

Economics 3710
Economic Analysis of Canadian Public Issues
Spring 2008

Thursday, January 10, 2008

Readings: *Freakonomics*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Discussion Questions #2

Chapter 3

1. What is conventional wisdom? Why isn't this type of wisdom questioned more?
2. What are the incentives that people have to perpetuate misinformation? Should we listen to the advocates for the homeless, women, and other groups?
3. Why do people enter risky occupations such as drug dealing, acting, music or sports?
4. Why did crack cocaine increase in popularity in the 1980s in the United States (and perhaps elsewhere)?
5. Why is crime so often associated with violence? Surely in non-criminal activities there are similar issues but much less violence. Why?
6. How would you propose reducing the crime that is associated with crack cocaine and other drugs?

Chapter 4

7. Why is the link between abortions and crime so controversial?
8. How can an increase in the number of prison spots lead to an increase in measurable crime?
9. What are some of the costs associated with a ban on abortion?
10. How is causality between abortion and crime demonstrated in the book?