

PhD course: Economics of Teachers (2 ECTS)

May 29-31, 2024

Lecturer: Eric Taylor, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Danish Graduate Programme in Economics (DGPE)
TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research

This course is intended for PhD students in economics or related quantitative fields who have an interest in the economics of education, especially teachers, and personnel economics.

Teachers are central to the economics of schooling. Teacher labor costs dominate school budgets, and teachers' contributions to student achievement dominate the variation in achievement created by schools. This course has three overlapping themes: First, the econometrics of measuring teachers' causal contributions to student outcomes. Second, the notable variability in teachers' contributions, and what might explain that variability. Third, how employer-employee interactions between schools and teachers—e.g., performance evaluation, compensation, job design—affect teachers' contributions.

Some familiarity with linear regression and panel data is required. Ideally, students will also have familiarity with the standard causal-inference frameworks, e.g., field experiments, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, conditional independence arguments, etc.

Learning Goals

- Students should be familiar with the measurement of teacher contributions to student outcomes.
- Students should be familiar with current research in the economics of teachers, with application to public policy and personnel management.
- Students should be able to read and critically reflect upon academic studies on the research frontier related to economics of teachers.
- Students should be able to formulate a research outline contributing to the field of economics of teachers.

Credits

In order to receive credits for the course, students should either give a presentation (30 min) within the topics covered by the course (broadly speaking) or submit a research proposal (5-10 pages) no later than 2 weeks after the course has finished.

Lecturer

Associate Professor Eric Taylor: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/erictaylor>

Topics covered

1. The econometrics of measuring teacher value added to student outcomes.
2. Teacher training and skill development.
3. Teacher performance evaluation and incentives.
4. Teacher selection and dismissal by schools.
5. Teacher self-selection.
6. Teacher job design (and how it affects job performance and student outcomes).

Format and schedule

This course is comprised of the equivalent to 2 full days of teaching (12 hrs) in addition to preparing readings (20 hrs) and presentations (or the submission of a research proposal after the course) (20 hrs).

Wednesday, May 29 2024	Thursday, May 30 2024	Friday, May 31 2024
12.00-13.00 arrival and lunch 13.00-14.30 session 1 14.30-15.00 break 15.00-16.30 student presentations 18.00/30 course dinner	08.30-10.00 session 2 10.00-10.30 break 10.30-12.00 session 3 12.00-13.00 lunch 13.00-14.30 student presentations 14.30-15.00 break 15.00-16.30 session 4	08.30-10.00 session 5 10.00-10.30 break 10.30-12.00 session 6 12.00- sandwich to go

Time line

April 1, 2024: Submit draft paper for student presentation

April 15, 2024: Decisions on accepted papers are sent out. Final program is published.

May 1, 2024: Sign up for course.

Partial reading list

Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014a). Measuring the impacts of teachers I: Evaluating bias in teacher value-added estimates. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2593-2632.

Jackson, C. K. (2018). What do test scores miss? The importance of teacher effects on non-test score outcomes. *Journal of Political Economy*, 126(5), 2072-2107.

Jackson, C. K., & Bruegmann, E. (2009). Teaching students and teaching each other: The importance of peer learning for teachers. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(4), 85-108.

Papay, J. P., Taylor, E. S., Tyler, J. H., & Laski, M. E. (2020). Learning job skills from colleagues at work: Evidence from a field experiment using teacher performance data. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 12(1), 359-88.

Leaver, C., Ozier, O., Serneels, P., & Zeitlin, A. (2021). Recruitment, effort, and retention effects of performance contracts for civil servants: Experimental evidence from Rwandan primary schools. *American Economic Review*, 111(7), 2213-2246.

Brown, C., & Andrabi, T. (2023). Inducing positive sorting through performance pay: Experimental evidence from Pakistani schools. RISE Working Paper No. 23/123.

Taylor, E. S. & Tyler, J. H. (2012). The effect of evaluation on teacher performance. *American Economic Review*, 102(7), 3628-3651.

Fryer, R. (2018). The "pupil" factory: Specialization and the production of human capital in schools. *American Economic Review*, 108(3), 616-56.

Taylor, E. S. (2018). Skills, job tasks, and productivity in teaching: Evidence from a randomized trial of instruction practices. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 36(3), 711-742.