

University of California, San Diego
Econ 164: The Indian Economy (Spring 2020)

Class time: Mon/Wed: 5:00 – 6:20pm, Zoom online meetings through Canvas

Instructor: Prof. Karthik Muralidharan

E-mail: kamurali@ucsd.edu; Office: Economics 315 (Virtually in Zoom Chatrooms this quarter)

Group Office Hours/Discussion: Fridays 5:00 – 6:00pm (will be recorded)

Individual Office Hours: Fridays 3:45 – 4:45pm (not recorded). I will be in a Zoom chat room that you are welcome to drop by in to the way you would just drop in to my office.

I will also schedule around 5-6 smaller group virtual lunch meetings over the course of the quarter.

Course description: India is home to over 1.3 billion people and over a sixth of the world's population. It is also a nation of contradictions – being one of the fastest growing large economies in the world, and home to one of the largest number of poor people in the world at the same time. It is also a country that matters a lot for the rest of the world – both as a producer and as a consumer of private goods and services as well as global public goods (including security, disease control, and mitigating climate change). Thus, India matters both intrinsically and for the world, and there is growing interest in understanding it better.

This course aims to provide an introduction to the Indian Economy and some of the key policy challenges and choices for the country. The course is structured as a course in applied development economics illustrated through the lens of the Indian example. Thus, many of the issues discussed will also be of relevance to other low and middle income countries. This is an upper division economics course, and so each topic will feature theoretical and empirical economic research to better understand the relevant issues and evidence. Ten weeks is a short time and so the course will be broad rather than deep, but I will be happy to suggest additional readings on specific topics of interest to students.

Readings: The **required book** for the course (available in the Bookstore or on Kindle) is:

Joshi, Vijay *India's Long Road: The Search for Prosperity*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

The book is an excellent, accessible, and current overview of the Indian economy and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, and I will expect you to complete the full book. This is the only book you need to buy.

There are two other very good recommended books on the Indian economy, which include:

Panagariya, Arvind, *India: The Emerging Giant*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Dreze, Jean, and Amartya Sen: *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*; Oxford University Press, 2013.

Both books cover many common sets of issues but have different perspectives on the relative importance of the market and state in ensuring broad-based economic development, with Panagariya taking a more market-led view and Dreze & Sen taking a more state-led one.

Two highly recommended additional books are:

Gurcharan Das, *India Unbound*

Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*

The first provides a more discursive and personally-informed (but still quite analytical) narrative about the post-independence history of the Indian economy, and selected topics from colonial India. The second one does the same for the post-independence political history. Both are very easy to read and are highly recommended for those of you would like to learn more about India.

A good source of contemporary information about the Indian economy is the Government of India's annual *Economic Survey*. I will assign specific readings from recent *Survey* chapters as relevant.

Course Modifications for COVID-19

As you all know, we are in the middle of a global COVID-19 pandemic, which has required dramatic changes to how we teach and learn. All instruction will be conducted remotely using Zoom and Canvas. My hope and aim this quarter is to provide as high quality an intellectual experience for students as would have been the case if we were to have been able to meet in person. Of course, there will be some trial and error and we will need to make adjustments along the way, but I am adding design elements to the course to create a greater sense of intellectual community despite the lack of personal proximity in a classroom. I am also modifying the assessments structure to be based more on engagement with the materials than on high-stakes tests.

Here is the current plan for how I expect instruction, student engagement, and grading to work.

Lectures

All lectures will take place at the regular scheduled time for the class, which is from 5:00 – 6:20pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. All lectures will take place through Zoom Pro and will be recorded. My plan is to conduct the lectures live, but I may also prerecord the lecture for simultaneous viewing in case we have problems with connectivity. I usually like to make the lectures quite interactive and call on students. I expect to continue this with only slight modifications. Specifically, each lecture will have 3 to 5 modules/topics, which I will cover in 10-20 minutes each. I will pause for questions at the end of every module. You can ask questions either by putting up your hand (and I will call on you to speak) or by typing them in during the lecture, and I will review the questions and answer them during the Q&A interlude. I will put up lecture slides by 4pm on the day of the class so you can print before class and take notes on them if you would like.

Discussion Sections

To promote greater engagement with students, I will personally conduct a weekly discussion section that is required for all students (the session will be recorded for those who cannot make it). The section will answer questions based on your reflections that you will submit after every lecture that will both count for your grade and contribute to peer learning and discussion (see below). This will be a group discussion section every Friday from 5:00 – 6:00pm (it will be recorded).

Assignments and Grading:

The grade will be based on the following components:

Reflection Notes (30%): There will be a short graded assignment after every lecture that will be due by 11am, 2 days after the lecture (so the assignment on the Monday lecture will be due by Wednesday at 11am, and on the Wednesday lecture by Friday at 11am). The assignment is meant to promote better reflection and learning of the materials and you will be expected to submit answers to the three questions below after each lecture:

- 1) What were the most important 1-2 new things you learnt from the lecture and/or readings that you did not know before class? Describe one way in which what you learnt connects to either a different subject/topic you are interested in, or a personal experience.
- 2) What were 1-2 points discussed in lecture/readings that you are still confused/unclear about and would like some further clarification on?
- 3) What topics/questions would you like to learn more about or discuss more based on content covered in the lecture/readings?

Research on pedagogy shows that such reflection notes are highly effective at promoting learning and helps to make faculty and students accountable for what they have taught/learnt in each lecture. It is also a low-pressure form of assessment. They will be lightly graded as “check” (thoughtful response that engaged with the content of the lecture/readings), “check minus” (cursory responses that meet a minimum standard) and “zero” (did not turn anything in). You should ideally submit these notes for all lectures, but we will **drop your lowest 5 scores and use only your top 15 scores for the grade** (thus, each response makes up 2% of your grade).

These responses will also contribute to group learning in two important ways.

First, while the responses will be private; we will collect all responses and anonymize them and share them in a class discussion board – with one for each lecture. This way, you benefit from your peers’ reading and reflections on the materials as well.

Second, I will review all these materials before the discussion section on Friday and focus the discussion on answering the most commonly asked questions that are posed in the reflection notes.

Problem Sets (20%): There will be 4 problem sets which comprise of a combination of quantitative problems and short answers based on the readings and slides.

These will be handed out and due on the dates below. Problem sets are due by 4:45pm on the due dates. Answers will be posted on the course website soon after the due dates and **late problem sets will not be accepted**. Problem sets will be lightly graded, and mostly on the basis of completion (1 point for each fully attempted question). You can work in groups, but each student must turn in their own problem set written up individually. Problem sets will not be corrected individually, but detailed answers will be posted shortly after they are due. **There will be 25 questions across the 4 problem**

sets and we will drop your 5 lowest question scores, and only grade you on the top 20 problems.

This generous drop policy across both the reflections (can drop 5 out of 20) and the problem set questions (can drop 5 out of 25 questions) should be enough to accommodate a wide variety of extenuating circumstances that we expect students will have over this quarter, and I will not consider requests for additional exemptions (such as short bouts of being unwell) except in the most extreme circumstances (such as an extended illness documented with a doctor's note).

The problem sets and due dates are below:

	Date assignment will be posted	Due in class at the start of lecture on
Problem Set 1	6 April	13 April
Problem Set 2	20 April	27 April
Problem Set 3	11 May	20 May
Problem Set 4	25 March	3 June

Midterm and Final (50%): The details are yet to be determined as we finalize the exam protocols based on campus and department policies for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity for exams that are not conducted in person. But, the current plan is to have a midterm that will be 20% of the grade (in class during Lecture 10 – on Wednesday, 29 April), and a Final exam as scheduled by the registrar (on Monday, 8 June from 7-10pm). **You should plan on being online at a computer at these times and have a working video camera and Zoom for Zoom-based video proctoring.**

I take academic integrity extremely seriously, and will come up with a protocol for testing that allows us to maintain this. We will likely use Zoom or Loom for proctoring exams this quarter. These programs use video and audio recording or other personal information capture for the purpose of facilitating the course and/or test environment. UC San Diego does not allow vendors to use this information for other purposes. Recordings will be deleted when no longer necessary. However, if cheating is suspected, the recording may become part of the student's administrative disciplinary record. Finally, I reserve the right to give an oral test if I feel it is necessary to uphold academic integrity.

Review Sessions and TAs: The TA for this course is Nathaniel Bechhofer (nbechhof@ucsd.edu). The TA will hold office hours and conduct review sessions to go over problem sets (which are *highly* recommended). The TA will handle the grading, and is here to help you learn; attending review sessions/office hours with questions is one of the best ways to reinforce the materials that you may be seeing for the first time in class. Review sessions will be recorded, but office hours will typically not.

TA Office Hours: Tuesday 5:00 – 6:00 pm (unrecorded except on request)

TA Review/Discussion Sections will be held on Thursdays at 9:00 am

Website: Please check the course web site regularly. The web site will have problem sets and answers, the slides for each class, and all relevant information about the class including recorded lectures and discussion sections, and discussion boards. The website will also have any additional readings that are not on the list below that will be designated as required, recommended, or optional. You will be responsible for all readings designated as “required”.

COURSE OUTLINE (By Week)

Week 1:	Overview and Key Concepts
Week 2:	Economic and Political History of India
Week 3 – 4.1:	Trade & Market Integration; Public Finance and Macroeconomic Stability
Week 4.2 – 5.1:	Agriculture
Week 5:2:	Midterm
Week 6:	Manufacturing & Services
Week 7:	Education
Week 8:	Gender and Health; Environment
Week 9:	Poverty and Inequality; Migration
Week 10:	Politics, Corruption, State Capacity & The Road Ahead

Readings:

This is the reading list at the start of the course. More will be added as we go along.

Recommended & Optional readings will not be tested, but are provided for those who would like to learn about the concerned topics in greater depth

Week 1:

Required: Charting a Course for the Indian Economy
http://www.ideasforindia.in/article.aspx?article_id=1486

[Read the transcript and/or see the videos]

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapters 1 and 3

Week 2:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapters 2

Highly Recommended: *India Unbound*

Further optional reading: *Emerging Giant* – Chapters 1-6
Uncertain Glory – Chapters 2-3

Week 3 and 4.1:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapters 8 and 12

Further optional reading: *Emerging Giant* – Chapters 6, 9-11, 12 15

Weeks 4.2 - 6:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapters 4-7

Further optional reading: *Emerging Giant* – Chapters 13; 14

Week 7:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapter 9

Required: Muralidharan, Karthik: Priorities for Primary Education Policy in India's 12th Five Year Plan; Available at: <http://bit.ly/1rqwkbf>

Further optional reading: *Uncertain Glory* – Chapter 5

Emerging Giant – Chapter 20

Week 8:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapter 9

Further optional reading: *Uncertain Glory* – Chapter 6

Emerging Giant – Chapter 19

Week 9:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapter 10

Further optional reading: *Uncertain Glory* – Chapters 7 and 8

Emerging Giant – Chapters 7 and 8

Week 10:

Required: *India's Long Road* – Chapters 11 and 13

FINAL EXAMINATION (Monday, 8 June, 7:00 – 10:00pm)