This seminar will introduce you to modern econometric methods as they have been used to analyze topics in law and economics. Our focus will be on the identification of causal relationships between legal changes and individual behavior.

Grade: Ninety percent of your grade will be based on a submitted paper. The topic of this paper can be anything in the area of law and economics. There are two options for the paper: 1) the low risk (low reward) option is to write a literature review on a topic focusing on empirical research in the area, noting its shortcomings; 2) the high risk (high reward) option is to perform a simple empirical analysis where you formulate a hypothesis, collect relevant data to test the hypothesis, draw tentative conclusions, and note the shortcomings of the analysis. There are no length requirements/constraints for the paper. Papers are due by 11:59 pm on May 4, 2012. The remaining 10 percent of your grade is based on four short submissions described below.

Short Submissions: You must choose four topics covered in the semester for which you answer the following questions about one of the papers assigned for the week: 1) what is the hypothesis being investigated; 2) why is this question important; 3) what is the identification strategy that is employed; 4) what conclusions are drawn; and 5) what are the problems with the identification strategy. These papers cannot be longer than 2 pages each. Full credit will be given for all good faith efforts. Papers must be posted to the course portal’s document dropbox before the relevant class is held.

Attendance: You should come to class, unless you don’t want to.

Schedule:

January 9: Introduction to law and economics
January 16: No Class (MLK Day)
January 23: Introduction to empirical methods
January 30: Police and crime


February 6: Prisons and crime


February 13: Corporate Governance


February 20: Legal Origins


February 27: Abortion


March 5: No Class (Spring Break)

March 12: Medical Malpractice


March 19: Judicial Behavior


Jef De Mot, Michael Faure, and Jonathan Klick (2012), “Judicial Expedience as an Explanation for the Adoption of Comparative Negligence.”


March 26: Class Choice

April 2: No Class (make up covering more about empirical methods scheduled on January 27 9-11am)

April 9: No Class (made up through individual meetings regarding papers)

April 16: Class Choice

May 4: Papers due (upload to course portal document dropbox by 11:59 pm)