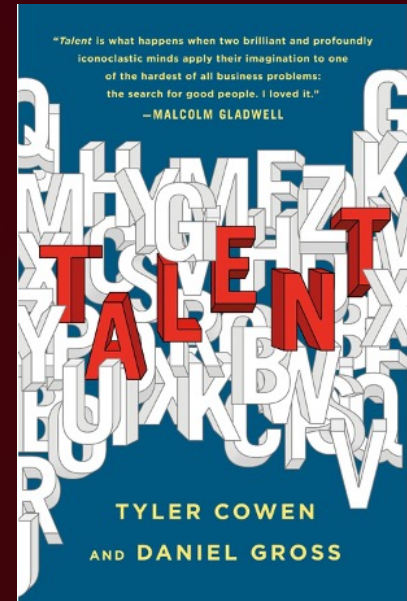
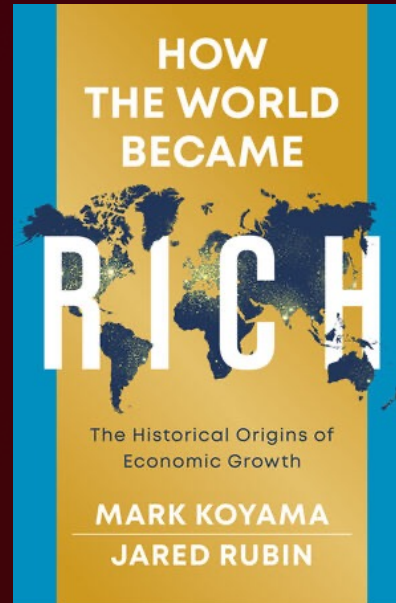
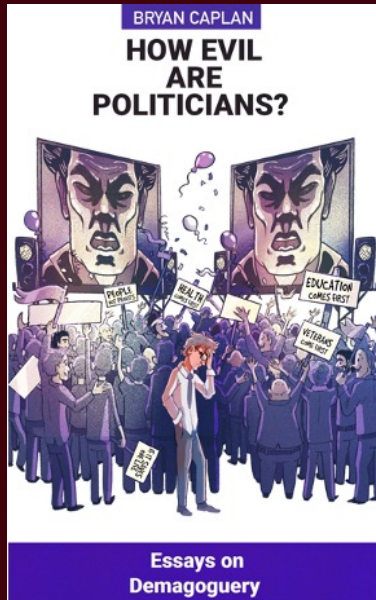




## CENTER FOR STUDY OF PUBLIC CHOICE

— CSPS —



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021-2022

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



In February I had the opportunity to talk about Constitutional Economics and Public Choice on the [Ezra Klein podcast](#) (take a listen!) Here's my introduction to Public Choice for Ezra's New York Times audience:

*Public choice is economists doing political science. And it basically says, what if we think about politics the same*

*way we think about markets, which is that people are generally self-interested. When people move from the marketplace to work in government, they don't suddenly become angels. Like Madison said, we wouldn't need a government if everyone were angels. Instead, they come with all of the same types of self-interested motivations. Some of them want power. Some of them want to do good. Some of them just want wealth perhaps, all kinds of things.*

*So we ask, well, what if people in government are self-interested? And when you think about what Buchanan called politics without romance, I think you do become less enamored with what is possible because you begin to see that it's not good enough to say, here's something good that we want. Let's just pass a law. You actually have to say, the people who are responsible for not just passing the law, but implementing the law, will they have the incentives which are necessary to actually make the law effective? And quite often, the answer to that is no.*

The January 6 protests/riots/insurrection/coup—in reality, a little bit of each depending on which players we are talking

about—has underlined the importance of Public Choice and Constitutional Economics. Part of the problem is that Congress is the most democratic and representative part of government, but—for precisely those reasons—Congress is the part of government least capable of vigorous action in our diverse society. As a result, the public becomes dissatisfied with the seeming impossibility of uniting to solve problems. The demand for action then flows to the President and also to the Courts which can act quickly and with vigor but these are the least democratic and representative parts of the system. Do we have the balance between representation and vigor correct? How can we design institutions to balance but respect both demands?

Elsewhere in this report you will find material on our Virtual Outreach Seminar and our very first Ideas on India Conference in Political Economy!

I'd also point to our spotlight on Center faculty member Mark Koyama and his superb new book (with Jared Rubin) *How the World Became Rich: The Historical Origins of Economic Growth*, the best survey and overview of this vital question!

Many more accomplishments from our faculty are detailed in the pages herein.

*Alex Tabarrok*

July 2022





## SPOTLIGHT ON MARK KOYAMA



**Y**our new book (with Jared Ruben), *How the World Became Rich*, is a comprehensive overview on the history of economic growth, why was it important to write it in this way?

The topic of the origins of economic growth is important and it has been the subject of

an immense amount of scholarly literature in the last 20 years. But many of the excellent recent books out there - like *Why Nations Fail* by Acemoglu and Robinson - push one perspective, that of the authors while neglecting other perspectives. What we felt was missing was a comprehensive account of the historical origins of growth. One that was on top of the most recent literature but also fair-minded; that is, the kind of book that could provide the ideal entry point to the subject for a student or interested layperson.

**Why did the Industrial Revolution occur when and where it did?**

Britain in the 18th century was a highly commercialized and sophisticated economy that was enjoying a high degree of domestic stability and peace. So, in a sense it is unsurprising that the economy did well in this period. But the harder question to answer is why was this growth episode different to other periods of economic expansion? Joel Mokyr thinks that England was distinguished by having a large population of skilled workers, enthused with an Enlightenment culture of

progress. Robert Allen points to the unusually high wages enjoyed by English workers and the cheap cost of capital and coal (which in his view incentivized labor-saving innovation). Other scholars point to England's comparatively large and deep domestic market and to its political institutions. We tend to think that it was a confluence of these factors that together explain why this period of economic growth didn't peter out.

**As you discuss, scholars do not concur in their attempts to situate the role of colonization within the history of economic growth. You write that colonization was a "highly heterogenous" experience, is this a plausible explanation for why the world became rich but large parts of the world also remained poor?**

An extensive body of recent research has studied the impact of European colonial empires and many of these impacts were negative. In particular, the legacy of colonial rule on institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America was broadly negative. But as you note, the colonial experience was heterogenous. Colonial authorities sometimes built infrastructure and invested in public health initiatives. But overall, the body of research suggests that being colonized had negative long-run economic consequences.

**So does this mean colonialism and slavery aren't good explanations for economic growth in the West?**

This is not the same as saying empire and colonization were important for the onset of economic growth. Empire, colonization, and slavery were common in economic history. The winners of the games of empire often got rich off the backs of those they had defeated and or enslaved. But this can't



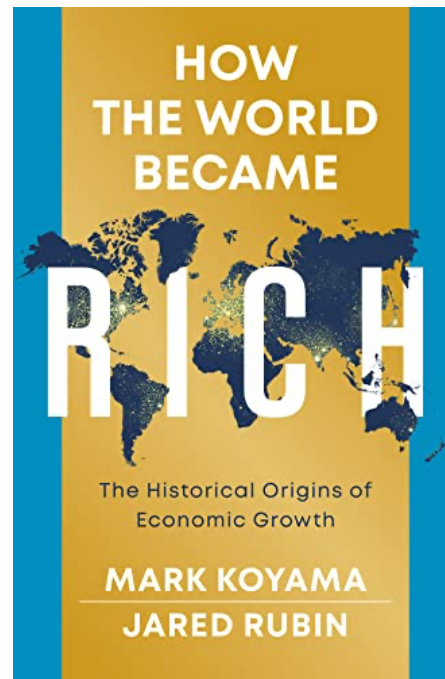
explain the scale of the transformation that we observe after 1800.

**In part 1 you discuss institutions followed by culture, is there a significant relationship between these two themes that is important to the discussion of the history of economic growth? Can you discuss institutions in this context without culture?**

We certainly think that culture and institutions interact in important ways. Indeed, this was recognized by the pioneer of institutional analysis in economics, Douglass North. The problem was that for a long time it was difficult to say something credible about culture. The difference between now and when North was originally writing is that we have developed tools that allow us to study the role of culture. For example, empirical studies are able to plausibly identify the impact of culture (for example by looking at how the beliefs of second-generation immigrants vary). Economic theorists also now have tractable models of how culture and institutions interact. We think that this intersection is an important area for future research.

**What are you working on now?**

Currently, I am working on a series of papers with Desiree Desierto and various other co-authors that study the political economy of the premodern and specifically focus on the emergence of institutions that constrained executive power in medieval and early modern England.



# 2022 Virtual Public Choice Outreach Conference



**Dr. Alex Tabbarok**  
George Mason University



**Dr. Shruti Rajagopalan**  
Mercatus Center, George  
Mason University



**Dr. Abby Hall Blanco**  
Bellarmine University



**Dr. Robin Hanson**  
George Mason University



**Dr. Peter Boettke**  
George Mason University

Learn more at: <https://publicchoice.gmu.edu/center-programs/public-choice-outreach-conference-2022-virtual>

Outreach remained virtual in 2022 – but in an exciting new live format. Participants from all over the world logged in each day to engage with the lecturers and participate in the discussions afterward. In this format the conference was held for six days, giving the group more opportunity to engage with the Public Choice-related material.

This year the conference was open to the public, with hundreds of interested participants signing up. While we missed the live version of the conference, the virtual aspect of this year's meeting let us expand to participants from all over the world including Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Columbia, India, Pakistan, Iran and elsewhere.

Here are just a few comments from student attendees:

*I found the conference very insightful and thought-provoking. Exploring multiple theories and thoughts in the discipline is what I enjoy doing and this was an interesting look into more government-critical political economic theory. – Attendee*

*It was extremely valuable for me as a young student to be able to interact with great scholars of George Mason and be able to ask questions. This, along with the interaction of other people created a very virtuous experience in which I learned a lot about public choice and political economy. – Attendee*

# IDEAS ON INDIA CONFERENCE

This year, India will overtake China to become the world's most populous country. The Indian economy is growing rapidly. India has over one hundred million English language speakers and is the third largest population of English language speakers in the world. India is also the world's largest democracy. India is growing rapidly on multiple fronts and reasserting its role in the world. Thus, understanding India and Indian political economy is becoming critical to understand the world.

The Center for Study of Public Choice was pleased to work with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University and Nilekani Philanthropies to host in August of 2022 a very successful Ideas of India Conference in Political Economy in Goa, India. The conference brought together people from academia, business, technology, non-government organizations, philanthropy, and journalism to discuss the political economy of India. What are the major challenges that India faces economically and politically? What are the capabilities of the Indian state? How can institutions be better designed to meet these challenges?

Joining Center director, Alex Tabarrok; faculty member Tyler Cowen; and director of Mercatus's Indian political economy research program, Shruti Rajagopalan; as speakers were Professor Ashwini Deshpande, founding director of the Center of Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) at Ashoka University; Dr. Janhavi Nilekani, founder-chairperson of Aastrika Foundation; Professor Ajay Shah, Jindal Global University; Dr. M. R. Madhavan, president of PRS Legislative Research; Dr. M. Govinda Rao, Center for Public Policy; IIM Bangalore; and Dr. Vaidehi Tandel, Reading University. Excellent breakout sessions included wide-ranging discussion and debate.

The Center plans to build on our first Ideas of India conference to encourage greater scholarship on India and greater ties between the Center and Indian academics.





# FALL 2021 SEMINAR SERIES

*The Seminar Series, now over 35 years old, invites scholars from around the world to share their work in a formal lecture, which is followed by a rigorous question and answer session.*



Name	Affiliation	Presentation
Stephen Broadberry	Oxford University, Nuffield College	Accounting for the great divergence: Recent findings from historical national accounting
Chinmay Tumbe	Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	Age of Pandemics (1817-1920): How They Shaped India and the World
Jason Brennan	Georgetown University	Why Swing State Voting Is Not (Usually) Effective Altruism: The Bad News about the Good News about Voting
Michael Andrews	University of Maryland	Bar Talk: Informal Social Interactions, Alcohol Prohibition, and Invention
John Horton	MIT	Pricing in Designed Markets: The Case of Ride-Sharing
Anne Degraeve	NYU	State Capacity, Fiscal Legibility and State-Society relations: Evidence from the French Napoleonic Cadaster
Leander Heldring	Northwestern University	Bureaucracy as a Tool for Politicians: Evidence from Weimar and Nazi Germany
Belinda Archibong	Barnard College, Columbia University	Prison Labor: The Price of Prisons and the Lasting Effects of Incarceration
Klaus Desmet	SMU, NBER and CEP R	The Instability of Nations: A Global Analysis of 3,000 Subnational Regions
Marc Law	University of Vermont	Industry Size and Regulation: Evidence From US states
Arthur Silve	Universit�e Laval	Frontier Planters, Immigrants, and the Abolition of Slavery in Brazil

# SPRING 2022 SEMINAR SERIES

Name	Affiliation	Presentation
Max Winkler	Harvard University	Shocks and Social Norms
Richard Bluhm	Leibniz University	Ethnofederalism and Ethnic Voting
Filipe Campante	Johns Hopkins University	The Political Economy Consequences of China's Export Slowdown
César Martinelli	George Mason University	Economic Consequences of Mass Migration: the Venezuelan Exodus in Peru
Marc Law	University of Vermont	Do Experts and Laypersons Differ? Some Evidence from International Classical Music Competitions
Scott Cunningham	Baylor University	Causal Inference: The Mixtape
Trevon Logan	Ohio State	Competition and Discrimination in Public Accommodations: Evidence from the Green Books
Nuno Palma	University of Manchester	American Treasure and the Decline of Spain
Sascha Becke	Monash University	Freedom of the Press? Catholic Censorship during the Counter-Reformation



CENTER FOR STUDY  
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# THE CENTER IN THE MEDIA: A SELECTION



## Alex Tabarrok

### The FDA's Dysfunction Is A Public Health Crisis Of Its Own

November 22, 2021– *Forbes*

Alex Tabarrok, an economics professor at George Mason University, has called the people who die when the FDA fails to approve a good drug the residents of an "invisible graveyard." That graveyard is much fuller today, thanks to the agency's slow response to COVID-19.



## Alex Tabarrok

### A Critique of Government That Progressives — Myself Included — Need to Hear

February 22, 2022 – *New York Times*

It's not just that we have decided that we're going to have a more fair, just, equal voice kind of world and accept that things are going to be slowed down a little bit. It's not that we've made that decision. It's that we've been forced into that equilibrium by each of us acting in a self-interested way. And then we end up where nobody has really benefited.



## John Nye

### Lectures in History: Economics of the Industrial Revolution?

March 10, 2022– *C-SPAN*

George Mason University professor John Nye taught a class about the economic history of the Industrial Revolution in the United States and Great Britain.



## Alex Tabarrok

### Tabarrok among Washington DC's 500 Most Influential People

Tabarrok weighed heavily into the conversation about how to handle Covid-19, arguing in media outlets that widespread rapid testing could end the mask debate in schools and workplaces and at celebrations.





## Peter Leeson

### What Do Broken-Hearted Knitters, Urinating Goalkeepers, and the C.I.A. Have in Common?

January 12, 2022 – *Freakonomics Radio*

Peter Leeson – “When we have fewer resources available to us, when societies are poorer, we can’t afford things like large professional police services and a professional judiciary and so on. So in that case, certain superstitions are relatively lower-cost ways of getting to the same kinds of outcomes.”

## Tim Groseclose

### Dem Nightmare: What if the War Ends Before November?

March 16, 2022 – *Townhall*

I’m sure it’s just a coincidence, but the media’s obsessive focus on Ukraine is terrific for the interests of the Democratic Party. Recall that, in his 2012 book, “Left Turn: How Liberal Media Bias Distorts the American Mind,” then-UCLA professor Tim Groseclose demonstrated that media bias alone costs Republicans about 8 to 10 percentage points in elections.

## Don Boudreaux

### Robert Lighthizer Has a Protectionist’s Blind Spot

July 22, 2022 – *Wall Street Journal*

Wall Street Journal: Boudreaux writes opinion on tariffs and U.S. trade deficit with China



## Vincent Geloso

### Reason TV: Geloso featured in documentary on Cuban health care and its myths

April 18, 2022 – *Reason*

Dr. Vincent Geloso, Assistant Professor of Economics, provides commentary during the discussion of infant mortality rates (story begins at video timestamp 17:15).

# FOCUS ON FACULTY



## Donald Boudreaux

Dr. Boudreaux published a book on James Buchanan called, *The Essential James Buchanan*. It was published by the *Fraser Institute* in Vancouver, B.C. His main work – in addition to teaching and much public speaking – is a [weekly column](#) that he writes for the *American Institute for Economic Research*, as well as a reasonably popular economics blog ([Café Hayek](#)).



## Bryan Caplan

Dr. Caplan had another successful year. Most notably, he published two new books of essays: *Labor Econ Versus the World: Essays on the World's Greatest Market* and *How Evil Are Politicians?: Essays on Demagoguery*. These are the first in a series of eight books of essays. Two more, *Don't Be a Feminist: Essays on Genuine Justice*, and *Voters as Mad Scientists: Essays on Political Irrationality*, will be published by early next year, to be followed by *You Will Not Stampede Me: Essays on Non-Conformism*; *Self-Help Is Like a Vaccine: Essays on Living Better*; *You Have No Right to Your Culture: Essays on the Human Condition*; and *Pro-Market AND Pro-Business: Essays on Laissez-Faire*. He also appeared on numerous podcasts, including Bari Weiss's *Honestly*.

Caplan has completed the script for *Build, Baby Build: The Science and Ethics of Housing Regulation*, and is working closely with the illustrator, Ady Branzei, to publish the book by mid-2023. This book will introduce readers to the last two decades worth of research on the immense economic damage of zoning and land-use policies. As Caplan will explain, these policies do not merely greatly inflate the cost-of-living in America's most desirable locations; they also sharply reduce workforce productivity by discouraging migration to high-productivity regions of the country. His hope is that a graphic format will “make seen the unseen” – to help readers appreciate the massive economic benefits of housing

deregulation. Caplan has signed a contract with the Cato Institute to publish the book; if successful, this will be the first in an entire library of Cato educational graphic novels, each of which he will write or edit.

Caplan has also begun work on a new academic book, tentatively titled *Unbeatable: The Brutally Honest Case for Free Markets*. The book argues that standard textbooks greatly underrate the value of markets, and greatly overrated the value of government. The root of these errors is what psychologists call Social Desirability Bias, our desire to avoid speaking ugly truths. This prevents economists from praising markets for making ugly but vital trade-offs. It also leads economists to praise government policies that sound good without carefully investigating what the policies actually accomplish. Thus, economists have long praised government for “helping the poor,” paying little head to the fact that most government spending is *not* means-tested. In spirit, *Unbeatable* is like Friedman’s *Free to Choose*, but with a much stronger emphasis on the psychology of underrating markets and overrating governments.

Further down Caplan’s queue is *Poverty: Who To Blame*. *Poverty* combines economic philosophy with economics, sociology, psychology, social work, history, and anthropology to answer some timeless questions, including “Why does poverty persist?,” “Who is morally responsible for poverty’s continued existence?,” and “What, if anything, can be done about it?” The book begins by reviving and defending the classic distinction between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. Then it will apply the distinction to the real world, focusing on bad economic policy in the Third World, immigration restrictions (and housing regulation) in the First World, and irresponsible personal behavior around the world. He has now finished the introduction, chapter 1, and much of chapter 2.

In other news, Caplan launched a new blog, *Bet On It*, this March. Hosted at Substack, *Bet On It* continues the interdisciplinary, contrarian Caplan was known for at *EconLog* from 2005-2022. The new blog already has more than 4,000 subscribers, still growing rapidly.



## Tyler Cowen

This year I published a new book on the economics of talent, co-authored with venture capitalist Daniel Gross. The title is *Talent: How to Identify Energizers, Creators, and Winners Around the World*. *Talent* was released in May 2022 and has been widely reviewed.

Alex Tabarrok and I also published the fifth edition of our *Modern Principles: Microeconomics, and also Macroeconomics*, with Worth Macmillan. This text is not just a rehash of the other books on the market but rather it attempts a comprehensive statement of micro and macroeconomics from a “GMU point of view.” That book is now actively on the market, in both physical and electronic forms.



# FOCUS ON FACULTY

I have continued as the regular main economics columnist at *Bloomberg Opinion*, where I publish a column twice a week. For a full listing and reproduction of these, see [https://www.bloomberg.com/view/contributors/AS6n2t3d\\_iA/tyler-cowen](https://www.bloomberg.com/view/contributors/AS6n2t3d_iA/tyler-cowen).

I continued the *Conversations with Tyler* series, with a new podcast coming out every two weeks. Some of the recent guests have been Marc Andreessen, Barkha Dutt, Thomas Piketty, Chuck Klosterman, Sam Bankman-Fried, Russ Roberts, Stewart Brand, Ray Dalio, David Rubinstein, Amia Srinivasan, Andrew Sullivan, Claudia Goldin, Ed Glaeser, David Cutler, David Deutsch, John Cochrane, Ben Friedman, and many others. The series has received coverage in virtually every major media outlet and has received several million hits on-line, with a rapidly growing trajectory of interest.

I have continued my directorship at Mercatus, and this year our regular budget now runs at about \$50 million. We support numerous faculty in economics, and over 70 graduate students, making us the largest supporter of graduate students at GMU. Our various academic outreach programs bring GMU economists and economics to several hundred graduate students each year.

I also continued work on Fast Grants, at the Mercatus Center, to support biomedical research directed at fighting Covid-19. The purpose of the program is to show that rigorous, refereed grant decisions can be made in a matter of days when the institutional will is there to do so. We have so far made over 260 major grants and raised over \$50 million for this endeavor, further details can be found on the website <https://fastgrants.org/> and here is [a full accounting of the project](#). Most of our support this year went to what are called “pan-corona-virus vaccines,” designed to protect against all possible strains of the virus.

## **Blogging**

I have continued the daily blogging of economic and other ideas for *Marginal Revolution* ([www.marginalrevolution.com](http://www.marginalrevolution.com)), which is generally considered the leading economics blog. Our readership remains robust, and we have recently expanded our audience to the new site [marginalrevolution.bulletin.com](http://marginalrevolution.bulletin.com), while continuing our old location.

I also have used *MR* to promote the research being done at GMU by many other faculty members and graduate students, including Daniel Klein, Mark Koyama, Noel Johnson, David Levy, Robin Hanson, Bryan Caplan and others. It has become perhaps the world’s biggest “window” onto our world.

### On-line education

The last year saw the continuation of [MRUniversity.com](http://MRUniversity.com), a site for the on-line teaching of economics, in conjunction with Alex Tabarrok. We now have a dozen or so classes up and running, including Development Economics, The Eurozone, Economics of the Media, The Economy of Mexico, International Economics, and International Finance, among others. We now have a complete and finished Principles of Microeconomics class up and running, and now Principles Macro is finished, too. We have about 300,000 YouTube subscribers and last year over 12 million unique views.



### Vincent Geloso

During 2021-22, I have had the chance to have seven new articles (on estimating inequality, income mobility and economic history) accepted at *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *Clometrica*, *Explorations in Economic History*, *Economic Journal*, *Public Choice*, *Review of Austrian Economics*, and *Journal of Government and Economics*. I also have requests for revision of articles at the *Journal of Development Economics*, *European Economic Review*, *Southern Economic Journal*, *European Journal of Law and Economics*, and *Public Choice*. I have an additional six articles in consideration at the present time. I am currently completing a paper with Jason Dean (King's University College, Canada) on estimating poverty in Canada up to 1960 as well as an article on measuring inequality at the state-level in the United States prior to 1941. I became an associate researcher at the CIRANO -- the largest economics research group in Canada. I published op-eds in *La Presse* (Canada), *The Financial Post* (Canada), *L'Express* (France) and the *Wall Street Journal*. I gave interviews about my research to *PolitiFact*, *Le Point* (France), *WalletHub*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany's largest newspaper), and the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*.

# FOCUS ON FACULTY



## **T**im Groseclose

During the 2021-22 academic year, Tim Groseclose published one peer-reviewed article, “One-Sided Bargaining over a Finite Set of Alternatives” (*Journal of Public Economic Theory*, October 2021 issue). He continued work on another paper, “The Coase Conjecture when the Monopolist and Customers have Different Discount Rates.” Also, he began work with Ph.D. student Harry Pan on a new paper, “Censorship of U.S. Movies by the Chinese Government: A Structural Econometric Model.” His work was mentioned by several media outlets, including *The Hill*, *The Federalist*, and a syndicated column of Ann Coulter.

### **Publications:**

“One-Sided Bargaining over a Finite Set of Alternatives,” *Journal of Public Economic Theory*. 23 (Oct., Issue 5): 933-957. 2021.



## **R**obin Hanson

Robin Hanson recently published in *Foundations of Physics* on incentives for computing now versus much later in the long-term future of the universe. He also published in *Economics Letters* on empirical trends in automation over the last twenty years, finding no change in which job features predict automation, and no relation between changes in automation and changes in pay or employment. Professor Hanson began a new book on the great unrealized potential of paying for results, in medicine, law, forecasting, and much more.





## Ronald Heiner

Professor Heiner continues writing a book about players who cooperate contingently in one-shot Prisoners' Dilemmas, depending on signals detected while communicating with their partners. His analysis generalizes signal detection theory from behavioral psychology, by allowing simultaneously shifting signal distributions, caused by contingent cooperators detecting signals more or less cautiously (which affects their probability of cooperating with other players). His analysis shows how the probability of cooperating depends on the four prisoners' dilemma payoffs: the "temptation payoff" (T) when one player defects on another player's cooperation, the "cooperation payoff" (R) when both players cooperate, the "penalty payoff" (P) when both players defect, and the "sucker's payoff" (S) when one player's cooperation is defected on by another player.

Professor Heiner's analysis implies stable Nash equilibria always exist that enable contingent cooperators to grow within the whole population against always defecting players. Testable predictions can then be derived: – about when contingent players will cooperate more or less frequently under alternative signal detection conditions (over the full range from perfect to random detection) – and for alternative payoff conditions, where the cooperation payoff difference ( $R - P$ ) increases or decreases relative to the greed and fear payoff differences ( $T - R$ ) and ( $P - S$ ). By comparison, standard game theory can only predict zero probability of cooperation in one-shot prisoners' dilemmas, regardless of any potential signal detection or payoff conditions – so long as the payoff ranking ( $T > R > P > S$ ) is preserved.

Professor Heiner has also written the following journal articles: 1. "Robust Contingent Cooperation in Pure One-Shot PD's." Under another revision for *Nature*. Signal detection theory is used to derive new results about stability and dynamics toward cooperation. I here show that contingent cooperators will evolve from any initial population through any payoff monotonic process (including replicator and logistic population dynamics). These properties are robust to signaling and communication costs between players, including mimicry and low-quality signals weakly correlated with a player's behavior. Signaling is also shown to have the same causal basis as that used in the natural sciences to forecast future events. The limiting case of pure chance detection is also considered; showing that even here, contingent cooperators can have a competitive advantage. These results hold for pure one-shot prisoners' dilemmas: meaning no repeated interactions and no information about past behavior is involved, all communication arises only from signals detected after two strangers meet for the first time; and no subjective preferences for fairness or reciprocity affect the raw evolutionary dynamics. I also describe testable predictions about the contingent cooperators' frequency of cooperation.

# FOCUS ON FACULTY



## Garrett Jones

Garrett spent the year finishing the final book in his Singapore Trilogy; the book will be published by Stanford University Press in the fall of 2022. It's entitled *The Culture Transplant: How Migrants Make the Economies They Move to a Lot Like the Ones They Left*.

The first book in his trilogy, *Hive Mind*, was at the intersection of economics and psychology; the second, *10% Less Democracy*, was at the intersection of economics and political science. The Culture Transplant is at the intersection of economics and anthropology, showing how national cultures substantially survive migration and shape the institutions and productivity of their new homes for centuries.

In addition, Garrett's tweets about how Covid vaccine delays cost thousands of lives both helped spur an article in *The Atlantic* that reported public health simulations that, to some degree, supported his claims and also generated a broader discussion on the policy failings of the vaccine rollout. Finally, his work on the merits of oligarchical central banks and on the weak evidence for big Keynesian spending multipliers continued to generate media discussion.



## Noel Johnson

In the last year Noel really enjoyed working with his Ph.D. students on several new projects. With Alexander Taylor and Andrew Thomas, he wrote "The Impact of the Black Death on the Adoption of the Printing Press." We use data on the 800,000 books published between the invention of the printing press in 1450 and 1600 to show that the demographic shock of the Black Death (1347-52) severely, negatively impacted the likelihood that cities would adopt this important technology. Noel presented this paper at Texas Tech, The University of Connecticut, Virginia Tech, and for the Center for Micro-Economic Policy Research.

Noel continues to work with Malik Hussain and Alex Tabbarok to collect data from the British Colonial Medical Archives on one of the largest vaccination campaigns in history. Between 1870 and 1928 the British launched a massive campaign to vaccinate the Indian population against smallpox. With the help of graduate students in India, Noel, Malik, and Alex have been collecting

the data on yearly vaccination rates across over three hundred districts in Colonial India. Among other things, they plan on investigating the impact of massacres associated with the Great Rebellion (1857) on medical mistrust and vaccine hesitancy.

Last year Noel saw three papers come out in Journals. “The Effects of Historical Pandemics: The Black Death” (with Remi Jedwab and Mark Koyama) appeared in the *Journal of Economic Literature*. It surveys what we know about the economic and social impacts of the 14th-century bacterial infection known as the Black Death. “Medieval Cities Through the Lens of Urban Economic Theories” (with Remi Jedwab and Mark Koyama) appeared in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. Noel did an interview with Jeffrey Lin for his podcast *Densely Speaking* on the paper. Finally, “The Effects of Land Redistribution: Evidence from the French Revolution” (with Theresa Finley and Raphael Franck) appeared in the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

In addition to his research, Noel taught his usual classes on Spatial Techniques in Empirical Economics to Ph.D. students and Economic History to the undergraduates. He also developed a new class on Text as Data and Machine Learning and taught it to a very enthusiastic group of Ph.D. students in the Spring. Noel also started running a bi-weekly meeting for the Ph.D. students for them to do short presentations of research problems or papers that they need feedback on. He plans on continuing this informal seminar in the Fall.

In addition to his research and teaching, Noel continued his service to the Department by running the Public Choice Seminar. He also traveled to several conferences and did a few podcast interviews. Noel also received the pleasant news that he was promoted to Full Professor in May.



## Mark Koyama

May 2022 saw the publication of my new book *How the World Became Rich* (co-authored with Jared Rubin). Several papers also appeared in print. “Epidemic Disease and the State” is forthcoming in *Public Choice*. This paper resulted from a Conference hosted at NYU in January 2021. “Medieval Cities Through the Lens of Urban Economic They” was published in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. “The Economic Impact of the Black Death” appeared in the *Journal of Economic Literature*. Finally, “Sea-Power,” with Ahmed Rahman and Tuan-HweeSng was published in the *Journal of Historical Political Economy*.

I presented at the University of Pittsburgh (in-person), the University of Korea (virtually), Tulane University (in-person), and at the University of Groningen (virtually). In April 2022, I was the

# FOCUS ON FACULTY

program chair of the annual ASREC conference, which was held in Chapman and saw dozens of scholars attend and present their research. Together with Desiree Desierto I won a Pluralism & Exchange Grant from the Mercatus Cetner to fund our ongoing work on the political economy of premodern England.



## Peter T. Leeson

Dr. Leeson is the Duncan Black Professor of Economics and Law at George Mason University and North American Editor of *Public Choice*.

Dr. Leeson's work studies the economics of non-market decision making. In 2021 he published, for example, "Externality and Covid-19" (with Louis Rouanet) in the *Southern Economic Journal*, "Trading with the Dead" in the *Review of Law and Economics*, and "Public Choice and Public Health" (with Henry Thompson) in *Public Choice*. Also in 2021, Leeson's research was featured in popular media, such as Steven Levitt's *Freakonomics Radio* podcast, *People I (Mostly) Admire*. Since June 2020, CGP Grey's YouTube adaptation of Leeson's book *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates* has been viewed more than 11 million times.

To find Dr. Leeson's work or press coverage, visit his personal website: [www.PeterLeeson.com](http://www.PeterLeeson.com).



## David Levy

The Sandra Peart-David Levy paper that was just accepted for publication at the *Review of Austrian Economics* might help clear up an old confusion. For a very long time the contributions of Carl Menger and W. S. Jevons have been seen as the case of scholars arriving at the same results independently, creating "subjective value theory." If that name is supposed to mean they both modeled an acting agent with a distinct utility function, that's what they did. However, if we ask about whether the model speaks to things or to beliefs then there are obvious differences. Jevons realized that he needed to work with things because one cannot substitute "similars" across belief states. Menger is clear that he deals with beliefs. From a technical point of view, the question is whether the "axiom of extensionality" – the fundamental substitution principle in set theory – holds. Jevons is explicit that it does; Menger is implicit that it does not.



Thus the split in the 1870s is not between mathematical economics or literary economics but what axioms holds. The axiom of extensionality has the pleasing property of turning wishes into theorems.

The work on economics and racism continues. One of the products of this effort came out in the chapter on Harriet Martineau. The difference between what she accomplished as a technical economist and her reputation as an economist is unbelievable. It is now obvious Carlyle's target for the "dismal science" label. We finished up a chapter on T. N. Carver for the volume on Harvard economics. Carver is particularly interesting for many reasons. He's a very important technical economist who was both a flamboyant eugenicist and a stern advocate of the free market. His best known student was Walter Lippmann, whose eugenic advocacy it has pleased readers to overlook. Perhaps Carver's least known student, Orval Watts (his name is not spelled correctly even by the Library of Congress!), was important in the free market movement in the 1940s and 50s. The canonical histories of economics seem never to notice Carver's eugenics. This is a reason replication is so important.

For our work on the long history of economics and racism we are now addressing the complication that there was a very long period in which Blacks were absent from professional economics. The issue is not that Black scholars were absent from higher education. Harvard awarded a Ph.D. in history to W. E. B. DuBois in the 1890s, but no Black person was awarded a Ph.D. in economics at Harvard until the 1930s. However, Black scholars made major contributions to what would be seen as economics but that was called history or sociology. The desires of the funders of the single most important work on racism in the twentieth century, Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 *An American Dilemma*, have been addressed by exemplary scholarship from which we are benefiting. One of issues we faced in our Natural Equals was the decision of the Ford Foundation not to support the Thomas Jefferson Center. Economic analysis is not purely exogenous. There were two panels at APEE this spring on Natural Equals. Our decision to publish documents seems to have been the correct one. This was also the reaction we received last year at the Public Choice Society meetings. The replication crisis is not unique to applied econometrics.

### Article published

"Responses to the Comments on Natural Equals" with Sandra Peart, *Research in the History of Economics and Methodology*, 2022.

### Book chapters published

"George Stigler" with Sandra Peart. *The Palgrave Companion to University of Chicago Economics*. Edited by Robert Cord. Palgrave 2022.

"Harriet Martineau" with Sandra Peart. *The Essential Women of Liberty*. Edited by Donald Boudreaux and Aeon Skoble. Fraser Institute.

# FOCUS ON FACULTY

## Presentations

“Harriet Martineau and the Collective Action Problems of Slavery.” Public Choice Society. Nashville  
Responses to papers in two panels on the Levy-Peart Towards an Economics of Natural Equals at Association of Private Enterprise Education, Las Vegas.

## Article forthcoming

“Menger and Jevons: Beliefs or Things” with Sandra Peart. *Review of Austrian Economics*. 2023 forthcoming.

## Book chapter forthcoming

“Thomas Nixon Carver” with Sandra Peart. *The Palgrave Companion to Harvard University Economics*. Edited by Robert Cord. Palgrave 2023.



## Cesar Martinelli

I got the solo-authored paper “Accountability and Grand Corruption” accepted in *American Economic Journal*. Micro and the paper “An Algebraic Approach to Revealed Preference,” co-authored with Mikhail Freer, accepted in *Economic Theory*. My chapter “History of Peru,” written with Marco Vega, appeared in the book *A Monetary and Fiscal History of Latin America, 1960–2017* (Juan Pablo Nicolini and Timothy J. Kehoe, eds.), published by University of Minnesota Press in 2021. My paper “Competition with Indivisibilities and Few Traders” with Jianxin Wang and Weiwei Zheng, got conditional acceptance in *Experimental Economics*. My book review “The Political Economy of Development: A Game Theoretic Approach by Robert H. Bates” appeared in *Political Science Quarterly* (summer 2022).

My paper “Assignment Markets: Theory and Experiments” with Arthur Dolgoplov, Dan Houser and Thomas Stratmann, was accepted for presentation at the World Congress of the Game Theory Society. My paper “Razor-Thin Elections,” with David K. Levine, was accepted for presentation at the RIDGE Political Economy Workshop, the 5th ETH Zurich Workshop on Political Economy; and the Meeting of the Society for Social Choice and Welfare.

I finished the paper “Economic Consequences of Mass Migration: The Venezuelan Exodus in Peru,” with Cynthia Boruchowicz and Susan W. Parker, currently submitted to a journal. I started new research projects on “Razor-Thin Elections,” with David K. Levine (referenced above), on “Accountability in the Lab,” with Naila Sebastian, on “Corruption and Gift Exchange: Odebrecht in Peru” with Janet Leyva, and on “Price Controls in the Lab” with Edgar Castro and Hugo Díaz.

I got invited to give seminars at the public choice seminar at George Mason University, Carlos III University of Madrid, and University College of Financial Studies (CUNEF), and online seminars at a panel on migration in the Americas at Universidad Iberoamericana, Universidad del Pacífico, DePaul University, and Wilfred Laurier.

I continue mentoring George Mason Ph.D. students Edgar Castro, Hugo Diaz, and Ruolong Xiao, and served as external thesis advisor for undergraduate student from Politecnico de Catalunya, Naila Sebastian, who visited Mason during the academic year, and for the graduate student from Catholic University of Peru, Janneth Leyva.

I co-organized the ETH Zurich - CEPR Workshop on Political Economy and the 25+ years of Quantal Response Equilibrium Conference at Caltech, and I am currently co-organizing as program chair the 2022 Latin American Meetings of the Econometric Society, to be held in Lima in November 2022. .



## **N**atalya Naumenko

In 2022, my co-authors Andrei Markevich and Nancy Qian and I continued working on the 1933 Famine paper, it was highlighted at the NBER digest (<https://www.nber.org/digest-202110/disproportionate-death-ukrainians-soviet-great-famine>). We plan to submit very soon. My co-authors Volha Charnysh, Andrei Markevich and I started a new project about the 1922 Russian famine and the role of the American Relief Administration in it; I collected relief data at the Hoover Institution Archives this June. I also taught Econ 630, Econ 340, and Econ 309.

# FOCUS ON FACULTY



## John Nye

My year ended up reasonably productive, given the constraints we were under. A paper of mine appeared in the *Economic History Review* (considered one of the three leading economic history journals). I was interviewed for a Youtube video series, and one of my lectures in economic history on the Industrial Revolution was recorded by *C-Span* and broadcast as well as put up on their webpage for the American History series. I continued to teach and also advised the Philippine Central Bank via Zoom. I was invited to participate in the Northwestern University workshop on the “Rise and Decline of Laissez Faire” for the Walker Hanlon book manuscript and will be a discussant online for 2022 SIOE conference.

### Publications:

“Wiring China: The Impact of Telegraph Construction on Grain Market Integration in Late Imperial China, 1870-1911,” with Li Hao, and Yuanzhe Li (2021). *Economic History Review*, October. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.13119>.



## Jonathan Schulz

The last year saw the start of our multi-million Templeton grant, “Religion, Family Structure and the Origins of Individual Freedom and Economic prosperity.” This project, led together with Joseph Henrich, assembles an interdisciplinary team of scholars including historians, linguists, psychologists, anthropologists, and economists to study the underpinnings of individual freedom and economic prosperity. I was invited to present this ongoing work on kin-based institutions, individual freedom and economic prosperity at several conferences and seminars including presentations at Brown University, Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam, the University of British Columbia, Stiftung Demokratie Saarland, and the University of Vienna. In the last year, three peer-reviewed manuscripts were accepted for publication: Social Norms and Dishonesty across Societies (forthcoming) with D. Aycinena, L. Rentschler and B. Beranek, *PNAS*. Kin-networks and Institutional Development (forthcoming). *Economic Journal*.

Selection into experiments: New evidence on the role of preferences, cognition, and recruitment protocols (2022) with P. Thiemann, U. Sunde, and C. Thöni, *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*.



## **T**homas Stratmann

During 2021-2022, Dr. Thomas Stratmann published his work in *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* and the *Southern Economic Journal*. Two papers were accepted for publication in the *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* and a paper was accepted in the *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. Dr. Stratmann is working in the field of Experimental Public Choice. Here, he examines data from one of his field experiments, analyzing the determinants of voter turnout in general elections. He studies whether citizens are more likely to vote in an election when they know that their neighbors can obtain information on whether they voted in the election. In a different treatment, he studies whether citizens are more likely to vote in an election when they are told that norms, such as civic duties, should be considered in deciding whether to cast a ballot in an election.

Dr. Stratmann pursues an active research agenda at the intersection of Public Choice Theory and the field of Law and Economics. In one research project, he analyzes the benefits and losses and determinants of Certificate of Need laws. In another research project, he studies the impact of guarantees of the rules of the law and the effect of transparent tribal judiciary systems on reservations on the income of American Indians residing on these reservations.

Dr. Stratmann is one of four Editors of the *European Journal of Political Economy* and serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal Public Choice*. Dr. Stratmann is the principal dissertation advisor on the dissertation committee of four Economics GMU Ph.D. students.





## Alex Tabarrok

As the pandemic slowly ended I began to focus on new topics and projects but, academic timelines being what they are, many of my papers on COVID began appearing in 2021-2022, including papers in *Science* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS). My work as a public intellectual on the pandemic also led to my being listed as one of the 500 most influential people in public policy by the *Washingtonian* and a profile in the *New York Times*.

Returning to more traditional topics, I published on the effect of litigation on housing and construction in Mumbai, India. My co-authors and I find that an amazing 27.3% of the projects and 42.9% of the built-up space in Mumbai is under litigation. We estimate that litigated projects take approximately 20% longer to complete than non-litigated projects,

which substantially increases the costs of construction. I also published with Shruti Rajagopalan, *Simple Rules for the Developing World*, which argues that Richard Epstein's "Simple Rules" framework is even more relevant to the developing world, which is plagued by low state-capacity, than to the more developed world.

I was also thrilled to appear on Ezra Klein's highly influential podcast to discuss Mancur Olson's *The Rise and Decline of Nations*. Olson's classic work has been foundational in my own thinking since I read *The Rise and Decline of Nations* as an undergraduate, so it was delightful to discuss the continuing relevance of his work.

### Publications:

- Ahuja, Amrita, Susan Athey, Arthur Baker, Eric Budish, Juan Camilo Castillo, Rachel Glennerster, Scott Duke Kominers, Alex Tabarrok, et al. 2021. "Preparing for a Pandemic: Accelerating Vaccine Availability." *AEA Papers and Proceedings*. 111: 331–35. <https://doi.org/10.1257/pandp.20211103>.
- Cason, Timothy N., Alex Tabarrok, and Robertas Zubrickas. 2021. "Early Refund Bonuses Increase Successful Crowdfunding." *Games and Economic Behavior*. 129: 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geb.2021.05.006>.
- Castillo, Juan Camilo, Amrita Ahuja, Susan Athey, Arthur Baker, Eric Budish, Tasneem Chipty, Rachel Glennerster, Alex Tabarrok et al. 2021. "Market Design to Accelerate COVID-19 Vaccine Supply." *Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abg0889>.
- Gandhi, Sahil, Vaidehi Tandel, Alexander Tabarrok, and Shamika Ravi. 2021. "Too Slow for the Urban March: Litigations and the Real Estate Market in Mumbai, India." *Journal of Urban Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2021.103330>.
- Rajagopalan, Shruti, and Alex Tabarrok. 2021. "Simple Rules for the Developing World." *European Journal of Law and Economics*. 52 (2): 341–62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10657-021-09716-3>.

Więcek, Witold, Amrita Ahuja, Esha Chaudhuri, Michael Kremer, Alexandre Simoes Gomes, Christopher M. Snyder, Alex Tabarrok, and Brandon Joel Tan. 2022. “Testing Fractional Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 119 (8). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2116932119>.



## Yong Yoon

Yong Yoon made two presentations based on his draft paper. One was by zoom and the other was in person: Seminar for Korean Hayek Society and Korean Public Choice Society “Anti-commons in Political Economy” (by Zoom) October 28-29, 2021.

Colloquium Presentation at American University:

“Meta-Mathematics and Meta-Economics: In Defense of Adam Smith and the Invisible Hand” (with Nimai Mehta) (in person), April 21, 2022.

# CENTER STAFF



## **Lisa Hill-Corley**

Lisa supports of the main resident faculty at Carow Hall with administrative, visitor and office manager tasks. She also manages the main budget and grants for Center, the Wednesday Seminar and the Center-based grants which provide support to outstanding Public Choice scholars.

Lisa, along with Kashiff Thompson, managed Carow Hall through the busy 2021-2022 academic year. She helped to coordinate the Virtual Outreach conference and the Fall and Spring seminars, which returned live in Fall 2021.

She is grateful for the support of the faculty, Kashiff Thompson and Julie Roberts in these unusual times. Here's to a great 2022-2023!



## **Kashiff A. Thompson**

Kashiff assists with providing administrative support to resident Carow Hall faculty. Kashiff also serves as co-coordinator of the weekly Public Choice Seminar. He grateful for the support of the faculty, Mrs. Lisa Hill-Corley, and Mrs. Julie Roberts. He is looking forward to having a great 2022-2023!

# 2021-22 CSPC DOCTORATES



**Markus B. Bjoerkheim**

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Defended the dissertation, “Essays in Health Economics.” Dr. Alex Tabarrok chaired the committee.



**Jonathan Murphy**

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Defended the dissertation, “Costs, Networks, and Experts.” Dr. Donald Boudreaux chaired the committee.



**Gregory W. Caskey**

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Defended the dissertation, “Three Essays on the Role of China in the Developing World.” Dr. Tyler Cowen chaired the committee.



**Robert T. Omberg**

---

Defended the dissertation, “Essays in Applied Microeconomics.” Dr. Alex Tabarrok chaired the committee.



**James Freeman**

---

Defended the dissertation, “Three Empirical Essays on Crime.” Dr. Alex Tabarrok chaired the committee.



**Aisha I. Yusuf**

---

Defended the dissertation, “Essays in Culture and Institutions of Developing Countries.” Dr. Tyler Cowen chaired the committee.



**Kaman Ho**

---

Defended the dissertation, “The Mongol Conquest, State Capacity, and Historical Stagnation of Imperial China.” Dr. John Nye chaired the committee.

**Nicolas Karolewicz**

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Defended the dissertation, “The Mongol Conquest, State Capacity, and Historical Stagnation of Imperial China.” Dr. John Nye chaired the committee.

**The Public Choice Center  
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Chris Rufer

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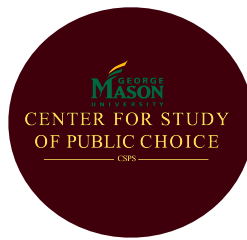
James C. Miller III

Sarah Scaife Foundation

The Patriot Lodge

***Thank you for your support  
of the center!***





The Center for Study of Public Choice is a unique research institution at George Mason University. It provides a single location where eminent scholars conduct innovative research, publish their findings and conclusions in a variety of print and electronic media, and teach the science of public choice. The Center builds on the groundbreaking economic and political science theories for which James Buchanan was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. The Center draws both visiting and resident scholars and students from all over the world. Its faculty and researchers lecture and conduct seminars locally, across the United States, and abroad.

The Center serves as the institutional home for the Public Choice Research Program, which has developed and matured over the past half-century. Created in 1957 at the University of Virginia, the Center was initially called the Thomas Jefferson Center for Studies in Political Economy. In 1969, the Center was reconstituted at Virginia Tech under its present name. In 1983, the Center shifted its operations to George Mason University. The Center's alumni includes doctoral students from George Mason, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia. From its historical association with three of Virginia's major universities, the Center's academic footprint is often dubbed the "Virginia School of Political Economy."

Public Choice scholarship has profoundly influenced thinking in the scientific community and the formation of public attitudes. As a research program, public choice extends the tools of economics to analyze the behavior of voters, candidates, legislators, bureaucrats, judges, and expert economists themselves. Research by scholars at the Center also focuses on other non-market institutions such as religion, the family, clubs, and culture.

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