

# **Development Economics**

## **Discussion Sections Syllabus**

### **Objective of the Discussion Sections**

Discussion sections are typically not going to be a repetition of the class; we will try to briefly discuss the main concepts of the course, solve any questions that you may have, and try to provide tips and exercises to help you with the assignments. Usually, we will organize the sections as follows: at the beginning of the class we will ask for questions and concepts from the lecture that you would like to review. For this, it would be helpful if you would email us your questions in advance when possible. We'll then review the main concepts and challenges from the class, making use of the assigned readings. Please don't forget to bring your materials from the lecture. Finally, we'll reserve time to give guidance and tips for working on the problem sets.

### **Attendance**

As mentioned in the syllabus of the class, besides the first discussion section, attendance is not mandatory. However, from past experience, we have noticed that students who regularly attend sections perform better in the examinations, so it is highly recommended that you do so. Sections are supposed to be an informal space for us to discuss materials related to the class.

### **Discussion Forums**

This term we will be using Piazza.com for class discussion. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates, the GSIs, and the Professor. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, we encourage you to post your questions on Piazza. We will either respond directly on Piazza, or incorporate questions into discussion sections that week.

Remember that class discussion on Piazza is still subject to the Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct below: conceptual and clarifying questions are great; respectful, vigorous intellectual debate is great; looking for specific answers to quantitative exercises is not great.

### **Office hours**

This class covers a lot of material at a fast pace and the amount of time during sections is very limited, so it is likely that you will have additional questions. We strongly encourage you to visit us during office hours to resolve any remaining question or concerns you might have about the materials covered in class or about the assignments. You can go to any of our office hours. Again, if you can email us questions/topics in advance, it helps us to prepare, but feel free to come even if you haven't emailed us.

### **Email Policy**

If you can't make it to office hours or use Piazza and still have additional questions, you can always send us an email with a (short) question. Please type Development Economics in the subject line. We'll try to respond promptly though generally not immediately. If you haven't received a response within 48 hours, please send us a reminder; like you, we are students juggling busy schedules. The day before an assignment is due we won't answer emails that are sent after 6 pm.

## **Assignments and Important Dates**

As you have probably noticed already, this class will require quite some work on doing exercises and problems. Overall, there are 11 assignments, so you'll be handing in something almost every week. Just as a reminder, there are penalties for turning in your assignments late (2 pts. per day for exercises and 1 pt. per day for the policy briefs). Assignments are considered late if they are submitted any time after the relevant class/section, even if on the same day, and late assignments must be submitted in hardcopy, not by email. The lecture syllabus lists all important dates and deadlines.

## **Academic Honesty**

In fairness to students who put in an honest effort, cheating will be treated as harshly as possible in accordance with University rules. Any evidence of cheating will result in a score of zero on that assignment or examination. Cheating on the final exam will result in an "F" for the course. Incidences of cheating will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct, which may administer additional punishment. More information may be found at <http://sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct>.

## **Re-grading**

Grade disputes should only be made in writing, and will be handled only during Office Hours. It is a policy that the whole exam or assignment is re-graded if there is a question on a particular part of the exam or assignment, so your grade can be higher or lower. If you wish to have an assignment re-graded, you must provide the original assignment and a written request for a re-grade within one week of the day the graded assignment was returned.

## **Special Accommodations**

We take class inclusion seriously. If you require special accommodation for exams or lecture due to learning or other disability, tell us as soon as possible so that we can work with you to make the necessary arrangements. You will ultimately need to obtain the evaluation form from the Disabled Students' Program (<http://dsp.berkeley.edu>) that they will send electronically.

## **Laptops and Phones**

You may use a laptop to take notes during class or section. However, we ask that students using laptops sit in the back of the room to keep from distracting others. Phones should be turned off or on silent mode.

## **Hints for success in this course**

This course covers a wide range of challenging topics in a very short period of time, for students from a range of backgrounds. We encourage you to make use of section time and office hours, and we cannot emphasize enough how important it is to *attend lectures* and *do the readings week by week as they are being assigned!* Because of the difficulty level of many of the chapters, students will find it useful to skim the chapters for main points and vocabulary before lecture for basic familiarity to help the lecture material "stick," and then read the chapters more thoroughly again after hearing the lecture. Because of the quantity of material covered, reading the chapters at the last minute before exams will be difficult.