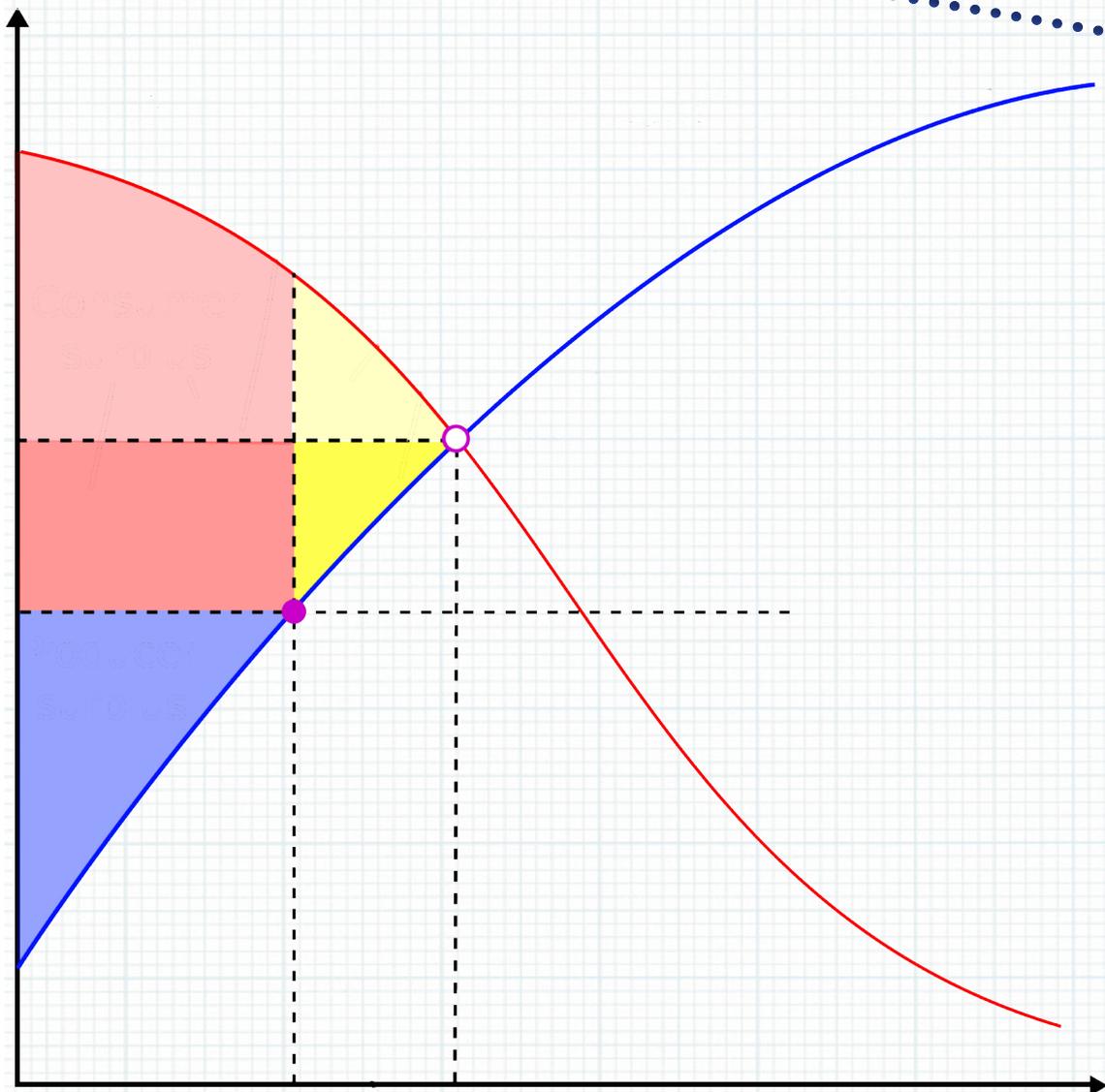


THE POETRY OF ECONOMICS

Creative Writing Selections From UEP 251
Economics for Planning and Policy Analysis
Spring 2016





The poems in this anthology represent student submissions to creative writing assignments in a classroom experiment designed to test the effects of poetry versus expository writing on learning in an economics classroom.

The project was supported by a Tufts University Innovates grant, and represents a collaboration between the course instructor Mary Davis, an economist, with cognitive psychologist Ayanna Thomas and poet Jill McDonough. Graduate students Jonathan Diaz and Lylee Rauch-Kacenski provided research assistance and creative support for this project.

Mary Davis, Associate Professor, Tufts University

Ayanna Thomas, Associate Professor, Tufts University

Jill McDonough, Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Boston

Students wrote poetry as part of homework assignments, and during in-class writing exercises. For the in-class exercises, students had 10-15 minutes to create the poems. For the homework, the amount of time that students put in to the poems varied.

1 INEQUALITY

Normative Standards of Equity

Nathaniel Mayo	5
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski	5
Elise Simons	5

Determinants of Urban Inequality

Betsy Byrum	6
Lauren Lynch	6
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski	6
Nathaniel Mayo.....	7
Meghan Higgins	7
Brooke Schwartz	7

2 MARKETS AND ELASTICITY

Elasticity

Monique Ching	8
Ashley Clark	8
Tony Lechuga	8
Tech Leng	8
Lauren Shuffleton	8

Efficiency vs. Equity

Monique Ching	9
Mbacke Faye	9
Lauren Shuffleton	9
Christina Schlegel	10

3 CONSUMER AND PRODUCER THEORY

Price Discrimination

Meghan Higgins	10
Anna Krane	10
Lauren Lynch	11
Nathaniel Mayo	11
Liz Pongratz	11
Brooke Schwartz	11

Average Total Cost, Economies of Scale, Diminishing Returns

Betsy Byrum	12
Brooke Schwartz	12
Alexandra Purdy	13
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski	13

4 MARKET STRUCTURE AND TAXES

Monopolies, Market Power

Kaitie Butler	14
Monique Ching	14
Christina Schlegel	14

Sales Tax, “Bad” Tax, Principle of Neutrality, Second Best

Monique Ching	15
Christina Schlegel	15
Tony Lechuga	16
Yuan Li	16

5 ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS AND COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Externalities

Elijah Romulus	16
Tony Lechuga	17
Jessie Norriss	17
Cecilia Smith	17

Public Goods, Tragedy of the Commons

Betsy Byrum	18
Nathaniel Mayo	18
Lauren Lynch	19
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski	19
Meghan Higgins	20
Sharon Ron	20
Brooke Schwartz	20

6 URBAN ECONOMICS

Gentrification

Ashley Clark	21
Meghan Higgins	22
Sharon Ron	22

Scale and Agglomeration Economies

Mbake Faye	23
Elijah Romulus	23
Kaitie Butler	23
Monique Ching	24
Tech Leng	24
Christina Schlegel	24
Olivia Percy	25
Lauren Shuffleton	25

7 NEOCLASSICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Elizabeth Gohringer	26
Matt Hinds	27
Koko Li	28
Tech Leng	29
Lauren Lynch	30
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski	31

INEQUALITY

Normative Standards of Equity (In-Class Writing)

Choose one of the normative standards of equity (equality of outcomes, equality of opportunity, equal rewards for equal contributions, equal rights, attention to the least fortunate) to complete the following assignment: Attempt at least 5 lines of metered verse to creatively describe your choice.

My neighbor writes a poem and so do I
And so we make an equal contribution
And for reward a cookie each we get
but what if I like cookies more than he does?
If he will struggle more than I to write
then he deserves two cookies he won't like
For my part I will write a poem with ease
and earn a treat that I will really like
how do we make sure that rewards are fair?

Elise Simons

It's hard to give a break
To those who like to take.

I pay my bills
To fund their thrills

No bread? Eat some of my cake.

Nathaniel Mayo

We both work nine to five
long hours, day after day
though it's equal work
Is it equal pay?
Whose to judge the sweat, the depth
of contributions to the system.
When did we decide that doctors
work harder than school teachers
the barista smiling through condescending interactions
with hedge fund owners

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski

Determinants of Urban Inequality (Homework)

Read the Huffington Post article "Washington Sets the Pace on Income Inequality," which is unequivocally critical of higher income inequality in DC and makes many good arguments. In contrast, the Glaeser and Tobio (2009) article discussed in class also makes some interesting counterarguments, going so far as to suggest that urban income inequality is not necessarily a bad thing. Use a comparative analysis of the two articles to write a blank verse poem at least 7 lines long about urban income inequality. It need not focus on DC, but should generally describe (creatively!) the drivers of urban income inequality and/or whether you believe it is necessarily a bad thing.

A Poem on Urban Inequality

Twice now on the commute I fall asleep
While dreaming, thoughts of inequality
Encroach into my dreams I wake and see
(The suburbs sprawl McMansions dot the land)
Neighborhoods divide by class by skin
The gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots' widens
College grads push higher paying jobs
But still we subsidize their mortgage loans
We value upper class, working elites
But to the service workers turn our nose
Refuse to loan to the bottom 20%
Or make it possible for fair bank loans
While renters sink further into despair
The gap widens, low wages, who can fare?

Instead how do we support something fair?
Wherever everyone begins to meet their needs
Redistribution's the name of the game
As taxes go to help even the field
Increase quality schools and raise grad rates
Higher wages, families able to save
Slowly, slowly the wealth gap starts to fade

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski

Our nation's cities pride themselves to be
for all, a place of opportunity
With open arms they welcome rich and poor
Each office building needs a corner store

But all these people need a place to live
The owners yes, but renters too - what gives?!
Our policies, right now, provide a break
To mortgage holders who, for heaven's sake
Are quickly building wealth within their home
These policies must change - the time has come.

Lauren Lynch

There is a lot of inequality
In urban places across our country
And several factors help us to explain
The reason why this issue has remained
Like human capital and the ROI
On education from school alumni
Bad situations can often ensue
More crime and less happiness are just two
But inequality's not always bad
Skilled people and sectors can often add
Services and more opportunity
For those who are in the community

Betsy Byrum

An Ode to San Franciscan Inequality

Obscured by tech's most innovative crew
The Tenderloin boasts less than fine cut views
Alas, it's written in the mortgage deeds
New Lorenz curves to which we won't accede

But won't we see San Fran's poorest souls rise?
As neighbors model higher ed's return
The view now seems a bit too compromised
For those who deemed school not the place to learn

Your wage-constructed ladder falling short
Thank heavens for the dress to break your fall
This growth may hit a ceiling, says reports
But first, you'll provide the floor of support

Meghan Higgins



Really Mr. Glaeser I can't agree,
urban inequalities not for me

Higher incomes may drive better service
(good schools, health care, things to help preserve us)

But that does not answer this here question...
Who does it hurt, this financial oppression?

It's not those at the top that can't succeed
but those at the "bottom" that are in "need"

Brooke Schwartz

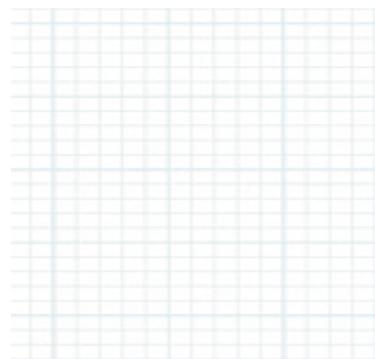


Your apartment's not a home, as it stands
Not four walls, floors, wires, pipes
Its market speculation: the price of land
The key to tax deductions, better life

Good news! Rich folks are coming - cappuccino!
The streets and private schools will be clean.
The cost of things will rise a bit, but you know,
You can't hurt homeowners - that's too mean

You make ten an hour at the bodega,
Two bucks saved for the kids, one for mom
Now its twelve-fifty, working at Panera
But rent's up - and your future gets none.

Nathaniel Mayo



MARKETS AND ELASTICITY

Elasticity (In-class writing)

Based on the Boston Globe article "The Ride Less Ridden After Increase in Fare," write a poem in metered verse (attempt 5 lines) that explores elasticity from the perspective of a vulnerable population of your choice. How are elasticity and price changes reflected in the choices made by your population?

Limited budget means limited fun
Four-dollar rides for each grocery run
Wonder if appointment really is needed;
Know for a fact cabin fever has seeded.
Haven't seen outside my door in days
Hope I can find another way.

Lauren Shuffleton

I live on milk and crackers most, these days.
The Ride is more than I can really pay.
I've hardly ventured out at all, since then
Last week I could not go to see my friend
It's sad, to trade my life for just some cash
But things arise; I need to keep a stash
And here, I end my days in solitude
And all because the T's world view is skewed.

Monique Ching

Going to class to get their GEDs
Or E-S-O-L to find a way up
T fares increase, adult learners lose out
Spending more cash, when less would be more just
Mere rents to the rich prohibit the poor
Who cease learning gains and lose so much more

Tech Leng

Inelastic is right with no good alternatives in sight.
With this new fare increase -
What else can I decrease?
You see increased fares,
and I see hungry stares

Ashley Clark

This fucking world where I have no voice
They raise the cost knowing I have no choice
Money, better wealth, buys the right to choose
Low elasticity means I will lose
Vulnerable means economic slave

Tony Lechuga

Efficiency vs. Equity (Homework)

Read the attached article “South Sudan Hit by Bidding War for Brides” and answer the following questions: Write a blank verse poem of at least 7 lines describing the efficiency and equity concerns in the Sudanese bride market (either from the perspective of the buyer or bride).

In brush I creep, with eyes on lurching cattle.
The years at war will help me still the rattle
of nerves tied taut, now waiting for the sign
to cry, to yell, to tackle cow and swine.
At home we all have women we've eyed;
we're only here to earn a perfect bride.
I never thought I'd steal, take debt, risk life
In the hard course of securing a wife.

Lauren Shuffleton

A bride! The dream, the aim of young males
A craze, amplified from the past civil war
A war, depriving proud men's livestock
A monetary value to win a bride
Driven by the feeling of reconstruction
Bidding prices are rising
Shifting right the demand curve will be
Let's expect a market disequilibrium
No cattle! No wife!
Surplus will surge at this flow
Thieving! Mobbing! Sudanese men are sinking into
In a vicious circle the economy will turn into
Deprived from remaining cows
Sudanese families will be confronted to
Fair distribution of wealth
Oh my friend! Forget it!

Mbacke Faye

If only women came about
Like widgets from a factory, churned out,
With binders full of brides for eager lads,
Each suitor pays in line with what he has.
A dame who suffers from a manufactured flaw,
Is sold at lower prices, set by law.
Unsightly moles mean docking off a couple cows,
But also makes a wretched boy a spouse.
Some come included with a PhD,
Upon them buyers looked upon with glee.
“We keep astride of marketplace demands,
Whereas before supply was not well-planned,”
The factory owner did his guests regale
The joys of fabricated wives for sale.

Monique Ching

Twelve cows, six sheep, and a little cash have I.
Yet not enough a bride to buy.
Years past, before the war,
For us, the tribal leaders would ensure
An equitable price for each - no more.

Of brides there is enough supply,
(An efficient market in which to buy)
All going to "the other guy"!
No longer can I sit idly by.

The God of Price, he won't come down
So I must find a way around,
Amassing enough livestock
So I can add a bride to my flock....

Christina Schlegel

CONSUMER AND PRODUCER THEORY

Price Discrimination (In-Class Writing)

Based on the New York Times article "Is Uber's Surge-Pricing an Example of High-Tech Gouging?"
Attempt 5 lines of iambic pentameter to describe the Uber case or a similar example of price discrimination you experience in your own life.

The rain was falling, pooling in the streets
Reflecting twinkling lights on NYE
Thousands of manicured thumbs click "request"
As street cabs gridlock, headed east and west
Alas, drink budgets, ruptured at the start
by surging prices five times multiplied
The company line pins it on supply
While five inch heels discount a subway ride.

Meghan Higgins

It is New Years Eve and time to play
Head to friend's before next day.
Step outside and hail a cheap cab ride,
An UBER home with a price I cried.
With a surge charge, no other choice,
The ride then twitter to raise my voice.

Anna Krane

A trip to the store to pick up some bagels
Only four bucks on Saturday morning
Later that night in sleet and a wind storm
That same exact journey cost twice as much!
Uber you sneak, I thought we were buddies
Apparently all you want is money

Lauren Lynch

Hey blan! Hey blan, come buy some stuff from me!
Some onions, cola, rice, spaghetti, tea.
I'll take deux mango, ten gourde, bon prix.
Just like what she got, same price for me?
No no blan, its not bon prix for you -
Ten gourde gets blan just one mango, not two!

Nathaniel Mayo

On Friday nights the clubber must be weary
For if they're far from home and things seem dreary
The uber app may soon come to mind
Alas the clubber will be sad to find
That uber surging wants to rob them blind

Liz Pongratz

Hmmm, ahhhh...it's two AM we stop to think
The T? It's closed. Shit. She says to her drink.
Uber? There's 4 of us so that could work
Okay, wait what?? Two times the early fare??
Well, I guess we could walk...ugh I don't care.

Brooke Schwartz

Average Total Cost, Economies of Scale, Diminishing Returns (Homework)

Choose one or more of these economic concepts (average total costs, economies of scale, and the law of diminishing returns) and write a blank verse poem of at least 7 lines. Your poem should present a creative rendition of the definition(s) and/or describe a real-world example of how this concept(s) comes up in your daily life.

Duo:

Diminishing Returns on Help in the Kitchen

I cook at home in quite a small kitchen
When they come visit, my parents pitch in
When just mom helps we can get in the zone
Getting much more done than when I'm alone
But my dad is happy to help as well
And with this additional "personnel"
It gets too crowded, stuff gets knocked around,
Our added production starts to go down

Diminishing Marginal Utility

On weekend mornings and without delay
I make some coffee to jump-start my day
The first cup's delicious - fragrant and hot
It helps wake me up and def hits the spot
I have a second, it quenches my thirst
But's not as satisfying as the first
I drink a third cuz it's there in the pot
It's good but makes my stomach hurt a lot

Betsy Byrum

Really, I do like the farmer's market:
fresh plums, fresh eggs, fresh milk, fresh grapes, fresh cheese
But as nice as it is it's not my place
for when I go shopping I want my space

I like my food in bulk, that is, you see
so its Costco where you'll find me
I go down the aisles feeling at home
buying twenty apples, saying "shalom"

Now, you may not enjoy Costco like me,
but here's a fact with which you must agree
Costco is an economy of scale
and trust me they even sell kale

Brooke Schwartz

A Poem for Lindley

In a production shop she spends her days
Making exquisite furniture to sell
Each piece handmade ornate details abound
Smooth to the touch the grain, designs, impress
One table sets you back four thousand (\$)
To mill the parts, assemble and hand plane
Then glue up, wax, now oil- the final touch
Labor of love takes twenty four to build (hours)
With all that set-up silly to make one
When built in twos each only takes sixteen (hours)
A run of three the build time is thirteen
You get the gist, efficiencies increase
(but only to a point, then comes decline
Fifty tables at once would be obscene,
Nowhere to build, not enough wood or help)
Each table still sells for four thousand (\$)
So profits rise as production time falls
Economies of scale in real life
More than confusing numbers in a book

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski

Indigo Fire

Small businesses, as many know are hard,
Whether starting something common or vanguard.
When you are up against the biggest stores,
They have economy of scale in scores.
So for your new pottery studio,
Coil, trim, bisque, slip, score, glaze and throw, throw, throw!!
Until your business makes enough to grow...

Alexandra Purdy

MARKET STRUCTURE AND TAXES

Monopolies, Market Power (In-Class Writing)

Based on the Boston Globe article “Beer distributor to pay \$2.6 million fine in pay-to-play case” answer the question below: Drawing from the concepts (not necessarily the example itself) outlined in the article describing ‘pay-to-play’ in the beer industry, attempt a blank verse (iambic pentameter!) poem of at least 5 lines. Try to use at least two economic concepts in your poem – i.e., monopoly power vs competition, anti-competitive behavior, social welfare losses, etc.

Prevailing economic thought asserts
Monopolies are generally unwise.
A market made of only one results
In artificial shortage and high price
But one may argue that monopoly
Has helped drug companies to innovate.
That may be true, but for the dying destitute
This pill is tough and cold to swallow.

Monique Ching

the largest one has all the power
little business shrinks and cowers
the wish for how we want to live
is perfectly competitive
wouldn't it be just so nice
if no one person set the price!

Kaitie Butler

Our monopoly was working well
We had enough of beer to sell.
By freezing out competing brewers
through shady pay-to-play maneuvers.
We dominate the local markets
(local brewers got nowhere to park it)
Our actions mean consumers lose
Their opportunity to buy local booze.

Christina Schlegel

Sales Tax, “Bad” Tax, Principle of Neutrality, Second Best (Homework)

Write a blank verse poem of at least 7 lines that describes the competing interest of a sales tax to both generate tax revenue and change behavior. Ideally your poem will address in some way (even roundabout!) the Principles of Neutrality and the Second Best as it relates to your chosen tax.

Marijuana taxes for general revenue and education?
That’s an interesting take on diversification.
High sales taxes - close to 30 percent
Has led analysts to warn of discontent.
“Buyers fleeing to the black market;
Is this something we permit?”
Taxing “bads” to fund our schools,
Is this a socially efficient tool?
Who bears the burden,
What income group or ethnicity?
(Taxed marijuana has shown elasticity.)
But with \$100 million revenue last year alone;
The excess burden seems overblown.
Who knew all things that could be high
(Taxes, people, revenue...)
In a state so dry.

Christina Schlegel

My chromosome offends you, I suppose,
An externality you do not like.
Perhaps it’s periods that you oppose?
Or bleeding breads at work that you dislike?
You’ll gladly tax my tampons; pay me less,
While you enjoy Viagra, tax exempt.
This “bad” behaviour won’t be easily redressed,
A fact, I’m sure, you can preempt,
Why tax my menses if I could just stop?
An idiot knows that would make no sense.
My monthly visits to the corner shop
Will help to fund some government expense.
When menopause sets in, I will be free
Not fined for orphaned ova I discharge.
Unless I get a hysterectomy,
And shed this gender-based surcharge.

Monique Ching

The government treats us like maniacs,
They're trying to create a snack food tax,
Want to control how we spend our greenbacks,
We shuffle round on caterpillar tracks,
Eating snacks coated in paraffin wax,
Neutrality, shit, better check the facts,
A tax based on values, where's the impacts,
Less money we make the harder the axe,
Honestly feels like your knives in our backs,
When our view of food is a parallax,
With no tax on snacks made of glycine max,
But breakfast of Skittles and Honey Smacks,
We don't want to be fat as razorbacks,
Too bad all we have is corner snack shacks.

Tony Lechuga

Why does tax happen?
Revenue or change action.
A sales tax works often.
Two ends are competing.
Demand curve is elastic,
Tax changes the behavior;
Demand curve is inelastic,
Tax brings more revenue.
Taxing can be good,
Less bad externality.
Taxing can be a waste,
Less social welfare created.

Yuan Li

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS AND COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Externalities (In-Class Writing)

Attempt a blank verse (iambic pentameter) poem of at least 5 lines describing your personal experience with a positive or negative externality.

Forced to write about negative externalities
That coincide with my dealing with reality
How much are you worth? A real economic question
Not just a segment for a part of the class lesson
Policies are pushed based on this ludicrous notion
Life translated into dollars and cents instead of spirit and emotion.
How much is the life valuing others' lives?
Is it the queen bee to the rest in the hive?
Or is this valuation method as strong as the bug you swat?

Elijah Romulus

The woman upstairs is a new mother,
Her baby spends whole nights all a blubber,
Screaming and wailing, oh what a bother.
Dreaming I use my pillow to smother,
That baby, but then, someone does love her,
I hope she doesn't have another.

Tony Lechuga

Negative Externality - Living with boys

Living with boys, nothing new
Living with boys from the Northeast though
a lot to do.

Keep every bedroom door shut tightly,
For even if opened ever so slightly
The street cat outside will never look so frightly

Gone for five days, I was scared to come in
Constant stench, I have no clue where to begin

Shower daily they do, but eating
nasty foods will make you smell
Worse than poopoo.

Alas here we are, the negative
externalities up too far.
Counting the days until they move out,
Hopeful such odor takes the
fast track too.

Jessie Norris

Traffic Pollution (negative externality)

Can't talk on the phone now, windows are open
Close the windows, then heat comes in
But I can't hear you, traffic is loud
So I must choose between heat or listen
Cars get to speed up under my window sill
Forget the carbon emissions, what about noise?
Noise pollution, I must endure
Lest I am willing to pay
Rent premium to move away
From the road's margin
But ability to pay is a constraint
Better off dear than no shelter

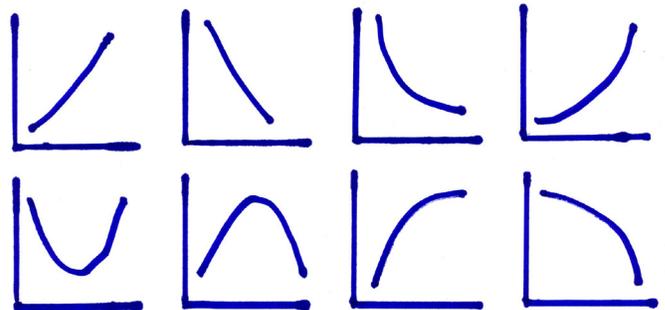
Cecilia Smith

Public Goods, Tragedy of the Commons (Homework)

Write a blank verse poem of at least 7 lines that describes your understanding of public goods as discussed in class. Your poem would ideally incorporate more than one of the public good concepts related to excludable, rival, free riding, public vs private provision, tragedy of the commons, etc.

In the study of the economy
Understanding our public goods is key
They're non-excludable, here's what that means:
They're open to all - from paupers to queens.
We all have access, folks can't be kept out,
And so none of us have to go without.
Public goods are non-rival - at one time
A good that is yours can also be mine.
A public good, it can be used by you,
And at the same time, I can use it too.

Betsy Byrum



Breath in, breath in, but too much
You know, the dirty air and such.

Nobody owns the air, we all
Breathe and belch and snort. So small
Bits of gas and things that we deposit
Aren't government by regs or laws - it
Goes into the public sphere we call the planet,
A public good for which we can't plan. It's
Just too big to think that we each own one seven-billionth
And the administrative costs to manage that would be in the trillions.

Nathaniel Mayo

Leaves crunch beneath my feet the scent of pine
Engulfs me as I scale the steep incline
The public goods, trails, parks help keep me sane
As concrete jungles, crowds, cars melt my brain

Together strangers share the common space
Smile, recreate, create a sense of place
But who is charged to care for common space?
If no one owns it no one feels the need
To keep it clean, respect it, plant new seeds

A fine balance between use and neglect
Create connection, stories that reflect
The need for green spaces to gather in
The reason to take care of public land

To knit together shared experience
Lower our guards, look past seeming difference
Importance of shared commons can't be lost
To squabbles over use, who pays the cost?
It's all of us if we can't see a way
To share the work, the space so we can play.

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski

I ran to the swing set, wind in my hair
Rushing to be the first one to get there

Only two swings, and more than ten students
In this situation, one must be prudent

While swings have no price they are rival goods
Your use excludes mine, it's well understood

It's selfish indeed, but the way things work
Rationality makes us act like jerks.

Lauren Lynch

I took for granted, all these hard-fought years
The conduits our synapses produce
No hypothetical quota on tears
Purporting an empathy broad and diffuse

But like the earth mined dry of common need
Our minds, requiring admitting fees
Credentials upon which we have agreed
For rival social justice to be seized

The tragedy is thusly summarized
Even compassion wrongly colonized
My costs and benefits are prioritized
At the expense of those disenfranchised

For whom is our concern truly deserved?
The consensus: empathy's best conserved

Meghan Higgins

Can we share a lane?
After seven on a week day I'm there
In the Tufts pool, swimming, really I swear.

At this hour its free with an I.D.,
busting with old men who ate too much brie

Now I don't mind the old hairy geezers,
but when there's six or eight, they're not pleasers

It's not because I'm ageist per sé
rather that the pool is rival and they're in the WAY!

Brooke Schwartz

The fireworks exploded in the night air.
While the city manager mumbled "it's not fair"

For weeks he curated and choreographed a show
Worth of being captured by Van Gogh.

"Charge them a dollar!" cried he, with pride
"Our annual budget will easily be supplied."

But on the night of the grand debut,
Only a meager crowd paid to view

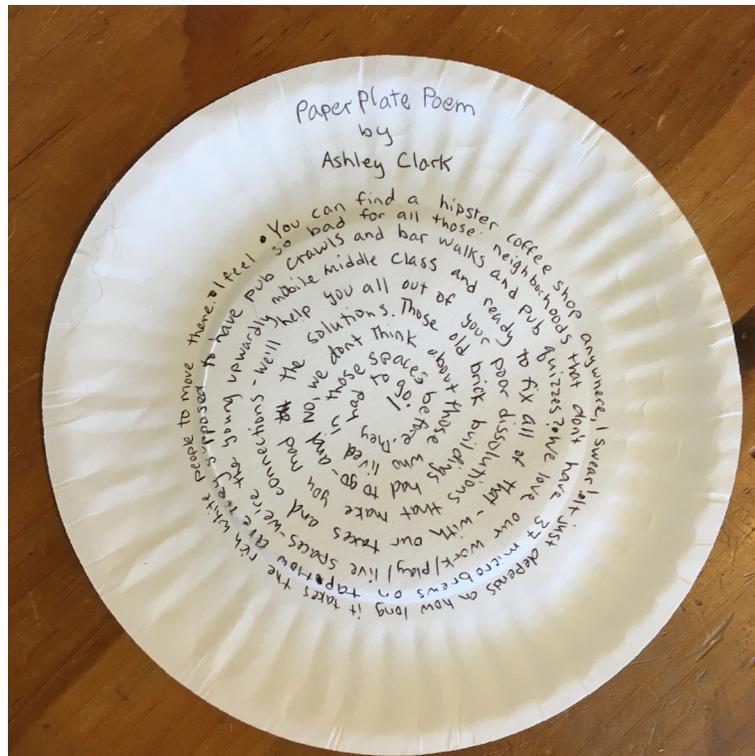
The residents, they watched from window and on roof,
Alas, they were all free-riders; this event was proof.

Sharon Ron

URBAN ECONOMICS

Gentrification (In-Class Writing)

Freeman and Braconi 2004 argue that gentrification has positive spillover effects for the original residents that remain in gentrified neighborhoods. From the perspective of either the gentrifier or the displaced/original resident, write a blank verse poem of at least 5 lines describing the experience of living in or being displaced from a gentrifying neighborhood.



Paper Plate Poem

You can find a hipster coffee shop anywhere, I swear!
It just depends on how long it takes the rich white people to move there.
I feel so bad for all those neighborhoods that don't have 37 microbrews on tap
How are they supposed to have pub crawls and bar walks and pub quizzes?
We love our work/play/live spaces -
we're the young upwardly mobile middle class and ready to fix all of that -
With our taxes and connections -
we'll help you all out of your poor dissolutions that make you mad at the solutions.
Those old brick buildings had to go - and no, we don't think about those who lived in
those spaces before they had to go.

Ashley Clark

My favorite (gentrified) things

Dog walkers on sidewalks and gluten-free dinners
Whole Foods produce and brand-new beard trimmers
Fresh pastries tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things

Cream colored coffees and artisanal strudels
Brownstones and fixed-gears and instagrammed noodles
Wild goose whiskey with moon on their wings
These are a few of my favorite things

Girls in thrifted dress, with pinterested sashes
Cruelty-free make-up that stay on nose and eyelashes
Netflix-infused winters that melt into springs
These are a few of my favorite things

When displacement bites, when the cost of living stings
When I'm feeling SAD (seasonal affective disorder)
I simply remember my favorite things
Like Netflix-infused winters that melt into springs
Then I don't feel so bad.

Sharon Ron

“Good morning.” I told my doorman, Jose.
“Just on my way to morning Soul Cycle”
But first, I'll grab an organic au lait
And then email that start-up guy Michael

This neighborhood's so full of charm and grit
But gaaawd, I wish they'd add a Trader Joe's
That reminds me, at lunch I'll stop and get
The kid's app for that Montessori school

And ask Jose to keep the front door locked
Those VA clinic guys go by in flocks
I wonder if Jose knew them before
When he still owned his little corner store

Meghan Higgins

Scale and Agglomeration Economies (Homework)

Write a blank verse poem of at least 7 lines that describes your understanding of the economic rationale for the existence of cities discussed in class. Your poem would ideally incorporate one or more of the important scale or agglomeration economies concepts.

I am poor citizen! Gentrification
A term with a scary resonance, for me it is!
Those who, at the end of the month,
Hardly their bills are paid!
Fear on my face! Staring at my well-off new neighbors
With them they brought! Investors, shop owners, real estate agents
Those whose power stimulate the economy
More rich people, more resources, better quality of life!
Am I supposed to be reassured, satisfied?
Better food, better education they claiming
Until when? My fear is to wake up and be kicked out!
In a city that is upgrading from lacking to well-off!
My city officials like it , eageded by these changes
Screaming more revenues!
Gentrification a vitamin to my city, a distress to my life!

Mbake Faye

Small town America is falling off the map,
Deserted farms, run down factories, and
textile scraps,
Not much better than the hoods the ghettos,
and the traps.
Cities and towns on the verge of bankruptcy,
Population decline due to the lack of
sustainable industry.
These 7 lines culminate into a brief dissent,
On how economics fails to fully address
the concentration of wealth by the top one
percent.

Elijah Romulus

a few small houses, in a row
beside a field, with seeds to sow.
a factory moves in next door,
more people than we've seen before.
more people still, move to our town
the jobs for factory work abounds.
new businesses are creeping in,
feeding, clothing, teaching children.
one factory has grown to many,
each one makes a pretty penny.
costs are low, production high,
all you need, it's right nearby.
our little town was itty bitty,
now it's grown to a giant city.

Kaitie Butler

The planes, the trains, the automobile lanes
A high concentration of mighty brains
The ease of transport from one place to next
Low costs for inputs, no need to be vexed
These clusters make marginal costs go down
While profits bring life to cities, not towns

Our cities have grown while our towns lose might
Population decline - a curse, alright
Efficiency is high where costs are slim
Which makes the prospects for small towns seem dim
By pooling their might, they'll avert that fate
At last, here's that rhyme for agglomerate!

Tech Leng

In Park City, Utah, silver was King.
For nearly 100 years,
A town built on mining.
Miner's pick, pick, pick,
The population booms.
Did anyone know silver would be
The little town's doom?

1951: It's a "Ghost Town of the West"
But Park City has been twice-blessed.
A little ski jump
Was built on the old mine dump...
A new "company town" emerges,
Park City's skiing industry surges.
Now business is good
Ski shops and retail open in the neighborhood.
In 2002, town residents
The Olympics would behold.

And once again, all that glitters is gold.

Christina Schlegel

You see the blinking lights along the shore
And realize this growth came out of war.
The days of opium came first of all,
Before the Brits made this a port of call.
Then traders came from far and wide,
Where commerce and cheap labor did collide.
A perfect port in Asia's marketplace,
While capitalist values it embraced.
Then retail stores began to coalesce,
And growth that was not easy to suppress.
But now Hong Kong is China's once again,
We'll see how that affects the market trend.

Monique Ching

People pine for people, and they also need to shop.
They demand investment in the roads, the schools, and cops;
Many will request much more: events, town halls, street sweeps.
None of these beloved systems or goods are cheap,
Economies of scale make possible to offer
Amenities, paid for from municipal coffers.
As more people cluster, easier it is
To meet the needs, attract more biz.

Lauren Shuffleton

A Tale of Retail Agglomeration

In my downtown there was a group of local shops
Filled with specialized goods and run by the moms and pops
Then a ways down the road, a big old mall was built
Teens they gathered, food court drinks were spilt;
And of course the shopping preferences began to tilt

Along with that mall, came Walmart and Costco
Lower prices and convenience; made it a must go
With spatial concentration influencing where to shop
My downtown center is empty and businesses did flop
The mall and discount shops came out the victor
That's of course until our friend, Amazon, entered the picture

A new retail agglomeration ready to strike
That's faster, easier; you're guaranteed to find what you like.
"It's death to malls! Down with big box stores!" declared from online
Those businesses now closing; they too need adjusting
Trying to keep up with the ever-changing consumer mind

But could there be a spark of hope?
Reversing the fate of the local shop mope
In my downtown the small shops reemerged
Again they gather for personal experiences and a unique good

Olivia Percy

NEOCLASSICAL ASSUMPTIONS

(Homework)

Imagine a situation or instance in your own life that violates one of the failed assumptions of the neoclassical model. Describe the real-life example you have chosen using the following formats: A single paragraph in short answer form, and a short original poem in metered verse of at least 6 lines.

A situation in my own life that violates the neoclassical model's assumption of perfect information is waiting for the bus. Recently, I've had a couple of situations in which I've been waiting for the bus to come and have used an app on my phone called NextBus. The app may say that the bus is coming in 15 minutes, but the bus actually arrives in 25 minutes. While I may have planned enough time to get to my destination based on a bus arrival time of 15 minutes, I may not have planned enough time to get to my destination with a bus arrival time of 25 minutes, resulting in my being late to my appointment. In this situation, I did not have perfect information, although I tried to obtain as much information as I could (using the app). The neoclassical model may assume that a person should be able to get to their destination on time, given that they have "perfect information," but given the variations of timing caused by different traffic conditions and delays, perfect information can be extremely hard to come by, even with the help of technology.

I planned enough time - but what! But what!
The bus won't come - why not! Why not!
It says it's here - but it's late, I fear.
My hands are cold, my legs might fold.
The man next to me smells like beer.
...I might get there this time next year.

Elizabeth Gohringer

A farmer has a budget of \$400/week to employ workers. He has the following pool to hire from: 1. Masters students who are seeking to earn \$15/hour, 2. High school students who are seeking to earn \$10/hour 3. Migrant workers who are seeking to earn \$5/hour. He decides to hire a migrant worker and pay \$10/hour. This violates the neoclassical assumption that firms will be as monetarily efficient as possible. The migrant worker would have been satisfied by earning half as much. Additionally, if he would have paid the asking price, he could have hired another migrant worker, and increased his labor force by 33%. Based on these facts, the farmer is being irrational. However, with more information, we can come to understand this farmer's rational. The farmer also knows that both the masters and high school students will not have the time to focus on farm activities. The migrant worker will be able to focus solely on farming. He also knows that if he pays the migrant worker \$5/hour, they will have enough to feed their family back home, but will have to sleep in a tent city. With \$10/hour, rent can be afforded at a low income housing unit. From the farmer's standpoint, the improvements in living conditions for the worker is well worth the reward in that the worker will be healthier and happier. Knowing that their business is supporting the livelihood of one individual brings the farmer the greatest joy, or the most utility.

To pay a migrant
A living wage even though
They would work for less
Neoclassical
Theorists would call you a fool
Who's Irrational?

Matt Hinds

I used to think Girl Scout Cookies were wholesomely made and not highly processed, because they're supporting a good organization, they taste good, and even on the website under their recipes section for Girl Scouts cookies inspired recipes, the ingredients listed look wholesome (in the sense that they contained only natural cookie making ingredients like milk, flour, eggs, etc). However, I did not have perfect information on what I was consuming until I recently read the ingredients myself on a box of Caramel deLites. I found out there were many processed ingredients like sorbitol and glycerin in the cookies. Had I known this before, I would not have made the decision to consume the cookies. However after knowing this and being grossed out I was eating something soap is made of along with other ingredients that negatively impacts my body when ingested, I made an irrational choice and ate 2 more deLites, before vowing to not eat Girl Scout cookies anymore.

I used to love Girl Scout Cookies
Until I found they were not filled with goodies
Damn it, market assumption of perfect information
Eating sorbitol can give you constipation
Now I must be rational and stop this consumption
One more bite though, no hesitation

Koko Li

Spending my money on bad coffee and wasteful and environmentally harmful packaging is hard to resist - even before I step on the MBTA en route to Tufts, I pass within a 45-second walking detour of two neighborhood Dunkin Donuts locations. While I enjoy great coffee, I don't insist on indulging that preference every day and consume coffee primarily for the caffeine. At home, I possess all the equipment and ingredients to make (marginally) better tasting, less wasteful, comparably caffeinating, and lower-priced coffee, and in a comparable amount of time to waiting in line. By frequenting these two neighborhood DD spots, I routinely violate the assumption of rational self-interest by undermining my deeply-held preferences to save money, be caffeinated, and consume in a less wasteful manner. So why do I buy coffee every day? I do so because of the utility I gain from convenience, from loyalty to employees who accommodate my consistently inconsistent orders, and from the connections I make by participating in my local economy.



Caffeine, my vice, is all that keeps me sane
for me, for all who ride the 'T' in pain
We feed this need to numb the agony

Of screeching trains, delays, and man-spread knees

But rationality is not my game
Home brew or buy, it's not the same. But look!
A Dunks looms near, its joy awaits my brain
I'll blunt the pain and watch my balance drain

Tech Leng



Prior to reading *The Omnivore's Dilemma* I frequently purchased “cage free” and “free range” eggs (The Country Hen eggs, among others). Although I was fully aware that these eggs typically cost 25-50% more than standard eggs, I was under the impression that by spending an extra \$1 per carton of eggs I purchased, I was supporting The Country Hen's efforts to provide their chickens with “a comfortable, cage free existence with access to the outdoors and a diet of the very best things a chicken could desire.” As it turns out, I was not fully informed about the regulatory processes, or in this case the lack thereof, associated with the terms “cage free” and “free range” eggs. As I later learned, these terms could mean as little as the fact that 1000 chickens living in a cramped warehouse or barn may have “access” to a single door at one end of the barn, open for only 2 hours per day, which provides access to an area of green space so small that only 10 chickens can fit outside at a time. Had I been aware of this information at the time of my purchase, I would not have chosen to spend the additional money on “cage free” and “free range” eggs. Considering that “acting independently on the basis of full information” is one of the assumptions of the neoclassical model of rationality, it is fair to say that this assumption was violated in this situation. Nowadays, I try to avoid purchasing eggs from the grocery store, and instead purchase them from local farmer's markets where I can speak to farm owners directly.

Imagining chickens, caged and unwell
I took out my wallet, “Oh what the hell”
These eggs, yes they cost more, but what's a price?
If money buys humane treatment, that's nice.

To my chagrin I discovered the lie
“Cage free” and “free range”, just pie in the sky
With no regulation, these terms are vague
How then to know the true price of an egg?

Lauren Lynch

Choosing a Field Project team for the UEP Field Projects class violates the perfect information assumptions of the Neoclassical model of understanding human motivations. It is difficult to make a fully formed rational choice about which project may be the best fit knowing that the description is only a general idea, the project in flux, and the scope of the work may change many times over the course of the project. When choosing a Field Project the students do not have perfect information. They may have an idea of which project sounds exciting and seems like it will utilize their skills and talents, while in practice the project takes different skills and a different direction than initially intended. Another part of the unknown information is group dynamic. When applying, a student doesn't know who the other team members will be, and how those different personalities, strengths, and styles will affect the team. In addition to the scope of the project changing, and interactions between the team affecting the project; the third piece of imperfect information is how the client will interact with the team. The personal interactions between the team and the client add another unknown layer of dynamics that may change the outcome of the final project. Though students don't have perfect information to choose a project they can still make a decision informed by what they do know, their own personal skills, work style, and passions around specific topics.

Contemplating Perfect Information: An Ode to Field Projects

loose project topics vie for center stage
designing districts, land trusts, roads to pave
imperfect information's all we have
oh how do we collate and form a plan?
as group dynamics shift our views expand
we move our project forward, not too slow
revising expectations as we go.

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski

