

San José State University
College of Social Sciences/Department of Economics
ECON 141, Law and Economics, Section 01, Fall 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Darwynn Deyo
Email:	darwynn.deyo@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	By appointment over Zoom
Class Days/Time:	Asynchronous Class
Classroom:	Canvas
Class Website:	http://www.darwyndeyo.com/econ-141-law-and-economics.html
Prerequisites:	Prerequisites: STAT 95 or ECON 3; ECON 100W. Previous education in economics is helpful but not essential.

Course Description

Students in this course will examine the economic effects of legal institutions, existing and proposed, and apply economic analysis to the law. The course will teach students to evaluate the interactions between legal and economic principles and introduce students to standard topics such as property rights, contracts, liability, and torts. Students will be expected to complete homework, two exams, a paper proposal, peer edits, a paper presentation and an original final research paper related to law and economics.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Have a deeper understanding of the law and economics literature.
2. Be able to apply economic analysis to proposed and existing legal rulemaking.
3. Work with and analyze datasets for statistical analysis.
4. Develop a research paper on a topic related to law and economics.

Required Readings

[CO] Robert D. Cooter and Thomas Ulen, *Law and Economics* (6th edition). ISBN 978-0132540650.

[FR] David Friedman, *Law's Order*, ISBN 9780691090092.

Articles and handouts posted on the class website

Note that the Cooter and Ulen text is available free online as a PDF from UC Berkeley:
<https://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/books/2/>. It is also included in Canvas Files.

Recommended Readings

[BO] Wayne C. Booth, *The Craft of Research* (4th edition). ISBN 978-0226239736.

[MC] Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Economical Writing* (2nd edition). ISBN 9781577660637.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Key Semester Dates

First Day of Class – August 19
Last Day to Drop Classes – August 31
Paper Topics Due – September 14
Proposal Due – September 25
Exam #1 – October 9
Last Chance for Proposals – November 1
First Draft Due – November 16
Peer Edits Due – November 23
Exam #2 – December 4
Presentations Due & Last Day of Class – December 7
Final Paper Due in Canvas – December 16

Class Teams

Online classes can be isolating since we are not sharing a single classroom together. Class teams are a way for students to meet and workshop exercises, work on homework questions, troubleshoot your research projects, and get to know each other. Teams must check in together during at once each month (beginning in September) for at least 15 minutes to discuss general questions, an exercise, or homework. Recordings must be uploaded by the end of the month in Canvas. Further details are listed on Canvas.

Participation

Participation will be assessed at random intervals through the semester. Participation is assessed via Canvas Quizzes, weekly Discussions, and Class Team recordings. Each component represents one-third of the total participation grade. Canvas Quizzes may be on the readings, lectures, or other class material. Students must reply to each weekly prompt on Canvas Discussions, and reply to at least two other students' comments that week. If you perform at least 1% better than the class average for participation, I will add 1% to your final weighted score (e.g. if you earned 8% out of the possible 10%, you would then have a recorded 9%). Make sure you have your Canvas notifications turned on!

Exercises

Exercises are listed in Canvas and can be completed in your class teams over Zoom, but you must submit your work individually. Exercises cover applications in law and economics as well as the building blocks of writing a research paper. Instructions will be given for each exercise on Canvas.

Homework Assignments

There will be four homework assignments during the semester. Homework is *not* submitted for credit. However, exam questions will *almost certainly* draw from the homework questions. You may work on the homework assignments together in your Class Teams or solo. Class Teams can ask questions during Zoom drop-in office

hours to discuss questions on the homework.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course on Canvas under Canvas Quizzes. If a student must miss an exam, this should be discussed with me at least one week ahead of time. In the event of an emergency, students should email me immediately and provide documentation ASAP. Please note that if a student misses an exam and I have not accepted a student's excuse, a grade of "0" will be given. If the absence is excused, the weight of the missing exam will be distributed across the remaining course material.

Final Paper

As part of this course, each student will propose and submit a *research* paper on a subject related to law and economics. The final paper is due in Canvas on the day of the university scheduled final exam, **December 16**, and should run between 8 to 10 pages of text. The paper must be double spaced, follow Chicago Style end references, have Times New Roman font, size 12, and 1 inch margins in a Word Document (.doc or .docx). Tables and references do not contribute to the page count. Your final paper must be submitted to Canvas by **December 16** to receive credit. In addition to the text of your paper, you must include the analysis output used to generate your results (Excel, R, Python, Stata, etc) with your submission. The assignment will be graded using a rubric on Canvas. There are assignments along the semester which will guide you through this process, detailed below.

Research Paper Topic

In order to prepare for the final paper proposal, you will submit a *specific* research question in Canvas Discussions by **September 14** stating the research topic you intend to focus on. Each student must choose a separate topic! If you do not submit your topic on time, you will automatically lose half-credit for the paper proposal. You do not have to wait until the due date (and I recommend you don't!) to submit this topic. I will then give feedback before your proposals are due. Further details are listed on Canvas.

Covid-19 Note: I encourage students to choose a paper topic unrelated to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. There may be a strong temptation at the start of the semester to write on this topic, but by the end of the semester you may feel burned out or under more stress than you are at the start of the semester. There are countless other subjects that fall under the law and economics umbrella; I suggest you take the chance to focus on something new and interesting!

Paper Proposal

In order to prepare for the final research paper, you will submit a 1-2 page proposal in Canvas by **September 25** stating the research question and hypothesis, data sources, methods, and five economic journal citations you plan to use (refer to the template under Canvas Files). I will then approve this proposal or require adjustments before you proceed. You do not have to wait until the due date (and I recommend you don't!) to submit this proposal. The proposal operates on a PASS/FAIL basis. You may find McCloskey and Booth particularly helpful when writing the proposal and final paper. If you receive a RESUBMIT, you must rework the proposal based on my comments by **November 1** or forfeit credit.

First Draft and Peer Edits

The first draft of your paper (minimum 5 pages of text) is due in Canvas on **November 16**. You will then conduct peer edits using the final paper rubric and submit your comments through Canvas. Failure to provide a

draft for someone else to grade and failure to provide peer edits will result in zero credit. Peer edit comments are due in Canvas on **November 23**. Further details are listed on Canvas.

Paper Presentation

You will also give a short ten minute presentation on your paper, which is due in Canvas Studio by **December 7**. You may use presentation slides. The assignment will be graded using a rubric on Canvas.

Course Component	Student Work	Instructor Engagement
Regular 3 units (9 h/wk)	Readings, Homework, Exams, Final Presentation, Final Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare online activities • Evaluate student work and provide specific and actionable feedback
Activity 1 unit (3 h/wk)	Exercises, Proposal, First Draft, Peer Edits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and lead stats workshop including an introduction to data collection • Plan and lead class exercises • Evaluate student work and provide specific and actionable feedback

Grading Information

Determination of Grades

This course must be passed with a C or better as an SJSU graduation requirement. These weights are fixed - improvement in other categories will not raise your grades elsewhere except as stated otherwise. Late work will not be accepted. The final grade in the course will be based on the following weights:

Category	Weight
Participation	15%
Exercises	15%
Exams	20%
Paper Proposal	10%
First Draft & Peer Edits	10%
Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper	20%

These weights are fixed - improvement in other categories will not raise your grades elsewhere except as stated otherwise. Late work will not be accepted.

Grading Scale

A+: 97 to 100 A: 94 to 96 A-: 90 to 93
 B+: 87 to 89 B: 84 to 86 B-: 80 to 83
 C+: 77 to 79 C: 74 to 76 C-: 70 to 73
 D: 60 to 69
 F: <60

Classroom Protocol

Office Hours

The best way to contact me is by email at darwyn.deyo@sjsu.edu. My office hours are by appointment over Zoom. Many questions can be answered quickly over email.

Academic Honesty

I take academic honesty very seriously and will follow the policies as published by SJSU. These policies are online and available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>. It is the responsibility of the student to read and understand what constitutes a violation of the honor code. Claims of ignorance cannot be used to justify dishonest behaviors. Any student caught engaging in activities which violate the honor code as written by the University will receive zero credit for the course instrument(s) which violates the academic honesty policy, and up to a semester grade of “F” for this course. All instances of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will be reported to Student Conduct and Ethical Development. You are expected to be familiar with the SJSU Plagiarism Tutorial & Quiz at <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism>.

Disability Notice

Please contact me as soon as possible if you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Other Class Policies

1. Students will show respect at all times for others.
2. Students must use their SJSU email to communicate with me regarding course material and messages related to this class. I will make an effort to reply to emails related to the course within two business days, but I will not accept email attachments from non-SJSU emails.
3. Students must submit all work through Canvas. All final written work is automatically submitted to Turnitin. Additional class materials can be found at <http://www.darwyndeyo.com/econ-141-law-and-economics.html>
4. Cumulative grades on Canvas do not reflect your class grade. You may request a grade check from me and we can schedule an individual office hour appointment over Zoom to discuss your grade. I cannot send grades over email.
5. Pursuant to California law and University policy (S12-7) <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, this syllabus notifies students that all office hours over Zoom will be recorded. Recordings will only be used in compliance with SJSU policy on academic disputes or in compliance with state and federal law. Students are required to record class team meetings for documentation, but cameras do not need to be turned on so long as other documentation of team interaction exists.
6. Students will not be permitted to share any class recordings or class material with someone who is not enrolled in the class or without permission. The recordings and class material are protected by instructor’s copyright.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Make sure to review these policies and resources.

ECON 141-01 / Law and Economics, Fall 2020 Course Schedule

My proposed schedule for the semester follows. If it proves too ambitious, I will try to simply say less about each topic rather than cut the topics for the final weeks.

Course Schedule

Module	Week Of	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines
1	August 19	Introduction and Online Class Prep
2	August 24	Economic Efficiency and Utility Theory
3	August 31	Property Rights
4	September 7	Externalities & Transaction Costs; <i>Exercise #1: Coase Theorem; HW #1</i>
5	September 14	Contracts and Breach; <i>Topics Due (September 14)</i>
6	September 21	Using the SJSU Library; <i>Exercise #2: Library Workshop</i>
7	September 28	Product Liability and Torts; <i>HW #2</i>
8	October 5	Exam Review; Exam #1 (October 9)
9	October 12	The Economics of Crime...; <i>Exercise #3: Identifying Literature</i>
10	October 19	...and Punishment;
11	October 26	The Shadow of the Law; <i>Exercise #4: Literature Reviews; HW #3</i>
12	November 2	Public Law, Private Governance; <i>Exercise #5: Data Analysis</i>
13	November 9	Applications in Public Health; <i>Exercise #6: Manski Bounds</i>
14	November 16	Labor and the Law; <i>First Drafts Due (November 16) & Peer Edits</i>
15	November 23	Antitrust; <i>HW #4; Thanksgiving Break (November 26 – 27)</i>
16	November 30	Exam Review; Exam #2 (December 4)
17	December 7	<i>Presentations Due (December 7) & Last Day of Class</i>
Final Paper Due	December 16	Final Paper Due in Canvas

ECON 141-01 / Law and Economics, Fall 2020 Readings

In addition to the textbook readings listed for each week, students should read the articles associated with each topic posted on the class website.

Course Schedule

Module	Week Of	Topics and Readings
1	August 19	Introduction and Online Class Prep (CO 1)
2	August 24	Economic Efficiency and Utility Theory (CO 2-3; FR 1-2)
3	August 31	Property Rights (CO 4; FR 10-11)
4	September 7	Externalities and Transaction Costs (CO 5; FR 3-5)
5	September 14	Contracts and Breach (CO 8; FR 12)
6	September 21	<i>Using the SJSU Library</i>
7	September 28	Product Liability and Torts (CO 6; FR 14)
8	October 5	Exam Review; Exam #1 (October 9)
9	October 12	The Economics of Crime... (CO 12; FR 9, 15)
10	October 19	...and Punishment (CO 13; FR 18)
11	October 26	The Shadow of the Law (FR 19)
12	November 2	Public Law, Private Governance
13	November 9	Applications in Public Health
14	November 16	Labor and the Law
15	November 23	Antitrust (CO 11); <i>Thanksgiving Break (November 26 – 27)</i>
16	November 30	Exam Review; Exam #2 (December 4)
17	December 7	<i>Presentations Due & Last Day of Class</i>
Final Paper Due	May 20	Final Paper Due in Canvas