

Law and Economics

Module 4, 2020-2021

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Course information

Course Website: TBA

Instructor's Office Hours: TBA

Class Time: TBA

Room Number: TBA

TAs: TBA

Course description

Why are some countries rich and others poor? Why are some countries democracies and others dictatorships? These fundamental questions have animated both economists and political scientists since centuries. In this course, we take a “law and economics” perspective to answering these questions. First, we explore what kind of legal institutions promote economic development and democratic accountability? Second, we take this discussion to frontier of research and ask what are the determinants that bias judicial decisions? The goal of this course, therefore, is to acquaint students with the seminal academic contributions as well as frontier research that attempts to tackle questions that are key for economic and political development from a “law and economics” perspective.

Course requirements, grading, and attendance policies

Taking Econometrics I, II and Applied Microeconomics course are preferred but not required for this class. Kindly, try to make it to the course 5 minutes before the start of each lecture. Grades will consist of a referee report (25%), a presentation (25%) and a research paper (50%) in groups of 2. The students can choose to organize in a group of 2 or submit assignments individually if they prefer to do so. Compulsory readings are marked with *.

Course contents

Lecture 1. Introduction

- *Posner, R.A., 2014. Economic analysis of law. Wolters Kluwer law & Business. Chapter 1
- *Posner, R.A., 2014. Economic analysis of law. Wolters Kluwer law & Business. Chapter 2
- Myerson, R.B., 2000. Economic analysis of constitutions. Chicago Law Review
- Levine, R., 1999. Law, finance, and economic growth. Journal of financial Intermediation, 8(1-2), pp.8-35.

Lecture 2. Law and the Economic Development Part I

- *Feld, L.P. and Voigt, S., 2003. Economic growth and judicial independence: cross-country evidence using a new set of indicators. European Journal of Political Economy, 19(3), pp.497-527.
- Djankov, S., La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F. and Shleifer, A., 2003. Courts. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118(2), pp.453-517.
- La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., Pop-Eleches, C. and Shleifer, A., 2004. Judicial checks and balances. Journal of Political Economy, 112(2), pp.445-470.

Lecture 3. Conceptional Issues

- *Besley, T. and Case, A., 2000. Unnatural experiments? Estimating the incidence of endogenous policies. The Economic Journal, 110(467), pp.672-694.
- Levine, R. and Zervos, S.J., 1993. What we have learned about policy and growth from cross-country regressions?. The American Economic Review, 83(2), pp.426-430.
- Durlauf, S.N., 2009. The rise and fall of cross-country growth regressions. History of Political Economy, 41(Suppl_1), pp.315-333.

Lecture 4. Law and Development Part II

- *Lim, C.S., Snyder Jr, J.M. and Strömberg, D., 2015. The judge, the politician, and the press: newspaper coverage and criminal sentencing across electoral systems. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 7(4), pp.103-35.
- Ponticelli, J. and Alencar, L.S., 2016. Court enforcement, bank loans, and firm investment: evidence from a bankruptcy reform in Brazil. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 131(3), pp.1365-1413.
- Mehmood, S., (2020). Judicial Independence and Development: Evidence from Pakistan. Under Revision for Review of Economic Studies.

Lecture 5. Law and Physiological Bias

- *Eren, O. and Mocan, N., 2018. Emotional judges and unlucky juveniles. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 10(3), pp.171-205.
- Danziger, S., Levav, J. and Avnaim-Pesso, L., 2011. Extraneous factors in judicial decisions. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 108(17), pp.6889-6892.
- Heyes, A. and Saberian, S., 2019. Temperature and decisions: evidence from 207,000 court cases. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 11(2), pp.238-65.
- Dietrich, B.J., Enos, R.D. and Sen, M., 2019. Emotional arousal predicts voting on the US supreme court. Political Analysis, 27(2), pp.237-243.

Lecture 6. Law and Race

- *Alesina, A. and La Ferrara, E., 2014. A test of racial bias in capital sentencing. *American Economic Review*, 104(11), pp.3397-3433.
- Arnold, D., Dobbie, W. and Yang, C.S., 2018. Racial bias in bail decisions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(4), pp.1885-1932.
- Rachlinski, J.J., Johnson, S.L., Wistrich, A.J. and Guthrie, C., 2008. Does unconscious racial bias affect trial judges. *Notre Dame L. Rev.*, 84, p.1195.

Lecture 7. Law and Gender

- *Ornaghi, A., Ash, E. and Chen, D.L., 2020. Gender Attitudes in the Judiciary: Evidence from U.S. Circuit Courts. *Center for Law & Economics Working Paper Series*.
- Sen, M., 2017. Diversity, qualifications, and ideology: how female and minority judges have changed, or not changed, over time. *Wis. L. Rev.*, p.367.

Lecture 8. Law and Religion

- *Seror, A. and Mehmood, S., 2020. Ramadan Spirit and Criminal Acquittals: Causal Evidence from Pakistan. *AMSE Working Paper*.
- Shayo, M. and Zussman, A., 2011. Judicial ingroup bias in the shadow of terrorism. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(3), pp.1447-1484.
- Seror, A. and Mehmood, S., 2020. Shrine Leaders and Rule of Law. *AMSE Working Paper*.

Lecture 9. Law and Political Bias

- *Harris, A.P. and Sen, M., 2019. Bias and judging. *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Binder, S.A. and Maltzman, F., 2002. Senatorial delay in confirming federal judges, 1947-1998. *American Journal of Political Science*, pp.190-199.
- Ash, E., Chen, D.L. and Naidu, S., 2019. Ideas have consequences: the impact of law and economics on American justice. *Center for Law & Economics Working Paper Series*.
- Ash, E. and MacLeod, W.B., 2020. Reducing Partisanship in Judicial Elections Can Improve Judge Quality: Evidence from US State Appellate Courts. *Center for Law & Economics Working Paper Series*, 5.

Lecture 10. Law and History

- *La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., Shleifer, A. and Vishny, R.W., 1997. Legal determinants of external finance. *The journal of finance*, 52(3), pp.1131-1150.
- Glaeser, E. L., & Shleifer, A. (2002). Legal origins. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(4), 1193-1229.
- Anderson, S., 2018. Legal origins and female HIV. *American Economic Review*, 108(6), pp.1407-39.

Lecture 11. Law and Russia

- Shvets, J., 2013. Judicial Institutions and Firms' External Finance: Evidence from Russia. *The Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 29(4), pp.735-764.
- *Slinko, I., Yakovlev, E. and Zhuravskaya, E., 2005. Laws for sale: evidence from Russia. *American Law and Economics Review*, 7(1), pp.284-318.

Description of course methodology

Course is based on lectures that involve active participation of students in discussion.

Sample tasks for course evaluation

Write a 2-3-page referee report on the paper “Ideas have consequences: the impact of law and economics on American justice” by Daniel Chen, Elliot Ash and Suresh Naidu

Course materials

Recommended textbooks

Posner, R.A., 2014. Economic analysis of law. Wolters Kluwer Law & Business. New York.

Academic integrity policy

Cheating, plagiarism, and any other violations of academic ethics at NES are not tolerated.