

At www.edge.org—a site created by John Brockman where people like Dan Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Steve Pinker, and quite a few members of the ICCI discuss intellectual and scientific matters — there is now [online](#) "A Short Course in Behavioral Economics" taught by Richard Thaler, Sendhil Mullainathan and Daniel Kahneman, with text and video, aimed at a non-specialised audience.

Here is the program:

INTRODUCTION

By Daniel Kahneman

[10.1.08]

FIRST DAY REPORT

By Nathan Myhrvold

[10.1.08]

SECOND DAY REPORT

By George Dyson

[10.1.08]

Class 1

A Talk By Richard Thaler

[10.1.08]

Danny Hillis, Nathan Myhrvold, Daniel Kahneman, Jeff Bezos, Sendhil Mullainathan

If you remember one thing from this session, let it be this one: There is no way of avoiding meddling. People sometimes have the confused idea that we are pro meddling. That is a ridiculous notion. It's impossible not to meddle. Given that we can't avoid meddling, let's meddle in a good way. —Richard Thaler

Class 2

A Talk By Richard Thaler & Sendhil Mullainathan

[10.9.08]

Jeff Bezos, Nathan Myhrvold, Salar Kamangar, Daniel Kahneman, Danny Hillis, Paul Romer, Elon Musk, Sean Parker

At a minimum, what we're saying is that in every market where there is now required written disclosure, you have to give the same information electronically and we think intelligently how best to do that. In a sentence that's the nature of the proposal.—Richard Thaler

Class 3

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SCARCITY

A Talk By Sendhil Mullainathan

[10.15.08]

Nathan Myhrvold, Richard Thaler, Daniel Kahneman, France LeClerc, Danny Hillis, Paul Romer, George Dyson, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Sean Parker

Let's put aside poverty alleviation for a second, and let's ask, "Is there something intrinsic to poverty that has value and that is worth studying in and of itself?" One of the reasons that is the case is that, purely aside from magic bullets, we need to understand are there unifying principles under

conditions of scarcity that can help us understand behavior and to craft intervention. If we feel that conditions of scarcity evoke certain psychology, then that, not to mention pure scientific interest, will affect a vast majority of interventions. It's an important and old question.

Class 4

TWO BIG THINGS HAPPENING IN PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

A Talk By Daniel Kahneman

[10.22.08]

Danny Hillis, Richard Thaler, Nathan Myhrvold, Elon Musk, France LeClerc, Salar Kamangar, Anne Treisman, Sendhil Mullainathan, Jeff Bezos, Sean Parker

There's new technology emerging from behavioral economics and we are just starting to make use of that. I thought the input of psychology into economics was finished but clearly it's not!

Class 5

THE IRONY OF POVERTY

A Talk By Sendhil Mullainathan

[10.29.08]

Daniel Kahneman, Paul Romer, Richard Thaler, Danny Hillis, Jeff Bezos, Sean Parker, Anne Treisman, France LeClerc, Salar Kamangar, George Dyson

I want to close a loop, which I'm calling "The Irony of Poverty." On the one hand, lack of slack tells us the poor must make higher quality decisions because they don't have slack to help buffer them with things. But even though they have to supply higher quality decisions, they're in a worse position to supply them because they're depleted. That is the ultimate irony of poverty. You're getting cut twice. You are in an environment where the decisions have to be better, but you're in an environment that by the very nature of that makes it harder for you apply better decisions.

Class 6

PUTTING PSYCHOLOGY INTO BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS

A Talk By Richard Thaler, Daniel Kahneman, Sendhil Mullainathan

[11.6.08]

Richard Thaler, Daniel Kahneman, Sendhil Mullainathan, Sean Parker, Anne Treisman, Paul Romer, Danny Hillis, Jeff Bezos, Salar Kamangar, George Dyson, France LeClerc

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