

Law 216 - Fall 2010

Syllabus - Tentative

Description:

This seminar will provide students with an opportunity to discuss ongoing research in the economic analysis of law. At each session, an invited speaker (from Berkeley or elsewhere) will present work in progress, and then take questions from students and faculty in the audience. Speakers include prominent scholars in the field of law and economics from around the nation and the world. The seminar is normally offered in the fall and the spring. Enrollment in either or both semesters is permitted.

A schedule of the workshops is available at the Program in Law & Economics website:

<http://www.law.berkeley.edu/146.htm>, and also at bSpace course website

<https://bspace.berkeley.edu> (registered students: log in with your CALNet ID.)

Prerequisites:

There is no prerequisite, but some familiarity with economic reasoning is required.

Law 251.31 (Law, Economics and Business) is especially good background.

Course Requirements:

There is no exam. However, students are required to submit memos on the papers presented. A student must write memos on at least 5 of the papers presented, and over the course of the semester the student must submit memos totaling 25 double-spaced pages (letter-size). Each memo should consist of 1-3 comments. A comment might, for example, identify weaknesses in the arguments presented; discuss issues and problems that the paper raises or misses; or explain the student's views on subjects or positions presented in the paper. The comment should have a heading indicating its main point. The heading should be in question form (e.g., "does the author miss X?"). A good way to begin a comment is by writing a paragraph or two that summarizes the thesis of the paper. A clear, short summary demonstrates that you understand the paper and prepares the reader for your critique of it. In your critique, avoid expressions of your own opinion. Instead, develop an analysis. Sample student memos have been uploaded to the "Resources" folder at bSpace. (Note: 5 comments totaling 25 pages do not satisfy the law school's writing requirement for graduation.)

Some of the papers might be difficult to understand. If a student feels stumped by a particular paper, s/he has three choices. (1) The student can look at the introduction and conclusion to get a sense of what the paper is saying, and then write comments relating to the general claims it makes. (2) The student can focus on a part, a section, or even one or two paragraphs of the paper, and use that material as a basis for several pages of comments. (One can say interesting things about a paper without being able to understand every equation, or even every part of the paper.) (3) The student can choose not to write comments on that paper.

Students should upload an electronic copy of their memo (in Word or PDF) to the "**Assignments**" folder at bSpace by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the seminar. Only memos submitted by the deadline will count toward fulfilling the course requirement. Student should include the followings as header:

Student Name

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Speaker_last name and seminar date (e.g. McCrary_Jan 25, 2010)

Papers presented at the workshop will be posted approximately one week in advance to the website: repositories.cdlib.org/berkeley_law_econ . You can also pick up a printed version of the paper at Simon 793. Questions about the memos submission or the availability of speaker papers can be addressed to Ida Ng (642-5406) at Simon 793. Students are expected to attend the sessions regularly and to participate in online or in-class discussions (even if they are writing memos on only 5 of the papers).

Grading:

Grades will depend on written work and class participation. Students turning in comments indicating that they've read the paper will receive at least a P. Students who wish to earn more than a P must put in more thought and effort. We generally do not provide individualized feedback during the course of the semester.