

Peter Courtney

PhD Candidate in Economics

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Research Interests

- Primary fields: Development Economics, Economics of Education, Economic History
- Secondary fields: Spatial Econometrics, Political Economy, Land Policy

Current Position

Joint PhD Candidate in Economics 2022 – Present
Stellenbosch University & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Tinbergen Institute)

Education

MSc: Development Studies – Economics (Cum Laude) Sep 2019 – Sep 2021
Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands
Dissertation: “Invisible Borders – Persisting Scars: How the Apartheid Homelands Define Contemporary South Africa”
Bachelor of Commerce: Honours in Economics Jan 2018 – Nov 2018
University of Cape Town
Bachelor of Social Science: Philosophy, Politics & Economics Jan 2015 – Nov 2017
(with distinction in each major)
University of Cape Town

Grants & Awards

C. Lowell Harriss Dissertation Fellowship 2025
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Research on property valuation and taxation
Emergent Ventures Grant 2022
Mercatus Centre, George Mason University
Machine Learning Land Valuation in Cape Town
Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Scholarship 2022
Comprehensive doctoral funding
Orange Knowledge Programme Fellow 2019 – 2021
Fully funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for MSc studies
Grant values available upon request

Research Experience

Consultant	2024 – Present
Usawa Agenda, a Gates Foundation Grantee	
Research Associate	May 2022 – Dec 2022
JPAL Africa, Shakuma Violence Prevention Programme (PI: Julian Jamison)	
Agricultural Economics Intern	Sep 2020 – Aug 2021
United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation	
Research Assistant	Jun 2020 – Oct 2020
University of Cape Town School of Economics	
Consultant Research Economist & Educational Video Script Writer	Aug 2021 – Aug 2022
Money & Macro	

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant	Jul 2022 – Dec 2022
Economics of Education (871), Stellenbosch University	
Designed & taught Stata-based assignments	
University Tutor	Jan 2018 – Nov 2018
Philosophy, Politics, & Economics, University of Cape Town	

Publications

Peer-reviewed Book Chapters

- Mohohlwane, N., Mtsatse, N., & Courtney, P. (2023). Bridging the 20-year Literacy Divide: African Language Reading Progress in South Africa. In *Tracking Changes in South African Reading Literacy Achievement: A Developing Context Perspective*, Brill Publishers.
- Spaull, N., Courtney, P., & Qvist, J. (2022). Mathematical Stunting in South Africa: An Analysis of Grade 5 Mathematics Outcomes in TIMSS 2015 and 2019. In *Early Grade Mathematics in South Africa* (Eds. Venkat, H. & Roberts, N.), Oxford University Press.

Working Papers & Reports

- Courtney, P. (2025). Education and Growth – Some Ideas on How to Improve Results. Bureau for Economic Research.
- Courtney, P. (2024). Education, Inclusive Growth, and Fiscal Consolidation. UNU-WIDER Working Paper.
- Donaldson, A. R., Guma, N., McKenna, L., van Reenen, N., Ryan, G., Courtney, P., & Janari, S. (2024). Inclusive Development in South Africa: Elements of a Structural Reform Strategy.

Thesis

- Courtney, P. (2021). Invisible Borders – Persisting Scars: How the Apartheid Homelands Define Contemporary South Africa. MSc Thesis, Wageningen University and Research.

Conferences & Workshops

Oxford Economics September Summer School University of Oxford, United Kingdom Treatment Effects: Beyond the Basics (Econometrics, Morning Sessions); Machine Learning (Econometrics, Afternoon Sessions)	2024
Third Annual UP-SU PhD Workshop in Economics Stellenbosch, South Africa Invisible Borders – Persisting Scars: How the Apartheid Homelands Define Contemporary South Africa	2023
Swedish Economic History Meeting Lund, Sweden Invisible Borders – Persisting Scars: How the Apartheid Homelands Define Contemporary South Africa	2022

Technical Skills

- Programming: R (Advanced; preferred), Stata (Advanced), Python (Intermediate)
- GIS: R (Advanced; preferred), QGIS (Advanced), ArcGIS Pro (Advanced)
- Document Preparation: LaTeX (Advanced), Microsoft Office Suite (Advanced), Adobe Creative Cloud (Advanced)