Assignment 1: presenting or discussing a research paper – 20% of the course grade

Main points:

- Each group will present one paper in a given lecture – list in Moodle.
- Approximately 40 minutes: 25 minutes presentation, 15 minutes discussion.

Note: there are examples from last year in Moodle.

By 8 am[1] **on the day of the presentation**: one person in the group should email me the slides for the presentation, which I'll upload to moodle.

Objective

General: the core objective of this course is for you to learn to understand high-quality level scientific research on development economics and to use it to guide policymaking, as qualified advisors. The tasks are structured such that working on them helps you to progress towards this final objective.

For this assignment: the main objective is for you to be able to extract and clearly communicate the most meaningful **content within the document**.

a. Present the problem addressed by the paper and how this fitted within the literature (at the time when the paper was written).
b. Introduce the context of the study such that anyone in the audience can visualize what the paper is precisely dealing with, in a concrete way. *For example, if the intervention consisted in giving families in rural Ethiopia a cow, which then was frequently referred to as "the productive asset" along the paper, make sure that in the description of the context you make it clear that the asset given was a cow (and not just "a productive asset"), and why cows should be relevant in this particular context.*
c. Summarize the main elements in the methodology, balancing technicality and clarity.
d. Display the main results and the conclusion in a precise and concise way.

A secondary objective, also important, is to critically analyse and constructively criticize the study, its limitations, contribution and its position within the literature. Think about exploring and discussing some of the following:

a. Limitations: what could have been done better? Think about whether the intervention or study could have been implemented in a more effective or insightful way, whether there are potential important factors that might have been overlooked, whether there are standing important questions to be explored that pose a threat to the main implications of the current findings of the paper, if the external validity of the results might be limited…
b. More recent findings: feel free to explore the literature on the topic after the publication of the paper (hint: check papers that have cited this one), to see how well the findings have survived time and posterior research: have later papers validated or contradicted the findings in other contexts? Have these been importantly complemented?

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[1] Penalties for delays apply systematically as explained in the slides for the first lecture, for every submission.

    c.   Potential complementary interventions and studies: think creatively and in concrete terms, what could be done to complete or improve on the lessons from the paper?

Important: your discussion should **focus on 1 or 2 well-developed key critiques** rather than listing many minor points. Quality over quantity.

Conditions

- You must cite any references used.

- AI can be used as a tool to assist in finding references and improving writing, but your analysis, reasoning, and structure must be your own.

Relevant factors to consider when developing the assignments.

- Use relevant examples to get inspired and facilitate your work.

- For the group projects: You are a team! Stop for a moment to reflect on your skills and their complementarities, dividing responsibilities and tasks accordingly.

- Feel free to send me an email or ask to meet whenever you think this could be useful.