

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, November 4, 2013

Where: JMHH 255

When: 12:00 noon to 1:20 PM

Daniel Benjamin

Associate Professor

Economics Department, Cornell University

The Promises and Pitfalls of Genoeconomics

ABSTRACT: This talk will provide an overview of the emerging field of research at the intersection of genetics and economics. Specifically, the talk will survey the main ways that the direct measurement of genetic variation across individuals is likely to contribute to economics, outline the challenges that have slowed progress in making these contributions, and present some new findings that illustrate the state of genoeconomics research. The most urgent problem facing researchers in this field is that most existing efforts to find associations between genetic variation and economic behavior are based on samples that are too small to ensure adequate statistical power. This has led to many false positives in the literature. The talk will survey and illustrate a number of possible strategies to improve and remedy this problem: (a) pooling data sets, (b) using statistical techniques that exploit the greater information content of many genes considered jointly, and (c) focusing on economically relevant traits that are most proximate to known biological mechanisms.