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# BLOCK SEMINAR

## CONTROVERSIES IN DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

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**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY! THEY SHOULD ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS!**

**Preliminary discussion: October 31, 2013, 17 h, Oec 0.168**

**Block course: December 13, 12-18 h (OEC 1.162), Dec 14, 8-18 h (Oec 1.169)**

Please contact Malte Reimers directly under the above email-address for the selection of the seminar paper's topic indicating your preferences (max. three topics from the list below).

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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The seminar addresses controversial issues in development economics. Such issues may be more topical (for example: Investments in agriculture and land: Land grab or development opportunity?) or more analytical (for example: The role of the state in economic development: Market-led development or interventionist models?). Based on the seminar papers, which will take a balanced stance toward a specific controversy, students will prepare a presentation that assumes a one-sided position during the seminar. Moderated discussions between two positions will be preceded and followed by a vote of the entire group to assess how convincing the respective presenter has made his or her argument. The seminar topics are subject to change every term.

**Language of instruction: English, but seminar papers can be written in German.**

**Compulsory meeting I: You should be present at the preliminary discussion. It may be that slots are already limited at the meeting.**

**Compulsory meeting II: You should meet your supervisor (either Malte Reimers or Jann Lay) at least once to discuss the table of contents of your paper. This meeting is compulsory. Appointments can be made via email.**

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### TIME SCHEDULE

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September 16, 2013	Application for seminar papers starts, topics are allocated according to “first-come-first-served”
October 31, 2013	Compulsory preliminary discussion and announcement of participants
December 8, 2013	Deadline for seminar papers. Only an electronic version should be sent in at 12:00 am latest. The printed paper should be handed in on Dec 9 latest.
December 13-14, 2013	Seminar

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### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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To acquire 6 credit points students will have to write a seminar paper (50%), prepare a presentation and participate in the discussions (which together accounts for the other 50%).

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### ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

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The seminar is open to MA students in economics, MA students in the three business MA programs, and Diplom Students in VWL or BWL. Ideally (but not necessarily), you have previously participated in development economics classes.

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### SEMINAR PAPERS

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The seminar papers should be written in English or German, comprising no more than 10 pages (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spaced, margins: left 2.5 cm, right 3.5; top/bottom 2.5, 10 pages excluding title page, table of content, bibliography and exhibits, max. 15 pages total). In addition, a short abstract of about 200 words has to be composed. The papers should be analytical and critical, develop a coherent argument, drawing own conclusions and should go beyond the pure summary of existing literature. Guidelines on well-written papers can be found on the webpage of Prof. Klasen.

Students should hand in an electronic (pdf) as well as one printed copy of their seminar papers. The electronic version will then be made available to all other students for reading.

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### PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

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We will have two presentations (each by two students) for each topic. Before the presentation, the “audience” will vote on the controversial issues (for example, “Do you think that states should play a more active role in promoting economic development than they currently do?”). In the presentations, each group will then take one of the possible views on the issue and make an attempt to convince fellow students of that view. The students will be facing the audience and seated in front of their fellow students as in a panel discussion format. The speakers can use any visual device for

their presentations (e.g. handouts, transparencies) and should be able to answer short questions during the presentation. Note that the one-sided view will only be required in the presentation. The seminar paper will be more balanced.

After the presentations the audience can ask questions and let the presenters defend their positions. It is expected that all other students have briefly gone through the papers of the other participants before the seminar, so that a good discussion after the presentations can take place.

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## TOPICS

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You can choose one of the below topics, but are also welcome to suggest alternative ones!

TOPIC 1: A NEW WTO AGREEMENT: (A) NEEDED OR (B) ARE WE FINE WITH MORE BI- AND MULTILATERALISM?

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<http://www.globalexchange.org/resources/wto/oppose>

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/issues/2005/84/7>

TOPIC 2: INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURE AND LAND: (A) LAND GRAB OR (B) DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY?

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Cotula, L. (2009). Land Grab Or Development Opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa. IIED.

TOPIC 3: RANDOMISTAS VERSUS POOR DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS: (A) RCTS AS THE GOLD STANDARD OF THE ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OR (B) MISGUIDED CERTAINTY?

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Ravallion, M. (2009). Should the randomistas rule?. The Economists' Voice 6.2 (2009).

TOPIC 4: THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (A) MARKET-LED DEVELOPMENT OR (B) INTERVENTIONIST MODELS?

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Rodrik, D., 2004. Industrial Policy for the Twenty-First Century (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 666808). Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY.

Pack, H., Saggi, K., 2006. Is There a Case for Industrial Policy? A Critical Survey. World Bank Res Obs 21, 267–297.

TOPIC 5: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (A) TRADE-OFF OR (B) WIN-WIN SITUATION?

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Dercon, S. (2012). Is green growth good for the poor?. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 6231.

TOPIC 6: HOW TO DELIVER AID: (A) SEARCHERS OR (B) PLANNERS?

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Easterly, William. "Planners vs. searchers in foreign aid." Asian Development Bank (2006). (<http://sunburst.usd.edu/~clehmann/courses/Ideas/Easterly.pdf>)

Sachs, J. D., McArthur, J.W. (2005). The millennium project: a plan for meeting the millennium development goals. The Lancet, 365.9456, 347-353.

TOPIC 7: THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: (A) USELESS LIP SERVICE OR (B) POWERFUL TOOL TO END POVERTY?

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Institute of Development Studies' (IDS) Hot Topic site  
(<http://www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/millennium-development-goals-mdgs-and-post-2015-agenda>).