

Economics Workshop

Raymond March, Ph.D.

San José State University

Thursday
April 26, 2018

DMH 161
4:30-5:30pm

"Gordon Tullock Meets Phineas Gage: The Political Economy of Lobotomies"

In the 1940s, the United States experienced a "lobotomy boom" where the number of lobotomies performed increased rapidly despite a widespread scientific agreement that the procedure was ineffective. We use the framework developed by Tullock (1966) to explain how institutional structures adjust incentives within the scientific community. Highlighting that lobotomies were largely only performed in public hospitals and asylums, we argue that government influence in the medical field prolonged the use of an ineffective and harmful medical procedure. Extending Tullock's analysis to examine the use of the lobotomy provides important implications for government's role in promoting science.



Raymond March, Ph.D. Ray March is an Assistant Professor of Economics at San José State University and a research fellow at the Independent Institute. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Texas Tech University in 2017 where he was a graduate assistant at the Free Market Institute. Ray was also an Institute for Humane Studies fellow and an Adam Smith fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. He blogs at *The Beacon*.

<http://blog.independent.org/author/rmarch/>

Economics Workshops offer an opportunity for SJSU students, faculty and invited guests to enjoy academic research presentations by scholars from around the world in their areas of expertise. Following most workshop events, the Barstool Economists group meets at a local eatery, where conversations with the speaker may be continued in a less formal environment.

For information on upcoming workshops,
Please see our website: www.sjsu.edu/economics/events.