The George Washington University  
MA in Applied Economics  

Course:  
Applied Behavioral Economics (ECON 6295, section 30)  
(a.k.a. “Economics in Theory and Practice: A Somewhat Irreverent View”)  

Semester:  
Fall 2016  

Time:  
Mon, 6:10-8:40 pm  

Location:  
TBD  

INSTRUCTOR  
Name:  
Dr. Diane Lim  

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by appointment  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
This course will first discuss/review the fundamentals of microeconomic and macroeconomic theory at an intermediate level and then critique where theories have failed to accurately explain or predict real-world behavior, motivating the more recent interdisciplinary "behavioral economics" approach. Can economists stray from the "one size fits all" approach and yet still have enough of a theoretical foundation to be able to predict economic outcomes? Students will compare and contrast traditional vs. behavioral economics research applied to a variety of public policy issues.  

COURSE PREREQUISITE(S)  
Intermediate-level microeconomic theory, intro-level macroeconomics  

TEXTS  

Textbook:  

“This textbook introduces all the key results and insights of behavioral economics to a student audience. Ideas such as mental accounting, prospect theory, present bias, inequality aversion, and learning are explained in detail. These ideas are also applied in diverse settings such as auctions, stock market crashes, charitable donations and health care, to show why behavioral economics is crucial to understanding the world around us…This book remains the ideal introduction to behavioral economics for advanced undergraduate and graduate students.”
Additional books to be assigned/drawn from:


Resources on public policy applications:


Students should also have a good, intermediate microeconomics book as reference:
(such as) Walter Nicholson and Christopher Snyder, *Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions, 11th ed.* (2011)

“Listening List”

- “The Hidden Brain” – NPR podcast series by Shankar Vedantam
- “Freakonomics” Radio

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the predictive value of traditional economic theories, yet also identify where traditional theories of the rational, fully-informed economic agent fail to adequately explain the behavior of individuals and groups;
2. Evaluate the merits of alternative private-market mechanisms and public policies, given the responses of individuals to price signals vs. other non-market “cues”/“nudges”;
3. Seek out opportunities and design methodological strategies for research that better and further utilizes “big data” and interactive formats to understand more about what drives individual- and family-level decisions;
4. Write and present/speak effectively on these topics, recognizing different audiences.

**GRADING**

- Weekly assignments (short problem sets and write-ups) – total of 30%
- One required “term paper” due on the last day of class – 30%
• A presentation to and discussion with the class of your paper topic in progress – 10%
• A final assignment/analysis/take-home exam to be completed during finals week (over a 2-hour period) – 20%
• Overall class participation – 10%

CLASS POLICIES
Attendance policy: Students should inform professor ahead of time of absence, if possible; attendance feeds into the participation grade
University Policy on Religious Holidays:
1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC)  202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

SECURITY
In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.