

Jeffrey M. Perloff (x2-9574)
Wednesday 2:00-4:00
2320 Tollman, CCN: 01218
eep39c@are.berkeley.edu

EEP 39C
2 units, LG
mail list: hottopics@are.berkeley.edu
subscribe: majordomo@are.berkeley.edu

Using Economics to Analyze and Debate Hot Topics

The purpose of this seminar is to use microeconomics to analyze some of the most controversial political and social topics of the day, such as the key ones in the Presidential election. Starting at the first session, we will collectively choose these topics based on student interest.

Possible topics

Discrimination

Social (economics of gay marriages, race/gender discrimination, war on drugs, children's rights, CA prison system, death penalty, Bush's terrorist surveillance, digital divide, tort reform)

Oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Global warming, markets for pollution, international agreements on the environment, deforestation

Biofuels

Health (Mad cow disease, universal healthcare, bird flu, organic/GMO foods, medicare)

Insurance: Katrina and other major disasters

Outsourcing and the World Trade Organization

Enron and other management scandals

Intellectual property rights (music/videos; piracy; patents)

Tax cuts and refunds (flat tax)

Government monopolies and privatization

Trade (outsourcing, importing drugs from Canada)

Antitrust and merger policies

Wal-Mart (effect on local businesses, workers)

Investments: effect of Olympics on nation's economy; divesting from Sudan

Markets to gather information on terrorism

Value of human life

Market Regulations (school vouchers, rent control, minimum wage laws, limiting advertising)

U.S. immigration laws (relations with Mexico; security fence)

Subsidizing farmers, corporations, or consumers

Encouraging or discouraging product differentiation

Tort reform

Activities

Because there are generally many sides to each topic, discussion and debate will be encouraged in the seminar. We will collectively decide how many sessions to spend on each topic and how to run the seminar. Some weeks we may collectively analyze and discuss a topic (first assigning individuals or groups to gather different facts and opinions and then share this information during the session). Other weeks, we may debate topics, possibly holding the debates twice and switching sides. Still in other weeks, we may write and exchange brief newspaper-column-like position papers.

Requirements

To prepare for sessions, students will gather information and opinions using the internet or other sources, write up brief papers to share, and read materials written by classmates. *The student must be enthusiastic: willing to put in time outside of the seminar collecting information and willing to participate during the seminar. In addition, the student must have had at least an introductory microeconomics course such as EEP 1 (preferably) or ECON 1.* This seminar may be used to satisfy the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement in Letters and Science.

Using the UC Berkeley Libraries for Research

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/assignments.html>

Doe and Moffitt Libraries: www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff

UC Berkeley Library: www.lib.berkeley.edu

Library Hours www.lib.berkeley.edu/edu/AboutLibrary/hours.html

UC Berkeley Library Research Advisory Service:

www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/ras.html

Reference Desks:

The Reference Center (Floor 2, Doe Library)

The Information Gateway (Floor 3, Moffitt Library)

Monday-Thursday 9 AM-9 PM; Friday 9 AM-5 PM; Saturday-Sunday 1 PM-5 PM

www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/reference.html

Ask-a-Reference-Question

www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/AskALibrarian.html

For a good list of databases go to <http://are.berkeley.edu/gf/library/>

In particular, look at Google (and Google News), EconLit:

<http://web5.silverplatter.com/webspirs/start.ws?customer=ucb&databases=ECON&conbutton=Connect+to+Resource>

and Lexis-Nexis: <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>

(Note: Some of these sources require a Berkeley connection).

Proper Citation (*how to avoid plagiarism*)

When you quote, paraphrase, or base your ideas on someone else's work, you need to acknowledge your intellectual debt by citing the source you used. See:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Citations.html>

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/b Bruinsuccess/>

According to the Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct:

Plagiarism is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Copying from the writings or works of others into one's academic assignment without attribution, or submitting such work as if it were one's own;*
- (b) Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment; or*
- (c) Paraphrasing the characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device of another without proper attribution.*