Objective: This seminar will focus on the economic model of crime and its empirical validity. We will be primarily interested in discussing the legal and policy implications of the literature.

Grading: Your grade will be based primarily (70%) on a semester paper. The paper can follow one of two models: 1) a low risk model involves performing a literature review of some area of crime research, providing critical commentary of the literature and suggesting fruitful extensions of that literature; 2) a higher risk (but also higher return) option will involve putting together a crime dataset and examining the effect of some policy intervention on crime rates. You should discuss your topic with me by the middle of the semester. I am happy to comment on drafts as well. The final paper is due on the last day of class (submitted by midnight to the class portal). The remainder of the class grade (30%) will be determined according to your performance on the “comments” discussed below.

Comments: As you can see on the schedule below, each week’s discussion will focus on the papers identified as “required.” There are also sets of “optional” papers for each week. Each week, you should choose one optional paper to write a very short (2 pages max) comment on that addresses the following questions: 1) What is the hypothesis of the paper; 2) why is the question addressed in #1 important; 3) what methods are used to examine the hypothesis; 4) what did the author find when she tested the hypothesis; and 5) what is the strongest criticism of the approach taken by the author. Your best six comments will count toward your grade (i.e., maximum of 5% for each), so (if you choose) you can skip the assignment for up to 6 weeks without hurting your grade. The comments are due before class starts each week (submitted on the class portal).

Discussion: Please be prepared to discuss each week’s required papers and any of the optional papers you find interesting.
Schedule:


Optional: None for this week

Sept. 9: Cops


Sept. 16: Prisons


Sept. 23: No Class

Sept. 30: Capital Punishment


Oct. 7: Guns


Oct. 14: Sentencing Enhancements


Oct. 21: Corruption


Oct. 28: White Collar Crime


Nov. 4: Effect of Macroeconomic Conditions/Poverty on Crime


**Nov. 11: Juvenile Crime**


**Nov. 18: Drugs/Drinking**


**Nov. 25: Relationship Between Education and Crime**


Dec. 2: Immigration and Crime

Borjas, Grogger, and Hanson “IMMIGRATION AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: THE RESPONSE OF WAGES, EMPLOYMENT, AND INCARCERATION TO LABOR SUPPLY SHOCKS” NBER 2006

Butcher and Piehl “Recent Immigrants: Unexpected Implications for Crime and Incarceration.” NBER 1997

Butcher and Piehl “WHY ARE IMMIGRANTS' INCARCERATION RATES SO LOW? EVIDENCE ON SELECTIVE IMMIGRATION, DETERRENCE, AND DEPORTATION” NBER 2007