UCLouvain

lbrai2212

2026

Economics of Rural Development

3.00 credits	30.0 h	Q1

Teacher(s)	Van den Broeck Goedele ;
Language :	English > French-friendly
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Prerequisites	Introduction to economics, especially micro-economics (e.g., LBIR1260 Principles of Economics)
Main themes	This course is about the economics of rural development, focussing on low- and middle-income countries. It covers several themes on poverty and other development indicators, the role of agricultural transformation in structural transformation, farm-household behaviour and livelihood diversification, gender inequality and women empowerment, and food security and nutrition. As such, this course helps students to better understand how to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of no poverty (SDG1), zero hunger (SDG2), gender equality (SDG5), and decent work and economic growth (SDG8).
Learning outcomes	**At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :** By the end of this course, students are able to: • Measure, monitor and track development over time, using both monetary and non-monetary indicators • Understand the role of agricultural transformation in structural transformation and how theories and policies have changed over time • Understand why and how farm-households diversify their livelihoods and predict their decisions under market imperfections • Understand the extent of gender inequality and how to measure women empowerment • Understand how global diets have changed over time and the implications for food insecurity and the triple burden of malnutrition • Write an essay in which they provide evidence-based argumentation on the role of agriculture in rural development Students have acquired the skills to examine rural development using insights from economic sciences. They are able to critically reflect on the role of agriculture in rural development and provide evidence-based argumentation on enabling and hindering conditions in this process. With respect to the learning outcomes of the program in Bio-engineering, this course contributes to the following main learning outcomes: - 1.2: to know and understand the basic concepts as part of an introduction to economics 1 - 3.1: to search for information on a defined and simplified scientific problem, to assess its reliability based on the nature of the source of the information and to produce a summary - 3.6: To demonstrate an ability to summarise and formulate conclusions on a well-defined scientific question. - 6.1: To understand and use scientific texts and literature and basic technical documents in French and English. - 6.2: To communicate information, ideas, solutions and conclusions as well as the knowledge and underlying principles, in a clearly structured, substantiated, concise and comprehensive way (as appropriate) both verbally and in writing according to the standards of communication specific to the context. - 6.6: To communicate effectively and respectfully with peers and teachers, demonstrating listening skills, empathy and assertiveness. - 7.1: To demonstrate intellectual independence of thought, to regard knowledge critically. - 7.3: To understand the key issues of sustainable development and to situate their own career in the light of these challenges. - 7.4: To demonstrate humanism, cultural openness and solidarity. - 8.5: To integrate new knowledge and skills independently (including methodological skills) in response to defined situations.

Evaluation methods	Essay (75% of overall grade) Participation during the year based on submitted questions for the paper discussions (25% of overall grade) **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools** The use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, is only permitted to improve the writing of the text. AI tools must not be used to generate content or results, nor to add references. AI tools must be used responsibly and critically. You must never copy and paste an AI tool's response without critically reflecting on it. If improper use of AI tools is detected during the evaluation of the report, sanctions will be applied, which may result in a final grade of zero out of 20 for this course.
Teaching methods	Classes, directed reading, oriented questions and answers, debate
Content	Students learn more about the processes of rural development and the economics behind it with a particular focus on the Global South. Five topics are covered: 1) Introduction of different concepts of development, distinguishing between monetary and non-monetary based indicators 2) The role of agricultural transformation in rural development, highlighting how development thinking and policies have changed over time 3) Decisions that farm-households take and how market imperfections influence these decisions 4) Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in poor, rural areas 5) Food and nutrition security, and the link with agricultural transformation The students are first introduced to the theoretical concepts through lectures. Each lecture is followed by a discussion on a related paper that students need to read beforehand and prepare one question about it. Students learn to debate based on their own questions and learn to reason about their answers in an interactive way.
Inline resources	Moodle
Bibliography	Variable
Other infos	The course will be taught in English. Students are expected to participate in an English-spoken debate.
Faculty or entity in charge	AGRO

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)

Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Minor in Development and Environment	MINDENV	3		
Master [120] in Forests and Natural Areas Engineering	BIRF2M	3		
Master [120] in Agriculture and Bio-industries	SAIV2M	4		
Master [120] in Agricultural Bioengineering	BIRA2M	3		