

---

# EC 379

## Economics of Crime Seminar

---

### Overview

This course is designed with two central goals. First, we will develop our ability to use microeconomic and econometric tools to explore and understand crime and incarceration. Relevant topics include but are not limited to: Are criminals rational economic actors? What policies most efficiently mitigate the social costs associated with criminal activity? What role does incarceration play in deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation? Second, we will develop student's analytical thinking and writing as well as research and presentation skills.

### Time Expectations

Students should expect to spend 2 hours outside of class for each hour of class time.

### Evaluation

Grades in this class will be based on, article summaries, discussions, and a research paper. In addition, you are expected to actively participate in class. I reserve the right to give additional short in class quizzes that will be counted towards your participation points. Grades will be weighted as follows:

- 20% - Article Summaries
- 20% - Class Participation
- 10% - Leading Discussion
- 25% - Research Paper Components and Presentation
- 25% - Research Paper – Final Draft

### Readings

There is no assigned text for this course. Readings will be placed on reserve in the library or posted to PWeb.

---

Fall 2021  
M, W 10:00 – 11:50 AM  
HSSC – S3333

Instructor: Logan Lee  
E-Mail: leelogan@grinnell.edu  
Phone: (641)269-4015  
Office: HSSC – S3348  
Office Hours: Monday: 1:00 - 2:00 PM  
Tuesday: 8:00 – 9:00 AM  
Wednesday: 3:00 - 4:00 PM  
Friday: 10:00-11:00 AM  
and by appointment

---

### Important Dates

---

#### September 8<sup>th</sup>

Research Paper Topic Due

---

#### September 15<sup>th</sup>

Analisa Packham Visit

---

#### September 29<sup>th</sup>

Data for Research Paper Due

---

#### October 13<sup>th</sup>

Paper Introduction and Literature Review Due

---

#### October 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>

Fall Break

---

#### November 3<sup>rd</sup>

Data and Empirical Model Paper Section Due

---

#### November 22<sup>nd</sup>

No Class – Research Day

---

#### November 24<sup>th</sup>

First Draft of Paper Due

---

#### December 16<sup>th</sup>

Final Paper Due

---

## Article Summaries

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to answer a series of questions about one of the readings assigned for that class session. Summaries must be turned in at the beginning of class and are designed to facilitate the discussion we will have. Questions for each article will be posted on P-web alongside the article itself.

## Class Participation

The allotted class time of 2 hours is designed to allow for a lecture/discussion lead by the instructor as well as a significant portion of the class directed by students. Throughout the semester, each student will be asked to lead discussion on one or more assigned readings. The discussion should include the central research question and motivation, the techniques used to answer the research question, a summary of the main results, policy implications, the paper's place among other papers we have discussed, and questions for discussion with the class. Each student should expect to meet with me individually to discuss the readings they are assigned to present. In addition, students will participate in debates and various other discussion activities. Active student participation will be crucial in this course.

## Research Paper

Students will write a research paper investigating a question related to the economics of crime. Each student will study a topic of their choosing but all topics must receive approval from me. When completing the data analysis, students may use whatever statistical software they are most comfortable with (eg. R, Stata). Your research paper will be shared with the class and you will present your research to the class near the end of the term. Throughout the term, components of the research paper will be due. This is to encourage you to start early and work on the paper throughout the term. Specific dates for each component can be found on the first page of this syllabus. More information about the research paper can be found in the final paper template available on PWeb.

## Students with Disabilities

I strive to create a fully inclusive classroom (digital or otherwise); thus, I welcome individual students to approach me about distinctive learning needs. In particular, I encourage students with disabilities to have a conversation with me and disclose how our classroom or course activities could impact the disability and what accommodations would be essential to you. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of Goodnow Hall (x3089).

## Academic Honesty

Grinnell College's Academic Honesty Policy is located in the Student Handbook available online at: <http://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537>. It is the College's expectation that students be aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy. If you have questions about what level of collaboration is acceptable on a particular assignment or about how a particular assignment relates to the College's policy, I am happy to discuss the assignment with you in advance of the assignment's due date.

## Religious Holidays

I encourage students who plan to observe holy days that coincide with class meetings or assignment due dates to consult with me in the first two weeks of classes so that we may reach a mutual understanding of how you can meet the terms of your religious observance and also the requirements for this course.

## Tentative Schedule

Below is a schedule of topics and readings that we will cover in lecture. This schedule is subject to change given the pace of the class. All changes will be announced in class and posted on blackboard.

Dates	Topic	Readings
<b>August 30-September 1</b>	<b>Introduction, and Syllabus Economic Models of Crime</b>	*Becker (1974), *Miceli - Chapter 9 (2004);
<b>September 6-8</b>	<b>Criminal Behavior – The Tools of Empirical Crime Research</b>	*Hansen (2015); *Anderson, Hansen, and Rees (2013); *Charles and Luoh (2010)
<b>September 13-15</b>	<b>Social Conditions and Crime</b>	Donohue and Levitt (2001a); Reyes (2015); (!) Chyn (2018); (!) Carr and Packham (2019)
<b>September 20-22</b>	<b>Deterrence and Incapacitation</b>	Kessler and Levitt (1999); Drago, Galbiati, and Vertova (2009), *Buonanno and Raphael (2013) – Paper Replication
<b>September 27-29</b>	<b>Incarceration</b>	Levitt (1996); *Johnson and Raphael (2012); Mukherjee (2014); (!) Agan and Starr (2017);
<b>October 4–6</b>	<b>Implications of Incarceration</b>	Johnson and Raphael (2009); *Moskos (2011); (!) Norris, Perenceo, and Weaver (2019); (!) Barr and Gibbs (2018)
<b>October 11-13</b>	<b>Recidivism</b>	Chen and Shapiro (2007); Di Tella and Schargrodsky (2013); (!) Lee (2020)
<b>October 18-20</b>	<b>Fall Break</b>	None
<b>October 25-27</b>	<b>Policing</b>	Draca, Mirko, Machin and Witt (2011); Evans and Owens (2007); *Chalfin and McCrary (2015); (Debate: Should the U.S. Police Force be Expanded?)
<b>November 1-3</b>	<b>Policing and Race Part 1</b>	Donohue and Levitt (2001b); Harvard Implicit Association Test; Grogger and Ridgeway (2006); Feigenberg and Miller (2021);
<b>November 8-10</b>	<b>Policing and Race Part 2</b>	(!) Hoekstra and Sloan (2020), Ba et al. (2020); Ba (2019); (Debate: Should Police be Required to Wear Body Cameras?)
<b>November 15-17</b>	<b>Juvenile Delinquency and Intergenerational Effects</b>	Mocan and Rees (2005); Deming (2011); Jacob and Lefgren (2003) Bayer, Hjalmarsson and Pozen (2009)
<b>November 24</b>	<b>Gun Policy</b>	Duggan (2001); Plassman and Whitley (2003);
<b>November 29- December 1</b>	<b>Gun Policy, Presentations of Research Projects</b>	Donohue, Aneja, and Weber (2016) - (Open Carry Debate)
<b>December 6-8</b>	<b>Presentations of Research Projects</b>	None

Papers marked with an \* are not eligible to be chosen for student presentations. Papers marked with an (!) are available as a Probable Causation podcast