

JOHN M. LYNHAM
lynham@econ.ucsb.edu
<http://www.econ.ucsb.edu/~lynham/>

Contact Information

North Hall 2120
University of California,
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9210

Cell: 805-252-2796
Office: 805-893-6073
Fax: 805-893-8830

Citizenship: Ireland

Undergraduate Studies:

B.A., Economics, Trinity College, University of Dublin, *First Class Honors*, 1999-2003

Graduate Studies:

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of California Santa Barbara, 2003 to present

Thesis Title: “*Essays on Information and Natural Resources*”

Committee: Chris Costello (co-chair), Bob Deacon (co-chair), Gary Charness, Doug Steigerwald

Expected Completion Date: June 2008

M.A. Candidate in Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology, UCSB, 2006 to present

Thesis Title: “*Marine Reserves as Tools to Reduce Epistemic and Aleatory Uncertainty*”

Thesis Advisor: Steve Gaines

Expected Completion Date: June 2008

Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Environmental and Resource Economics, Applied Microeconomics
Secondary fields: Experimental Economics, Behavioral Economics, Marine Ecology

Teaching Experience:

Summer 2005: Instructor of Record, Department of Economics, UCSB
Principles of Microeconomics

Fall 2003-Spring 2005: Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, UCSB
Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory, Experiments with Economic Principles,
Principles of Microeconomics

Professional Activities:

Referee: *Economica*, *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*

Presentations: NBER Summer Institute on Environmental Economics (2007), CU
Environmental and Resource Economics Workshop (2007), American
Fisheries Society Annual Meeting (2007), Growth of Gambling and Prediction
Markets Conference (2007), Occasional California Workshop in
Environmental and Resource Economics (2006), American Agricultural
Economics Association Annual Meeting (2006), World Congress of
Environmental and Resource Economics (2006)

Grants: “Incentive Structures and Procrastination”, Russell Sage Foundation, 2007-
2008, (\$2,500), Principal Investigator
“Responsibility Alleviation Effects in the Commons”, UCSB Economics
Department Research Grant, 2006, (\$500), Principal Investigator

Honors and Fellowships:

Academic: Departmental Distinguished Research Paper Award, UCSB, 2006
Graduate USAP Fellowship, UCSB, 2005
Regents International Student Fellowship, UCSB, 2003-2005

Teaching: Department of Economics Outstanding TA Award for Finn Kydland's
Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory class, 2005
Office of Residential Life Outstanding TA Award, UCSB, 03/04 and 04/05

Research Papers:

"Using New Entrants to Identify Information Spillovers" (**Job Market Paper**)

Whilst the study of uncertainty has a long history in resource economics, there has been less attention paid to endogenous efforts to reduce uncertainty through learning and information acquisition. An unresolved question in modeling the extraction of a natural resource is the degree to which individual extractors learn from the behavior of other extractors. The question is difficult to resolve because there is always the possibility that an unobserved influence on an individual extractor happens to be correlated with the behavior of other extractors. The difficulty is further compounded by the fact that an unobserved influence on one individual indirectly affects everyone that is influenced by that individual. We propose an identification strategy to overcome this concern by isolating individuals who have strong incentives to pay attention to their peer group but who do not influence their peer group. The approach seems well-suited to natural resources that experience a *gold rush* of new entrants. Fueled by a booming Japanese economy, the northern California sea urchin fishery experienced a surge of new entrants in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We use these new entrants to cleanly identify strong information spillovers.

"A Field Experiment on Studying and Procrastination" (with Nick Burger and Gary Charness)

We investigate the effect of paying students to complete 75 hours of studying at a monitored location over a five-week period. Students were recruited both from a large introductory class and from students in the regular experimental subject pool. In one treatment, the 75 hours of studying must be composed of at least 12 hours during the first week, at least 24 hours by the end of the second week, etc. In the second treatment, 75 hours of studying must be completed, but there were no weekly studying requirements. While our *ex ante* prediction was that imposing a weekly structure would help procrastinating students avoid getting too far behind, we instead find that a higher proportion of students achieve the 75-hour target in the time-unstructured treatment. The patterns of study time show a pronounced weekly cycle; remarkably, this pattern is almost identical for both treatments. While we cannot reject the models of quasi-hyperbolic discounting, these patterns seem more consistent with the notion of willpower. Finally, we find evidence that, over time, students who achieve the studying goal improve their performance in the introductory class relative to those students who did not.

"Betting on Weight Loss ... And Losing: Personal Gambles as Commitment Mechanisms" (with Nick Burger)

We investigate an unusual commitment mechanism used to overcome self-control problems: betting on one's ability to lose weight. Despite payoffs of as high as \$6,000, approximately 80 percent of people who make such bets lose them. We present a model, based on the time-inconsistency literature, to explain why people lose so frequently and why attempting an eventually unsuccessful bet might be beneficial. One of the predictions of the model is that breaking a costly task (such as winning a weight bet) into a series of smaller tasks increases the probability of completing the task. Empirical analysis of a weight loss betting market confirms this prediction: the bookmaker sets the price of a bet to account for the time-inconsistency of the bettor. Our results suggest that successful incentives for weight loss depend as much on the temporal structure of the incentives as on the actual magnitude.

Research Papers in Progress

"Information Effects in a Dynamic Cournot-Nash Model of Renewable Resource Extraction"

"The Responsibility Alleviation Effect in a Prisoner's Dilemma Game"

"Argh, Matey, You Found My Incentive!" (with Nick Burger)

"Income-Targeting and the Evolution of a Fishery" (with David Siegel and Chris Costello)

"Optimal Stock Assessment" (with Chris Costello)

"Quality not Quantity: The Role of Spatial and Temporal Experience in Fishing Productivity"

Popular Press:

"The Tragedy of the 'Con", *The Surfer's Path*, **61**, p. 130.

Thesis Committee and References:

Professor Chris Costello (Co-chair)
Donald Bren School of Environmental Science &
Management
4410 Bren Hall, UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-5131
Phone: 805-893-5802
Email: costello@bren.ucsb.edu

Professor Gary Charness
Department of Economics
2127 North Hall, UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9210
Phone: 805-893-2412
Email: charness@econ.ucsb.edu

Professor Bob Deacon (Co-chair)
Department of Economics
2127 North Hall
UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9210
Phone: 805-893-3679
Email: deacon@econ.ucsb.edu

Professor Doug Steigerwald
Department of Economics
2127 North Hall, UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9210
Phone: 805-893-3151
Email: doug@econ.ucsb.edu