

HASS 92

Freshman Discovery Seminar

Instructor: Jorge Agüero

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](mailto:jorge.aguero@ucr.edu)

Website: <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~jorgea/econ181>

# The contract

## Your role

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

# Project

- You will have to pick two examples from real life where incentives are wrongly put.
- For one of the two examples you will have to provide a way in which you can solve the problem.
- Submit a proposal on **November 7** 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.

## Plagiarism

- 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).

## Textbooks

### Required

- Levitt, S. and S. Dubner (2006) *Freakonomics [Revised and Expanded]: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. William Morrow Publisher. ISBN: 978-0061234002. [LL, HB74.P8 L479 2005].

### Suggested

- Becker, G. (1998) *The Economics of Life: From Baseball to Affirmative Action to Immigration, How Real-World Issues Affect Our Everyday Life*, McGraw-Hill.
- Frank, R. (2007) *The Economic Naturalist: In Search of Explanations for Everyday Enigmas*, Basic Books.

- Cowen, T. (2007) *Discover Your Inner Economist: Use Incentives to Fall in Love, Survive Your Next Meeting, and Motivate Your Dentist*, Dutton Adult.

# Course outline

1. Introduction.
2. The role of incentives.
3. The role of information.
4. Dealing with drugs and parents.
5. Finding causal effects: experiments.
6. Finding causal effects: other methods.
7. Names and jobs.
8. Missing women and sugar daddies.
9. Are students lazier?
10. It's beginning to look like Christmas.

# Talking points

- What was economics use to be about?
- Methods.
- Three problems:
  - Students and effort.
  - *Sin ganas* to sell.
  - Bureaucrats as psychologists.