson, Nigmatulina, and Kriticos (2021), *Journal of Urban Economics* 125.
- [Adapting to Flood Risk: Evidence from a Panel of Global Cities](#) — Gandhi, Kahn, Kochhar, Lall, and Tandel (2025), NBER Working Paper No. 30137.
- [Order Without Design: How Markets Shape Cities](#) — Bertaud (2018), MIT Press.

Lecture 3: Cities in Rich and Poor Countries (Professor Asher)

Required readings

- [Urban-Rural Gaps in the Developing World: Does Internal Migration Offer Opportunities?](#) — Lagakos (2020), *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34:3.
- [Do Urban Wage Premia Reflect Lower Amenities? Evidence from Africa](#) — Gollin, Kirchberger, and Lagakos (2021), *Journal of Urban Economics* 121.
- [The Spatial Distribution of Income in Cities: New Global Evidence and Theory](#) — Deffebach, Lagakos, Miyauchi, and Yamada (2025), NBER Working Paper No. 34505.

Recommended readings

- [Growing through Cities in Developing Countries](#) — Duranton (2015), *World Bank Research Observer* 30:1.
- [Urbanization with and without Industrialization](#) — Gollin, Jedwab, and Vollrath (2016), *Journal of Economic Growth* 21:1.
- [The Urban Mortality Transition and Poor-Country Urbanization](#) — Jedwab and Vollrath (2019), *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 11:1.
- [Making Non-Tradables Tradable: Human Mobility and the Spatial Reach of African Cities](#) — Blanchard, Gollin, Kirchberger, and Peters (2025), CEPR Discussion Paper No. 16661.

Lecture 4: Slums and Rural-Urban Migration (Professor Novosad)

Required readings

- [Impacts of Infrastructure: People versus Place](#) — Balboni, Bryan, Morten, O'Connor, and Siddiqi (2025), Working paper.
- [The Demand for and Impacts of Government Housing: Evidence from Ethiopian Lotteries](#) — Franklin (2025), CEPR Discussion Paper No. 19944.
- [Slum Redevelopments and Evictions in a Developing Megacity](#) — Philip (2026), Working paper.

Recommended readings

- [The Economics of Slums in the Developing World](#) — Marx, Stoker, and Suri (2013), *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27:4.
- [Slums and Urban Development](#) — Britto, Conwell, Sampaio, Ulyssea, and Warwar (2026), Presentation slides.
- [Rural Migrants and Urban Informality: Evidence from Brazil](#) — Imbert and Ulyssea (2026), *Econometrica* 94:3.
- [No Place Like Home? The Causal Effect of Forced Relocation from Central Addis Ababa](#) — Bryan, Franklin, Getahun, and Winton (2025), CEPR Discussion Paper No. 20809.

Lecture 5: Neighborhoods and Opportunity Differences within Cities (Professor Asher)

Required readings

- [The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility I: Childhood Exposure Effects](#) — Chetty and Hendren (2018), *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 133:3.
- [Residential Segregation and Unequal Access to Local Public Services in India: Evidence from 1.5 Million Neighborhoods](#) — Asher (r) Jha (r) Novosad (r) Adukia (r) Tan (2026), NBER Working Paper No. 34818.
- [Residential Patterns and Local Public Goods in Urban Brazil](#) — Harari (2026), Working paper.

Recommended readings

- [Who Benefits from Social Housing? Experimental Evidence from a Large-Scale Program in Brazil](#) — Belchior, Gonzaga, and Ulyssea (2026), Working paper.
- [Housing and Human Capital: Condominiums in Ethiopia](#) — Agness and Getahun (2024), Working paper.

Lecture 6: Land Use and Regulation I (Professor Novosad)

Required readings

- [How Costly Is Permitting in Housing Development?](#) — Soltas and Gruber (2026), Working paper.
- [Land Market Frictions in Developing Countries: Evidence from Manufacturing Firms in India](#) — Sood (2020), Working paper.
- [From Today's City to Tomorrow's City: An Empirical Investigation of Urban Land Assembly](#) — Brooks and Lutz (2016), *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 8:3.
- [From Samurai to Skyscrapers: How Transaction Costs Shape Tokyo](#) — Yamasaki, Nakajima, and Teshima (2023), TDB-CAREE Discussion Paper No. E-2020-02.

Recommended readings

- [The Holdout Problem, Urban Sprawl, and Eminent Domain](#) — Miceli and Sirmans (2007), *Journal of Housing Economics* 16:3–4.
- [Housing Supply and Housing Affordability](#) — Baum-Snow and Duranton (2025), NBER Working Paper No. 33694.
- [Land Use Regulation and Welfare](#) — Turner, Haughwout, and van der Klaauw (2014), *Econometrica* 82:4.
- [Zoning and the Dynamics of Urban Redevelopment](#) — Rollet (2025), Working Paper.
- [Creative Destruction: Barriers to Urban Growth and the Great Boston Fire of 1872](#) — Hornbeck and Keniston (2017), *American Economic Review* 107:6.

Lecture 7: Land Use and Regulation II (Professor Asher)

Required readings

- [The Costs of Housing Regulation: Evidence from Generative Regulatory Measurement](#) — Bartik, Gupta, and Milo (2025), SSRN Working Paper No. 4627587.
- [Relaxing Floor Area Ratio: Housing Supply and Affordability in India](#) — Nagpal and Gandhi (2026), Working paper.
- [The Skyscraper Revolution: Global Economic Development and Land Savings](#) — Ahlfeldt, Baum-Snow, and Jedwab (2026), Working paper.

Recommended readings

- [City-Wide Effects of New Housing Supply: Evidence from Moving Chains](#) — Bratu, Harjunen, and Saarimaa (2023), *Journal of Urban Economics* 133.
- [Rents, Movers, and Stayers: The Spillover Effects of Construction in San Francisco](#) — Pennington (2025), Working paper.

Lecture 8: Cities, Culture, and Gender Norms (Professor Novosad)

Required readings

- [Safety First: Perceived Risk of Street Harassment and Educational Choices of Women](#) — Borker (2021), World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 9731.
- [The Female Urban Mobility Advantage in South Asia](#) — Asher, Bhowmick, Bussolo, Novosad, Rexer, and Sethia (2026), Working paper.
- [Cross-Gender Social Ties Around the World](#) — Bailey, Johnston, Kuchler, Kumar, and Stroebel (2025), *AEA Papers and Proceedings* 115.

Recommended readings

- [Traditional Institutions Meet the Modern World: Caste, Gender, and Schooling Choice in a Globalizing Economy](#) — Munshi and Rosenzweig (2006), *American Economic Review* 96:4.
- [Demand for “Safe Space”: Avoiding Harassment and Complying with Norms](#) — Kondylis, Legovini, Vyborny, Zwager, and Andrade (2025), *Journal of Development Economics* 174.
- [Women’s Mobility and Labor Supply: Experimental Evidence from Pakistan](#) — Garlick, Field, and Vyborny (2025), IZA Discussion Paper No. 17883.
- [Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces and Police Patrols: Experimental Evidence from Urban India](#) — Amaral, Borker, Fiala, Kumar, Prakash, and Sviatschi (2025), *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 140:4.

- [How Are Gender Norms Perceived?](#) — Bursztyn, Cappelen, Tungodden, Voena, and Yanagizawa-Drott (2023), NBER Working Paper No. 31049.
- [Gender Norms and Development](#) — Field, McKelway, and Voena (2026), *Handbook of Development Economics*, Volume 6A.

Lecture 9: Measuring Culture and Cultural Change (Professor Asher)

Required readings

- [Frontier Culture: The Roots and Persistence of “Rugged Individualism” in the United States](#) — Bazzi, Fiszbein, and Gebresilasse (2020), *Econometrica* 88:6.
- [American Life Histories](#) — Lagakos, Michalopoulos, and Voth (2025), NBER Working Paper No. 33373.
- [Universalism: Global Evidence](#) — Cappelen, Enke, and Tungodden (2025), *American Economic Review* 115:1.

Recommended readings

- [Culture, Policy, and Economic Development](#) — Bau, Lowes, and Montero (2025), NBER Working Paper No. 33947.
- [Ethnographic and Field Data in Historical Economics](#) — Lowes (2021), *The Handbook of Historical Economics*.
- [Zero-Sum Thinking and the Roots of US Political Differences](#) – Chinoy et al (2026), *American Economic Review*.

Lecture 10: Presentation of Student Research Proposals

In mid-August, we will organize students into groups of 2–4 and send detailed guidelines on preparing a research topic proposal fitting the theme of the summer school. The aim is for groups to meet in advance of the summer school, with each member putting in about four hours of homework (which will be spent thinking about research ideas!), so that minimal additional work is required once we arrive at the venue.

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