**ECONOMICS**

***Freakonomics* In-Class writing NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Directions:**

**- Answer FIVE of the following questions**

**- If you prefer, you may answer in outline / list / bullet point form.**

**- Furnish accurate and precise information.**

**- You may discuss the questions as a small group, but each individual must submit his/her own answers.**

**Remember these fundamental ideas offered in the video:**

* ***Incentives are the corner stone of modern life.***
* ***The conventional wisdom is often wrong.***
* ***Dramatic effects often have distant, even subtle, causes.***
* ***“Experts”—from criminologists to real-estate agents—use their informational advantage to serve their own agenda.***
* ***Knowing what to measure and how to measure it makes a complicated world much less so.***

**1. Identify the incentives your peers have for cheating. Include positive incentives and negative (disincentives) for cheating. This can be regarding academic, athletic, social, or in the workplace. Propose an incentive (positive and/or negative) to decrease or eliminate the cheating you have identified. You may propose more than one.**

**2. Illustrate how a college or university could use their informational advantage to serve their own agenda, in their selecting a freshman class. Identify their informational advantage and conversely the incoming freshman’s disadvantage. Explain how their agenda may differ from that of the freshman. Explain how it could be used to pursue their interests at the cost of the freshman’s interests.**

**3. Explain what incentives, if any, a university might have to artificially improve the test scores and grades of its athletes.**

**4. Describe what it means for a Japanese sumo wrestler to be “on the bubble” and what incentives this wrestler and his opponent may have to “throw” a match.**

**5. Summarize the argument by Donahue and Levitt regarding the relationship between the drop in crime in the 1990s and the legalization of abortion as a result of Roe v. Wade. Your summary should focus on such factors as the characteristics of the average criminal (e.g., average age, home life); what happened in states that legalized abortion prior to the decision in Roe v. Wade, and the type of woman who is likely to take advantage of Roe v. Wade.**

**6. What do the experiences of *Winner Lane*, *Loser Lane*, and *Temptress* tell us about the likely relationship between a child’s name and his/her prospects for success in life? Are these examples sufficient for us to draw any definitive conclusions? Why or why not? Does having a very “white” name or a very “black” name matter? Do you think there are high-end and low-end names?**

**7. Describe some ways in which a school teacher might be able to improve the scores of his or her students on a standardized test. The last segment of the video focused on the experiment to bribe 9th graders to get better grades. What do you think would happen if teachers received “performance-based incentives” (= $$$) based on their students’ grades / performance on standardized tests (APs, SATs, ACTs, etc)?**

**8. What were some of the most convincing arguments put forth in *Freakonomics*? What were some of the least convincing?**