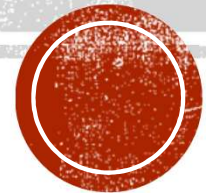


THE COUNTRY MUSIC GUIDE TO MACROECONOMICS

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INTRODUCTION

- Generally speaking, educators want to make learning fun and memorable.
- Simulations, games, and experiments have been part of economics education for decades, and will continue to be a staple for the foreseeable future.
- However, in the last 10-20 years, the community has embraced popular media to aid in teaching and learning.
 - *Seinfeld* (Ghent et al. 2011)
 - *The Office* (Kuester et al. 2014)
 - *Parks & Rec* (Wooten 2019)
 - 10 Greatest Films for Economics (Mateer et al. 2016)
 - Economics Media Library (Wooten 2018)



INTRODUCTION

- Film and TV clips can be amazing ways to illustrate the ‘real-world’ application of economic theory and models.
 - However, students may need background information to understand the clip.
- On the other hand, music and its lyrics are a self-contained story.
 - Broadway Economics (Rousu 2016)
 - K-pop (Wooten et al. 2020)



COUNTRY MUSIC

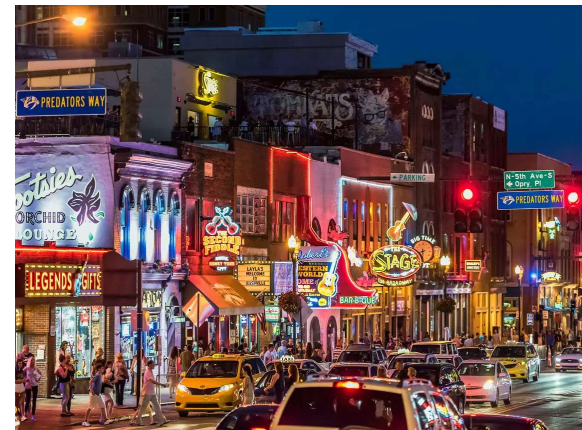
- Possible skepticism...
 - Most of my students are from urban areas
 - 18-22 year-olds listen to pop, hip hop, etc.
- As we all know, things go in and out of fashion.





Nashville

- 2014: 11 million visitors
- 2023: 16.8 million visitors



HOW TO USE MUSIC TO TEACH

1. Pre-lecture or during lecture
2. In-class assessment
 - Discussion
 - Think-Pair-Share
 - Polling (Kahoot!, Poll Everywhere, etc.)
3. Homework and group projects
 - Analyze lyrics in a more robust manner, possibly with data
 - Rockonomics



THE COUNTRY MUSIC GUIDE TO MACRO

- Example songs that can be interwoven into Principles of Macroeconomics.
- Common topics in a ECON 101 syllabus:
 - Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
 - Unemployment Rate
 - Inflation
 - Savings and interest rates
 - Economic growth
 - Fiscal Policy
 - Monetary Policy
- Econ Gone Country (<http://www.econgonecountry.com/>)



GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

- GDP is one of the most important and widely cited statistics in economics.
 - Provides an objective measure of standards of living.
- What are some of its shortcomings?
- “...it (GDP) measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.” (Robert F. Kennedy, 1968)
- “Rich and Miserable” by Kenny Chesney

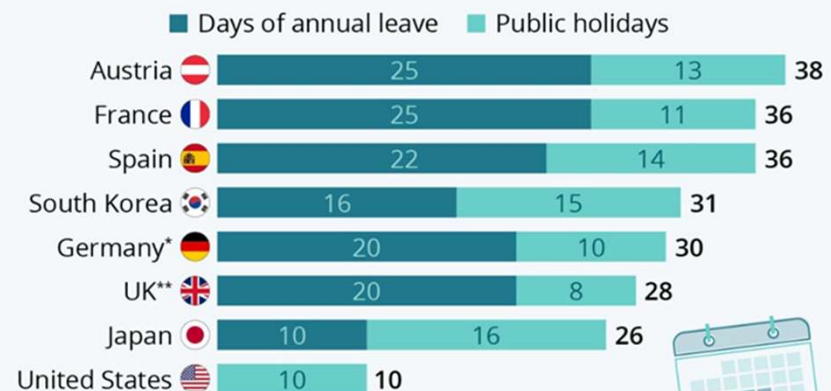


GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

- Life expectancy (2023)
 - United States: 57th
- World Happiness Report (2024)
 - United States: 23rd
- Statutory minimum paid vacation
 - United States: zero

The Time Off Work Employees Are Entitled to

Statutory minimum paid leave and public holidays in selected countries in 2020



* Up to 14 public holidays depending on state/municipality

** Northern Ireland: 10 public holidays

Full-time employees with at least one year of tenure with employer

Source: OECD



statista



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

- “A Simple Song” by Chris Stapleton

“Lately things are on my mind
Good news is hard to find
And I work on the factory line
And all I do is stay behind...

I finally saved some money up
'Til I had to fix my truck

Tryin' to quit these cigarettes
I can't seem to kick them yet
Sister got laid off last fall
And I got high cholesterol”



THINK-PAIR-SHARE

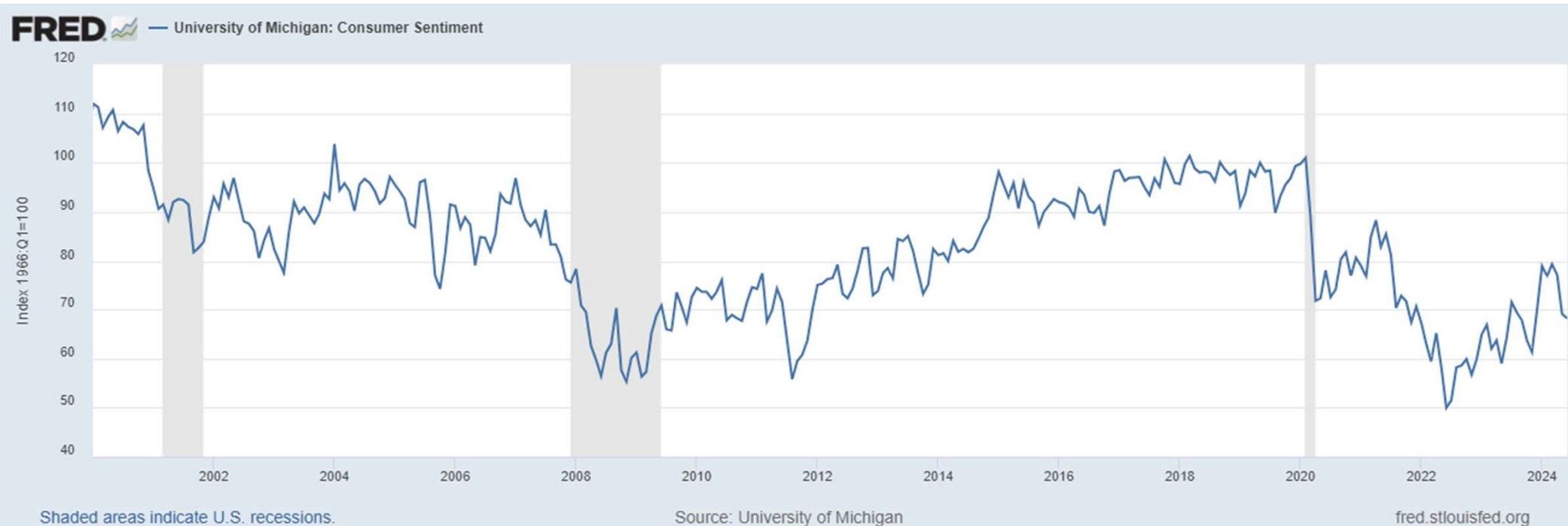
*Note: assume you have covered what the BLS defines as employment and what it means to be unemployed.

- Is the man singing considered employed or unemployed? What if he only works 20 hours a week?
- Is the man's sister unemployed? Is she part of the labor force?
- Do you think the headline unemployment rate (U-3) provides a good estimate of the strength or weakness of our job market? Why or why not?



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

- Roughly 3/4 of all economic activity in the U.S. comes from the consumer.
- What are some of the factors which may influence how consumers feel about the prospects of the U.S. economy?



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

- “Strange” by Miranda Lambert

“Coyotes on my left and wolves on my right
Sun keeps shining in the middle of the night
Urban feels suburban, Main Street ain't Main, yeah
And times like these make me feel strange

A Lincoln came and a Jefferson went
Money on a Maytag and the thing won't spin
Couple hundred dollars feels more like change, yeah
And times like these make me feel strange”



ASSIGNMENT

- Listen to “Taking the Temperature of the US consumer” from *The Indicator from Planet Money* and answer the following questions.
 - Who is responsible for the Survey of Consumers? How long has the survey been in existence?
 - What is strange about recent survey results?
 - How does Miranda Lambert’s “Strange” relate to the podcast? Provide some lyrics to strengthen your answer.
 - How do you personally feel about the future prospects of the US economy? Will things get better, worse, or stay the same? Why do you feel this way?



THE INDICATOR FROM PLANET MONEY

npr Network



ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Possibly the most important topic in Macroeconomics, but what are the factors which influence economic growth?

Economic growth

- Factors of production (inputs)
 - Land
 - Labor
 - Capital
 - Technology



ECONOMIC GROWTH

- “Scarecrow in the Garden” by Chris Stapleton

“Well, he came from Northern Ireland
Searchin' for the free man's ground
And he came to bet his fortune
On a West Virginia plow

He built a house of timber
And raised a redhead son
Then they worked the land together
And prayed the rain would come...

And the fields were green as dollars
'Cause the dirt was black as night

The fields ain't what they once were
The rains just seem to flood”



ASSIGNMENT (PPF & ECON GROWTH)

1. Why did so many European immigrants come to the United States from 1860 – 1920?
 - a) What was the Homestead Act? How does it relate to Chris Stapleton's "Scarecrow in the garden"?
 - b) Using the PPF model, illustrate what happened to the US economy from 1860 – 1920 when European immigrants arrived.
2. Please read the [CNBC article](#) "Immigration is 'taking pressure off' the job market and U.S. economy" and answer the following questions.
 - a) Looking forward, what benefits does new immigration offer to the U.S. economy? Illustrate this in the PPF model.
 - b) On the flip side, why do some criticize recent immigrant?
 - c) What are your opinions on the subject?



CONCLUSION

- Country music can be a low-cost and efficient way to add more ‘real-world’ content that students find relatable and memorable.
 - Country music is arguably more popular than ever, and some of the world’s most famous artists are crossing over to the genre.
- This paper hopes to provide a more comprehensive list of country music songs and instructional material for a standard Principles of Macroeconomics course.
- Many instructional methods exist to incorporate music and other media into your classroom; do what works best for you!!!



THANK YOU!!!

