

Introduction to Empirical Legal Studies

Course Description:

The use of empirical methods in legal scholarship has become increasingly important. From simple descriptive studies of court outcomes to sophisticated econometric studies of the effects of law on behavior, empirical work disciplines legal theorizing and provides new insights into old legal questions. In this course, we will briefly cover the mechanics of descriptive and inferential statistics as they apply to legal topics. The rest of the course will focus on research design with an eye toward testing causal claims made in legal scholarship.

Monday

Topics: Intro Stats and Mechanics of Regression

Readings:

Federal Judicial Center, Reference Guide on Statistics:

[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/SciMan3D07.pdf/\\$file/SciMan3D07.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/SciMan3D07.pdf/$file/SciMan3D07.pdf)

Federal Judicial Center, Reference Guide on Multiple Regression:

[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/SciMan3D08.pdf/\\$file/SciMan3D08.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/SciMan3D08.pdf/$file/SciMan3D08.pdf)

Tuesday

Topic: Correlation (Often) Isn't Causation

Readings:

La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, and Shleifer (2008). "The Economic Consequences of Legal Origins," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(2): 285-332

http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/shleifer/files/consequences_jel_final.pdf

Helland and Klick (2011). "Legal Origins and Empirical Credibility," in Faure and Smits, eds, *Does Law Matter? On Law and Economics Growth*

<https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/jklick/credibility.pdf>

Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2001). "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review*, 91(5): 1369-1401

<http://economics.mit.edu/files/4123>

Wednesday

Topic: The Credibility Revolution

Readings:

Angrist and Pischke (2010). "The Credibility Revolution in Empirical Economics: How Better Research Design Is Taking the Con Out of Econometrics," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 24(2): 3-30

<http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.24.2.3>

Levitt (1997). "Using Electoral Cycles in Police Hiring To Estimate the Effect of Police on Crime," *American Economic Review*, 87(3): 270-290

<http://pricetheory.uchicago.edu/levitt/Papers/LevittUsingElectoralCycles1997.pdf>

Klick and Tabarrok (2005). "Using Terror Alert Levels To Estimate the Effect of Police on Crime," *Journal of Law and Economics*, 48(1): 267-279

<https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/jklick/48JLE267.pdf>

MacDonald, Klick, and Grunwald (2014). "The Effect of Privately Provided Police Services on Crime," Working Paper

<https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/jklick/PhillyCops.pdf>

Thursday

Topic: Empirical Finance

Readings:

Klick and Sitkoff (2008). "Agency Costs, Charitable Trusts, and Corporate Control: Evidence From Hershey's Kiss-Off," *Columbia Law Review*, 108(4): 749-838

<https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/jklick/108CLR749.pdf>

Gelbach, Helland, and Klick (2013). "Valid Inference in Single-Firm, Single-Event Studies," *American Law and Economics Review*, 15(2): 495-541

<https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/jklick/15ALER495.pdf>

Friday

Advanced Topics and/or Hands On Exercises