

SYLLABUS
E306: Freakonomics

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Course Policies

1. This course is an upper division economics course, whose purpose it is to get students to “THINK” like economists.
2. There will be two examinations, one after Part I worth twenty (20) percent of the final grade which will be an objective item exam (True/False, multiple choice) and a final examination worth thirty (30) percent which is a take home essay exam with five questions you pick four worth 25% of the total of the final exam. There will be a total of four quizzes, I will count the best two and they are worth 10% of the final grade. The remaining forty (40) percent (that is 20% each for a total of 40)¹, is your doing the research finding the literature for the Parts VI and VII of the course. You are to cite the relevant articles, and give a one paragraph synopsis for each of the articles, and answer the question “Why?” the results are the way they are for both parts – limit 150 words.
3. The grade scale is:

| | |
|--------------|----|
| 100 | A+ |
| 91-99 | A |
| 90 | A- |
| 89 | B+ |
| 81-88 | B |
| 80 | B- |
| 79 | C+ |
| 71-78 | C |
| 70 | C- |
| 69 | D+ |
| 60-68 | D |
| 59 | D- |
| 58 and below | F |

¹ Turn #VI in before Thanksgiving so you have feedback before completing #VII. I will allow teams of up to three persons on each of these – the teams must be different for each part, and I will grade team efforts more critically than single efforts – but you must do at least one these assignments in a team.

4. Attendance will not be taken, however, it is strongly encouraged.
5. All other department, school, campus and university policies will be applicable to this course and strictly observed.
6. Have fun with this!!!

Textbook: Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. New York: William Morrow, 2005. [Herein Freakonomics].

Journal articles are available online from JSTOR at the IPFW Library site

New Times items are available from NY Times online

I. Introduction (two quizzes in this section)

1. An Explanatory Note - Freakonomics pp. ix - xii
2. Introduction: The Hidden Side of Everything - Freakonomics pp. 1-15.
3. John DiNardo, (Dec. 2007) "Interesting Questions in Freakonomics" *Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol. 45 (4): 973-1000.
4. Robert K. Merton, (Dec. 1936) "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review*. Vol.1(6): 894-904.
5. Richard Vernon, (Feb. 1979) "Unintended Consequences," *Political Theory*. Vol. 7(1): 57-73.
6. Robert H. Frank *Microeconomics and Behavior, fifth edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2003, Chapter 17 (Externalities, Property Rights and the Coase Theorem).
7. Not-so-Free Ride, New York Times, April 20, 2008, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt
8. The Jane Fonda Effect, New York Times, September 16, 2007, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt

----FIRST TEST----

II. Schoolteachers and Sumo Wrestlers. (One quiz in one of these II, III, and IV)

1. What Do Schoolteachers and Sumo Wrestlers Have in Common? - Freakonomics pp.19-51.

2. Mark Dugan and Steven Levitt (Dec. 2002) "Winning Isn't Everything: Corruption in Sumo Wrestling" *American Economic Review*. Vol. 92(5): 1594-1605.
3. Brian A. Jacob and Steven D. Levitt (Aug. 2003) "Rotten Apples: An Investigation of the Prevalence and Predictors of Teacher Cheating," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 118(3) pp. 843-877.
4. What the Bagel Man Saw, New York Times, June 6, 2004, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt.

III. The Ku Klux Klan and Real-Estate Agents

1. The Ku Klux Klan and Real-Estate Agents - Freakonomics pp. 53-85
2. Edmond Phelps, (Sep. 1972) "The Statistical Theory of Racism and Sexism," *American Economics Review*. Vol. 62(4): 659-661.
3. Is no News Bad News? (Winter 1997) Information Transmission and the Role of "Early Warning" in the Principal-Agent Model," *The RAND Journal of Economics*. Vol. 28(4): 641-61.
4. Hoodwinked? New York Times, January 8, 2006, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt.

IV. Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live with Their Moms?

1. Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live with Their Moms?, Freakonomics, pp. 87-114.
2. Steven D. Levitt and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, (May 2001) "Growing up in the Projects: The Economic Lives of a Cohort of Men Who Came of Age in Chicago Public Housing," *American Economic Review*. Vol. 91 (2):79-84
3. Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh and Steven D. Levitt, "Are We a Family or a Business? History and Disjuncture in the Urban American Street Gang," *Theory and Society* Vol. 29(4) (Aug 2000): 427-62.
4. Developing a Crack Index. New York Times, August 7, 2005, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt.

V. Where Have All the Criminals Gone? (One quiz in this section)

1. Where Have All the Criminals Gone? Freakonomics, pp. 115-44.

2. Mark Duggan, (Oct, 2001) "More Guns, More Crime" *Journal of Political Economy* Vol. 109(5): 1086-1114.
3. John T. Donohu and Steven D. Levitt, (May 2001) "The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 116(2): 379-420.
4. Ted Joyce (Winter 2004) "Did Legalized Abortion Lower Crime?" *The Journal of Human Resources*. Vol. 39(1): 1-28.
5. John J. Donohue and Steven D. Levitt (Winter 2004) "Further Evidence that Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime? A Reply to Joyce." *The Journal of Human Resources*. Vol. 39(1): 29-49.
6. Filling in the Tax Gap, New York Times April 2, 2006, Stephen Dubner and Steven D. Levitt.

VI. What Makes a Perfect Parent?

1. What Makes a Perfect Parent? Freakonomics, pp143-175

VII. Perfect Parenting, Part II; or Would Roshanda by Any Other Name Smell as Sweet?

1. Perfect Parenting, Part II; or Would Roshanda by Any Other Name Smell as Sweet? Freakonomics, pp. 177-04

VII. Epilogue: Two Paths to Harvard [time permitting]

1. Epilogue: Two Paths to Harvard, Freakonomics, pp. 205-07.

----FINAL EXAM-----