Dear e696H students.

This week, we're reading 'The Rhetoric of Economics,' by D. McCloskey. McCloskey is the best writer in economics alive today, in my opinion. The argument McCloskey presents is therefore some of the best writing that economics has to offer. Her argument is about the importance of 'argument' in the business of economics.

Her argument in this piece is that economics is fundamentally rhetorical, not, for example, mathematical. And her piece is a well-crafted argument to convince you of that.

I posit that Gibbard-Varian and McCloskey would agree about economic models. Gibbard-Varian describe models as a pair: (a story, a structure); in that they elevate the story to be at par with the mathematical structure. Perhaps you will agree by the end of this class. Perhaps you will disagree.

Therefore: read the introduction very carefully. McCloskey does not waste words. If you understand the introduction, you understand her entire paper.

A bold claim appears on the top of the second column of the first page, p. 482. To wit: 'Nothing is gained from the clinging to the Scientific Method, or to any methodology except honesty, clarity, and tolerance.' Why is this bold?

p. 482, first part after the introduction entitled: 'Part 1: Rhetoric is disciplined conversation.' What does she mean by this? Interpret the source and definitions she states.

p. 484. Let's understand her definition of modernism v. post-modernism.

You know, if we get this far and we get everything that's happened so far, I'll be very happy. See you Tuesday.

--adp