

EXPLORING ECONOMIC FREEDOM LECTURE SERIES

PRESENTS

THE CASE AGAINST EDUCATION: WHY THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IS A WASTE OF  
TIME AND MONEY

By

*Bryan Caplan, Professor of Economics, George Mason University*

When and Where:

Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am in Tivoli Turnhalle

Talk/Book Description:

While academics and higher education administrators argue often a college education will provide a host of skills and knowledge they will be apply in their daily life and at work, a deeper look at the returns of education shows that education is grossly overrated. In his new book, *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System is a Waste of Time and Money*, Bryan Caplan argues that, while there are exceptions, the primary function of education is not to enhance students' skill but to certify their intelligence, work ethic, and conformity—in other words, to signal the qualities of a good employee. Bryan Caplan will discuss why students hunt for easy As and casually forget most of what they learn after the final exam, why decades of growing access to education have not resulted in better jobs for the average worker but instead in runaway credential inflation, how employers reward workers for costly schooling they rarely if ever use, and why cutting education spending is the best remedy. Caplan draws on the latest social science to show how the labor market values grades over knowledge, and why the more education your rivals have, the more you need to impress employers. He explains why graduation is our society's top conformity signal, and why even the most useless degrees can certify employability. Finally, Bryan Caplan will discuss public policy responses.

Bryan Caplan bio:

Bryan Caplan (<http://www.bcaplan.com>) is Professor of economics at George Mason University and a blogger at EconLog. He is the author of *Selfish Reasons to Have More Kids: Why Being a Great Parent Is Less Work and More Fun than You Think*, *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies* (which was named "the best political book of the year" by the New York Times), and *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System is a Waste of Time and Money*. His work has been widely covered in various media such as PBS, USA Today, Washington Times, Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, the New York Times, the New York Times Magazine, and the New Yorker.

Bryan Caplan also published over 40 journal articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *The American Economic Review*, *Economic Journal*, *Journal of Law and Economics*, *Public Choice*, and *Rationality & Society*. He has published various editorials in outlets such as the *New York*

*Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Atlantic*. Bryan Caplan has appeared on ABC, Fox News, MSNBC, and C-SPAN.

He's writing with [Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal](#)'s Zach Weinersmith on *All Roads Lead to Open Borders*, a non-fiction graphic novel on the philosophy and social science of immigration, and writing a new book, *Poverty: Who To Blame*.