



Smith Institute for
Political Economy
and Philosophy



HUMANOMICS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

January 2025
Issue 1

WELCOME

Welcome to the first iteration of the *Humanomics Alumni Newsletter*. [Dare we call it the *HumanAlumnomics Newsletter*? Okay, too much.] But the “Welcome” stands. We anticipate the newsletter as a space to provide information, inspiration, and continued conversation amongst a group of people who want to engage with the intersections of economics, literature, and philosophy. Humanomics alums who want to be in a space of inquiry, who not only tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty but sometimes revel in the often contradictory and paradoxical nature of human thought and enterprise.

We anticipate, too, that the newsletter will be by and for the Humanomics community, so we invite you to submit pieces on ideas and issues that we might think about together – thinkpieces, if you will. We also invite you to submit memes [this will make sense below], to be in the *Alumni Spotlight*, to suggest books we might read together, and pretty much anything else you would like in terms of a newsletter that reflects Humanomics, helping us remember our shared past and create a community for the future.

If you have ideas regarding any of these suggestions, please email Jan Osborn [josborn@chapman.edu] to start the process. We welcome your ideas, your questions, your suggestions, your voices. See . . . the “Welcome” stands.

Prose and eCons

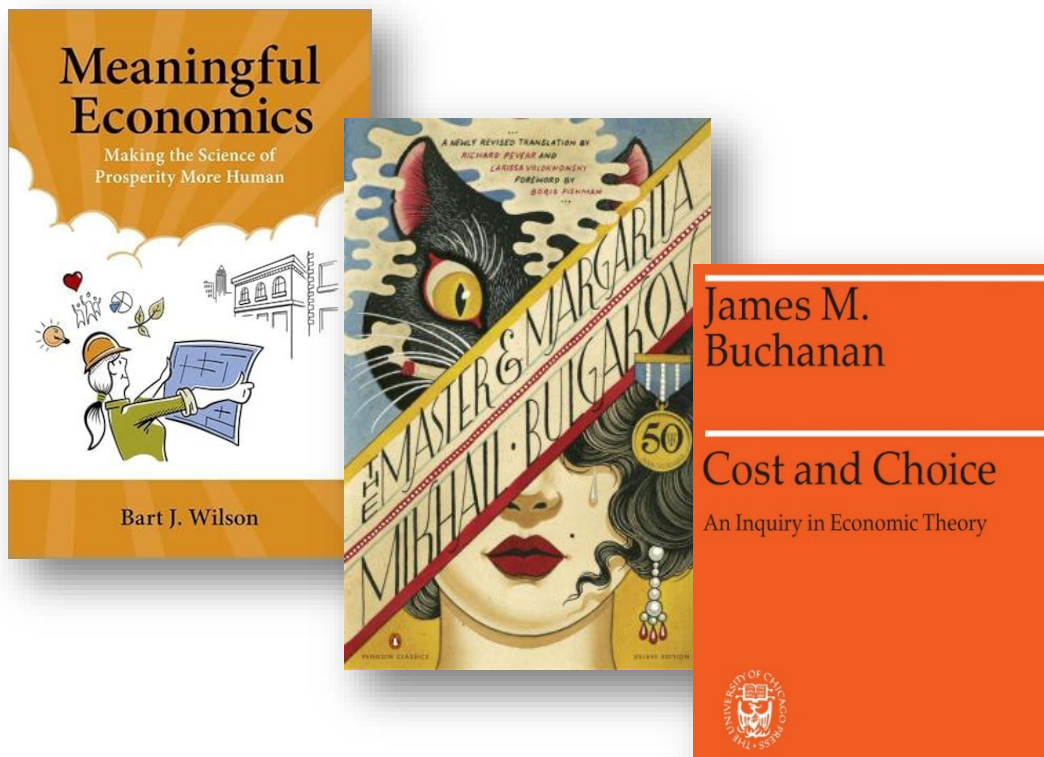
Let's Continue the Conversation

The eighth bi-annual Humanomics Alumni Colloquium [April 4-5, 2025] will explore questions of choice, asking essential questions, such as, “What is the nature of human choice? What are costs in the act of choosing? If choice is always shaped by context and alternatives, how is it “free”? Can the novel’s exploration of moral ambiguity and redemption expand the theory of choice in economics? How does Buchanan’s framework of subjective cost and individual valuation help us understand the profound stakes in Bulgakov’s narrative? What does meaning have to do with it?

“I don’t have any special talents, just an ordinary desire to live like a human being.”

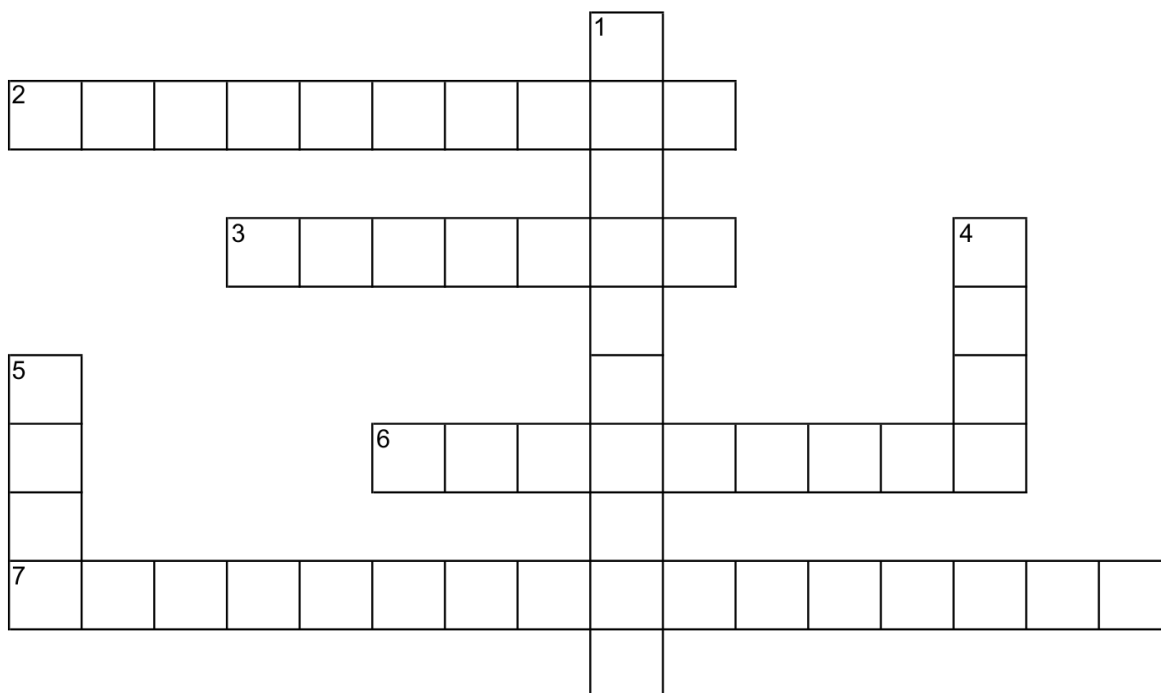
-Mikhail Bulgakov,
The Master and Margarita

Visit [Alumni Colloquium](#) for details and be sure to register by February 5.



HUMANOMICS MINI...

eat your heart out NYT



Down:

1. portmanteau of humanities and economics
4. what makes a rich nation _____
5. what makes a good person _____

Across:

2. Paul Betty's satirical novel featured in the first Alumni Colloquium
3. a Steinbeck character who says, "Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there."
6. who said "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable."
7. author of the Bourgeois Virtues

A warm-up puzzle. If you would like to up the level for the next newsletter, please email josborn@chapman.edu.

Crossword is fillable in the PDF.

Best in Class [Fall 2024]

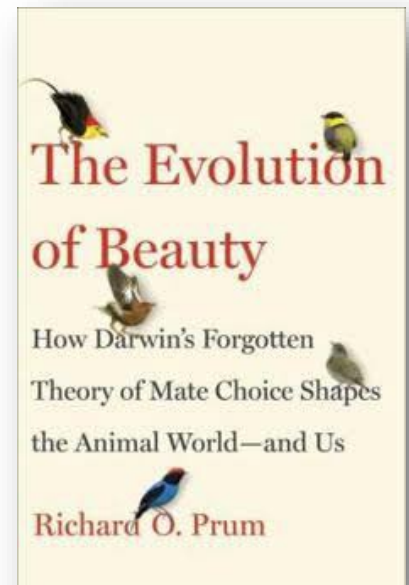
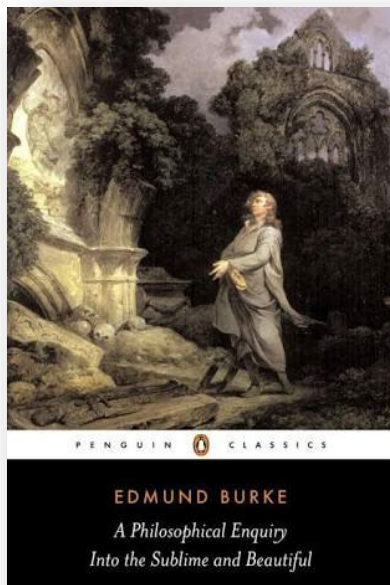
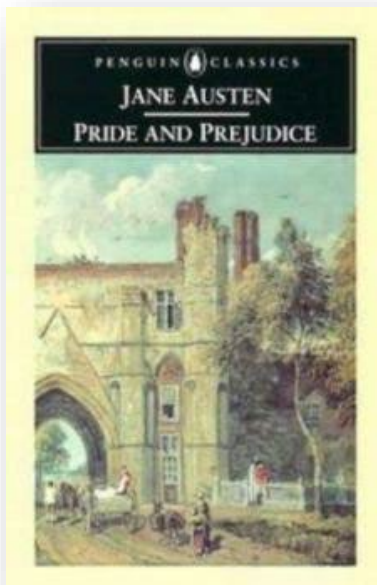
ECON/ENG/PHIL 357 *Topics in Humanomics*

Beauty Matters: Sex, Evolution, Romance and the Marriage Market

Professors Sean Crockett and Michael Valdez Moses created a class to explore beauty this past fall. With their students they asked serious questions about beauty:

- Is beauty defined according to relativistic and arbitrary cultural norms or are human conceptions of beauty universal and naturally determined?
- Do standards of beauty have an appropriate role in a fair and just society?
- Is there such a thing as non-human beauty, and embodiment of a spiritual value that transcends ordinary notions of human attractiveness?

You might want to read some of the texts they used to explore these questions:





First Year Foundations: *Humanomics*
Choice in Economics and *The Sandman*

Professors Katharine Gillespie and Bart Wilson offered the incoming first-year students an opportunity to think about choice. They began with the assertions that

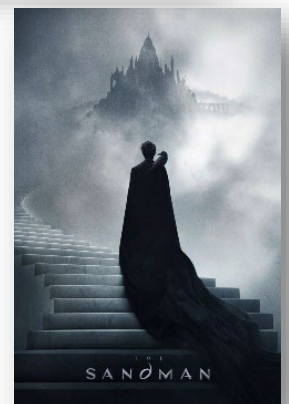
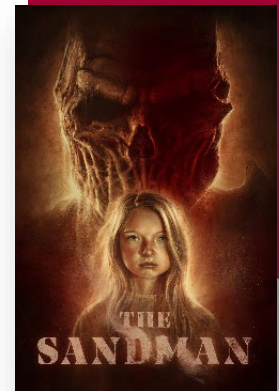
- to be human is to choose
- humans change as they choose, and
- humans must face the consequences of their choices

To engage the students with these ideas, the professors chose Neil Gaiman's graphic novel collection, *The Sandman*. In conversation with economist Lionel Robbins' "An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science," which argues that economics is "fundamentally distinct from ethics," the class considered Gaiman's characters, such as Dream, their ethics, and the changes determined by their choices.

"What does it mean for economic science and the human condition," the professors asked, "that humans are beings who choose and change?"

"Tales and dreams are the shadow-truths that will endure when mere facts are dust and ashes and forgot."

(Dream)





Appreciation

How about a Huma-meme-ec?

If you want a real meme, create one yourself
and email it to josborn@chapman.edu.

See you in April!

Chapman.edu/smith-institute



Next Issue:
April 2025