Syllabus
Hass 92: Freshman Discovery Seminar

Jorge M. Agüero
University of California, Riverside

Fall 2007

General information

Time and location: W 10:10 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. SPTH 1222
Office hours: M 11am-12pm, W 1-2pm (4108 Sproul Hall)
Phone: 951.827.4108
E-mail: jorge.aguero@ucr.edu
Website: http://faculty.ucr.edu/~jorgea/freshmen

Course description

What do criminals, soccer players and poor African farmers have in common? Their actions are shaped by incentives. In this seminar we will explore Economics beyond the traditional analysis of “production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.” We will investigate, among other issues, why drug dealers live with their moms, why Aunt Betty shouldn’t give you a sweater for Christmas, how to say no to “sugar daddies”, whether your name matters in order to get a job interview and whether watching TV makes you sick. All these will serve our main goal: understand human behavior and the policies to shape it.
The contract

Requirements
Attendance is required and please make sure to arrive on time. In addition you will be asked to

- Participate during the weekly meetings.
- Each day two students will be responsible to present the material to the rest of us. Be prepared to present or serve as a commentator as the other person’s presentation.
- Prepare a project. The details will be explained during the first day of class. This is due Wednesday, December 5 during the seminar.

Grades
Grades for this seminar are binary. You will either have a pass or a fail. Good performance on the requirements listed above guarantees a pass grade.

Communications
Most communication will take place during class. Otherwise I will send an email through ilearn. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that the email listed on ilearn is valid. If you do not use your UCR account make the appropriate changes to have your UCR emails sent to your preferred account.

Textbooks
Required
Suggested


Plagiarism

The appropriate ways for referencing the material used to write the paper will be discussed in class. Any student found committing plagiarism, not handing in original work of his/her own, or cheating, will be given an F in the course and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University. Please read this document and become familiar with the correct ways to cite other’s work. [http://senate.ucr.edu/agenda/041116/CEP_STUDENT_INTEGRITY_DEFINITIONS.pdf](http://senate.ucr.edu/agenda/041116/CEP_STUDENT_INTEGRITY_DEFINITIONS.pdf)

Course outline and readings

Each of the following topics should take us one week, on average.

I. Introduction

II. The role of incentives

- LD: chapter 1.
III. The role of information

- LD: chapter 2.

IV. Dealing with drugs and parents

- LD: chapter 3.

V. Finding causal effects: experiments

- LD: chapter 4.


VI. Finding causal effects: other methods

- LD: chapter 5. [*]


VII. Names and jobs


VIII. Coffee, rents and prices

- HT: chapter 1 and 2.

IX. Globalization and beer

X. It’s beginning to look like Christmas


