Introduction

*Economics of Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘n’ Roll* aims to show students how economics can be used to help understand almost every aspect of human behavior, ranging from drug addiction and prostitution to obesity and suicide. The conventional wisdom is that these behaviors should be studied only by sociologists and psychologists. With special attention to the evolution of economic ideas, as well as state-of-the-art economic theory and empirical analysis, the fallacy of this proposition will be demonstrated. Further, this course will provide you with sufficient knowledge to decipher between the economic facts and economic myths that pervade popular news media, particularly on topics such as the legalization of drugs and prostitution.

Required Readings

The book that contains most of the required reading:


I strongly suggest that you read the assigned reading before the class discussion of the topic. In the class, I will usually cover the concepts and issues that are *most challenging, reinforcing* and *extending* what is in the required reading. I suggest that after each class you review the assigned reading to solidify your understanding.
Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment is based on the following items, with weights noted:

- Assignment #1 (due by Wednesday, October 3) 15%
- Assignment #2 (due by Wednesday, November 28) 15%
- Midterm (Wednesday, October 17) 25%
- Final (Monday, December 17) 35%
- Class participation 10%

Assignments

There are two assignments to complete. You can answer any two of the 12 “puzzles” posed by David Friedman in his introduction to *Economics Uncut*. Each assignment should be around 1000 words long.

Blackboard Web Site

I will maintain a web site for the course using Blackboard. The website will include announcements and downloadable files with the class lectures.
Course Schedule and Readings

*Required reading

**Recommended reading

Lecture 1: Wednesday, September 5 (Introduction)


Lecture 2: Monday, September 10 (Drug Addiction, Part I)


Lecture 3: Wednesday, September 12 (Drug Addiction, Part II)


Lecture 4: Monday, September 17 (Prohibitions)


Lecture 5: Wednesday, September 19 (Drug Prohibition and Liberalization)


Lecture 6: Monday, September 24 (Crime, Part I)


Lecture 7: Wednesday, September 26 (Crime, Part II)

Kahane, L. (2005), 'Economics of Abortion', Chapter 11 in Simon W. Bowmaker (ed.), Economics Uncut, pp. 333-337*


Lecture 8: Monday, October 1 (Crime, Part III)


Lecture 9: Wednesday, October 3 (Discrimination)

Chiswick, B.R. (1995), 'The Economics of Discrimination: A Primer', Chapter 1 in Mariano Tommasi and Kathryn Ierulli (eds), The New Economics of Human Behavior, pp. 15-26*

Lecture 10: Monday, October 8 (Marriage and Divorce, Part I)

Hitsch, G.J., A. Hortacsu, and D. Ariely (2010), 'What makes you click? Mate preferences in online dating', Quantitative Marketing and Economics, 8 (4) pp. 393-427*

Lecture 11: Wednesday, October 10 (Marriage and Divorce, Part II)

Friedberg, L. and S.N. Stern (2005), 'Economics of Marriage and Divorce', Chapter 5 in Economics Uncut, pp. 144-150, 155-157*


No class Monday, October 15

Midterm: Wednesday, October 17, 4.55 pm to 6.10 pm in usual classroom.

Lecture 12: Monday, October 22 (Marriage and Divorce, Part III)

Friedberg, L. and S.N. Stern (2005), 'Economics of Marriage and Divorce', Chapter 5 in Economics Uncut, pp. 157-165*

Lecture 13: Wednesday, October 24 (Obesity)

Rashad, I. and M. Grossman (2004), 'The Economics of Obesity', Public Interest, pp. 104-112*
**Lecture 14: Monday, October 29 (Peer Effects and Drinking)**

Kremer, Michael and Dan Levy (2008), 'Peer Effects and Alcohol Use among College Students', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(3), pp. 189-206*

**Lecture 15: Wednesday, October 31 (Pornography)**

Cameron, S. (2005), 'Economics of Pornography', Chapter 6 in Simon W. Bowmaker (ed.), *Economics Uncut*, pp. 171-192*


**Lecture 16: Monday, November 5 (Prostitution, Part I)**


**Lecture 17: Wednesday, November 7 (Prostitution, Part II)**

Moffatt, P.G. (2005), 'Economics of Prostitution', Chapter 7 in Simon W. Bowmaker (ed.), *Economics Uncut*, pp. 211-224*


**Lecture 18: Monday, November 12 (Assisted Reproduction)**


**Lecture 19: Wednesday, November 14 (Abortion, Part I)**

Kahane, L. (2005), 'Economics of Abortion', Chapter 11 in Simon W. Bowmaker (ed.), *Economics Uncut*, pp. 315-333*
**Lecture 20: Monday, November 19 (Abortion, Part II)**


**Lecture 21: Wednesday, November 21 (Happiness)**


**Lecture 22: Monday, November 26 (Suicide)**

Cameron, S. (2005), ‘Economics of Suicide’, Chapter 8 in Simon W. Bowmaker (ed.), *Economics Uncut*, pp. 229-263*


**Lecture 23: Wednesday, November 28 (Religion)**


**Lecture 24: Monday, December 3 (Gambling)**

Simmons, R. (2005), ‘Economics of Gambling’, Chapter 13 in *Economics Uncut*, pp. 367-388*

**Lecture 25: Wednesday, December 5 (Rock ‘n’ Roll)**


**Lecture 26: Monday, December 10, (TBA)**

**Lecture 27: Wednesday, December 12, (TBA)**

**Final Exam: Monday, December 17, 6 pm to 7.50 pm, in usual classroom.**