

SHEFFRIN LECTURE IN PUBLIC POLICY

2014



Scarcity: A Talk for People Too Busy to Attend Talks

Why do successful people get things done at the last minute? Why does poverty persist? Why do organizations get stuck putting out fires? Why do the lonely find it hard to make friends? These seemingly unconnected questions are surprisingly joined by a single psychology of scarcity. The research in our book shows how scarcity—of any kind—creates its own mindset. Understanding this mindset helps illuminate behavior in nearly every walk of life.

Thursday, April 17

5:00 p.m.: Reception

5:30 p.m.: Lecture

AGR Hall, Walter A. Buehler Alumni Center

This event is free and open to the public.

The Sheffrin Lectures in Public Policy are possible thanks to a gift from former dean of the Division of Social Sciences, Steven M. Sheffrin, and his wife, Anjali.



Co-Sponsored by:
Center for Poverty Research
Institute for Social Sciences
Herbert A. Young Society

Sendhil Mullainathan

Sendhil Mullainathan is a professor of economics at Harvard University. His real passion is behavioral economics. His work runs a wide gamut: the impact of poverty on mental bandwidth; whether CEO pay is excessive; using fictitious resumes to measure discrimination; showing that higher cigarette taxes makes smokers happier; modeling how competition affects media bias; and a model of coarse thinking. His latest research focuses on using machine learning and data mining techniques to better understand human behavior.

He enjoys writing, having recently co-authored *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means so Much* and writes regularly for *The New York Times*. He helped co-found a non-profit organization to apply behavioral science (ideas42), co-founded a center to promote the use of randomized control trials in development (the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab), serves on the board of the MacArthur Foundation, and has worked in government in various roles, including most recently as Assistant Director of Research at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

He is a recipient of the MacArthur “Genius” Award, has been designated a “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum, labeled a “Top 100 Thinker” by *Foreign Policy Magazine*, and named to the “Smart List: 50 people who will change the world” by *Wired Magazine* (UK).