Issues in Economic Freedom:
How a Topics Course Can Popularize the Dismal Science
Howard H. Cochran, Jr. & Marieta V. Velikova
Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee

Why Economic Freedom?
- attractive to majors and non-majors in economics
- contemporary issues that have personal significance
- can more easily and effectively illustrate principles of economic reasoning while honing critical listening, thinking, speaking, and writing skills
- a course that can explore the connection of economic freedom to innovation, entrepreneurship, prosperity, and equality
- relationship between economic freedom and public policies can be illustrated through current economic events such as stimulus spending, taxation, government regulation, unemployment, price controls, education, healthcare, social welfare, environmental concerns, and international trade

Teaching Economic Freedom

Course Materials
- Free to Choose A Personal Statement by Milton & Rose Friedman
- Video series to accompany Free to Choose
- Economic Issues & Policy by Jacqueline Murray Brux
- Hernando De Soto on economic development
- Online components utilizing course management technology
- Selected videos on current events and issues
- Invited guest speakers

Course Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Journaling</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Assessment</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Realms of Experience
Classroom experience by engaging students personally on various levels:
- Physical
- Emotional
- Intellectual

What students think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey Questions</th>
<th>Positive Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would recommend course to a classmate</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging questions, problems and assignments</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments required critical thinking</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenged me to do my best work</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments contributed to learning</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course provoked curiosity in economic issues</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of videos and guest speakers</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to my learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used current examples and illustrations</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges
- A broad range of topics can be covered, need to narrow focus
- Student knowledge and familiarity with economic reasoning prior to the course
- Outdated current events, public policies and topics in textbooks
- Cross-disciplinary nature of the course
- Keep an environment conducive to openness and respect of various views and opinions while discussing controversial issues such as the minimum wage, poverty, inequality, healthcare, etc.
- Able to foment spirited discussion, but fell behind schedule
- Identifying pedagogies to encourage student participation and debate

Advice
- Promote course prior to student registration
- Encourage both majors and non-majors in economics to enroll in the course
- Identify topics that are interesting to a wide range of majors such as business, political science, social entrepreneurship, international relations
- Pre-screen and select videos
- Schedule guest speakers in advance
- Include interactive learning activities
- Provide course resources that reflect differing views
- Encourage persuasive writing and Letter to the Editor submissions