Economics of Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘n’ Roll

Fall 2017
Monday/Wednesday
11:00 am - 12:15 pm
Office Hours: Tues. 2 pm – 4 pm

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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 religion 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, and the pros and cons of capital punishment.

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

- Midterm (Wednesday, October 25) 30%
- Presentations (Mon, Dec 11, Tues, Dec 12, Wed, Dec 13) 15%
- Final (Monday, December 18) 40%
- Class participation 15%
Website

I will maintain a website for the course using NYU classes. The website will include announcements and downloadable files with the class lectures.

Classroom norms

Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices are a disturbance to both students and professors. All electronic devices must be turned off prior to the start of each class meeting.

Course Schedule and Readings

*Required reading

**Recommended reading

Lecture 1: Wednesday, September 6 (Introduction)


Lecture 2: Monday, September 11 (Drug Addiction, Part I)


Lecture 3: Wednesday, September 13 (Drug Addiction, Part II)


Lecture 4: Monday, September 18 (Prohibitions)


Adams, S.J. and C. Cotti (2008), 'Drunk Driving After the Passage of Smoking Bans in Bars,' Journal of Public Economics, 92 (5-6), pp. 1288-1305.**
Lecture 5: Wednesday, September 20 (Class Debate: Drug Legalization)


Lecture 6: Monday, September 25 (Crime, Part I)

Lecture 7: Wednesday, September 27 (Class Debate: The Death Penalty)

Lecture 8: Monday, October 2 (Crime, Part II)


Lecture 9: Wednesday, October 4 (Marriage and Divorce, Part I)


Monday, October 9: no class.

Lecture 10: Wednesday, October 11 (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.*


Lecture 11: Monday, October 16 (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 12: Wednesday, October 18 (Peer Effects and Drinking)


Lecture 13: Monday, October 23 (Midterm Review Session)
Wednesday, October 25 (Midterm Exam, same time in usual classroom)

**Lecture 14: Monday, October 30 (Pornography)**


**Lecture 15: Wednesday, November 1 (Prostitution, Part I)**


**Lecture 16: Monday, November 6 (Prostitution, Part II)**


**Lecture 17: Wednesday, November 8 (Class Debate: Prostitution Legalization)**

**Lecture 18: Monday, November 13 (Adoption and Assisted Reproduction)**


**Lecture 19: Wednesday, November 15 (Abortion)**


Lecture 20: Monday, November 20 (Happiness)


Wednesday, November 22: no class.

Lecture 21: Monday, November 27 (Suicide)


Lecture 22: Wednesday, November 29 (Religion)


Lecture 23: Monday, December 4 (Beauty)


Lecture 24: Wednesday, December 6 (Rock ‘n’ Roll)


Monday, December 11 (presentations)

Tuesday, December 12 (presentations)

Wednesday, December 13 (presentations)

Monday, December 18 (Final Exam, 10 am to 11.50 am in usual classroom)