Instructor:  Tanya Kar  
Contact:  tanya_kar@fitnyc.edu  
Office Hours:  There are no regular office hours, but I check e-mail and blackboard regularly. Send me an e-mail if you’d like to set up a Zoom meeting.

Course Description
Crimes with economic motivations are analyzed using the Economic Theory of Crime. Topics focus on urban problems including: narcotics, illegal gambling, loan-sharking, labor racketeering, and organized crime. Costs of crime and imprisonment are discussed. Strengths and weaknesses of the Economic Theory of Crime are discussed from alternative points of view.

Professor’s Note on the Course Description
I wrote this description over fifteen years ago and it needs to be changed. We will actually look at several different “Economic Theories of Crime.” We won’t have time to cover all those topics, but the spirit of the course is the same.

Learning Goals:
Upon passing this class students will be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of different economic approaches to crime and Criminal Justice
- Communicate knowledge of economic analysis of crime in written essays
- Work with other students to produce persuasive documents

How to Succeed in this Class
The most important factor in your grade will be the time you put into this course. You should spend 6-8 hours a week on this course. That means a total of 90 to 120 hours over the 15 weeks of the semester. Some students may need to spend more time on the course, and some may achieve their goals with less. The second factor is consistency and routine. You will do best if you pace yourself. It is too easy to let online courses slide and then try to catch up – that does not work. Your best strategy is to budget your 8 hours a week during times you know you can give the course your attention – stick it in your schedule and treat those hours as inviolate. Do not try to squeeze this class into the holes of your life. Third, ask questions! There is a special Discussion Tread in the “Introduction” Discussion Forum to ask questions. Fourth, proofread and “polish” written essay assignments that are graded. You will be writing in discussion boards where only your participation is graded; in these places you can be less formal with your writing.

Format of the Course and Workload
The course is divided into 5 units. Each unit is divided into weeks, some units contain more weeks than others. All weeks end on Sundays. There are readings or alternative media assignments for each week. These “inputs” should be started early in the week or even before the week begins. Each week also has assignments that earn points toward your final grade. Unless otherwise stated, these assignments are due at THE END OF THE WEEK. You are encouraged work on them early and to submit them early. Assignments include:

(1) “Reading Exercises” – fifteen weekly exercises, each worth 1% of course grade (15% total). These exercises contain multiple choice, ranking, multiple answer, and true/false
questions. These exercises should help you make the most of the readings and other media. You will be able to retake these until you earn full credit, or the week ends. If you have not attempted the Reading Exercise by the end of the week it will still be available, but you will only get one attempt. You are encouraged to try the exercises BEFORE you begin the readings; this will help you identify the important parts of the readings.

(2) Discussion Forums – fifteen weekly discussion assignments, each worth 1% of the course grade (15% total). These will be graded, but mostly on effort. Each week has specific discussion instructions, some weeks you must ask a question, other weeks you must reply to another classmate – read each week’s instructions carefully. Your grade will depend on your ability to follow the directions and the effort you put into your posting. Think of the Discussion Forums as a place to engage the class material, make mistakes and learn from them. You may participate after the week ends, but your grade will be reduced.

(3) Group Debate Assignments – various postings to the Debate Space worth 20% of your course grade. Each group member will receive the same grade (with possible adjustments for lack of participation as determined by the Professor). You will be assigned to a debate group by week 3. You can find more detailed instructions in the “Debate Space” inside our Blackboard site.

(4) Essays – two essays worth 25% of the course grade each (50% total). You should work on these for several weeks before they are due. The first is due at the end of week 11 and the other at the end of week 15. You are not required to submit outlines or drafts, but you can ask the Professor for advice and to review of outlines and drafts. More detailed instructions will be provided.

Course Grade
Reading Exercises 15%
Discussions 15%
Group Debates 20%
Essays 50%

Grading Scale
The grading scale will be the following* (grades rounded to the nearest whole number):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76-73 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70 %</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63 %</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>62-60 %</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60 %</td>
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</tbody>
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* I reserve the right to assign a higher letter grade than points earned (but not vice versa).

Feedback and Response Time
I will do my best to answer emails within 24 hours. Graded assignments may take up to a week for grading and comments. You have a right to helpful feedback on written assignments. If you feel that you have not received sufficient feedback, then email me and ask for more. If you can, be specific in your request for more feedback. The purpose to feedback is to help you improve your work.

Class Environment
This course discusses material some people consider sensitive. My goal is to provide a class where every student feels safe; but students should also feel “a little uncomfortable.” You should feel safe in that other students do not verbally attack you personally. You should feel safe in expressing your opinions. You should feel safe enough to make mistakes and expect forgiveness from others when you
do. (I cannot over emphasize the importance of feeling safe enough to make mistakes – college is all about a safe place to make mistakes – or at least it should be).

You should also feel somewhat uncomfortable about the subject matter and the policy positions of others including politicians, your classmates, your professors and even yourself. We need to confront the things in our lives and society that make us uncomfortable so that we can produce positive change. If you find the class has progressed beyond uncomfortable and transgressed into “unsafe.” Please let me know immediately.

I do not provide “trigger” warnings for each item that may make someone feel unsafe. If you know that you are very sensitive to certain subjects, please discuss this with me at the beginning of the semester. I will work with you individually to navigate these subjects.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

For the entire policy on academic integrity go to: [http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/academic-integrity)

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source
- Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments

Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or part of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the Internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources without proper attribution. (From the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Graduate Bulletin, p. 89)

Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The Library has free guides designed to help students with problems of documentation. We may use Turnitin.com.

**Textbooks**


Additional readings, videos, and podcasts available through Blackboard. These may be updated throughout the semester.

Please use the “Reading Guides” and Reading Exercises to help you manage the reading load. You do not need to read every sentence and listen to every minute of video/audio. Skimming through readings is a valuable skill – so work on it during this class. I find that its best to preview a reading. I give it only 10 minutes and I read the introduction and conclusion, plus the section titles and glance at any figures and graphs. Then I can go back for a deeper read of what is important. Taking notes as you go also helps.
Topics and Readings Schedule
Note: Unless noted, each week comprises the interval Monday to Sunday.
Expect additions & changes – blackboard will be updated.

Unit 1: Economic Analysis in Context

Introduction to our Class: Economic Analysis of Crime
Week 1 Ends August 30
Readings:
* Course Syllabus
Assignments:
* Week 1 Reading Exercise
* Discussion: Answer the Professor’s question in the “Introduction” Forum

Introduction to Three Kinds of Economic Analysis
Week 2: Ends September 6
Readings:
* ARIELY Introduction: Why is Dishonesty so Interesting
* “Marxist Ideology, Communist Reality and the Concept of Criminal Justice” by Eugene Kamenka and Alice Erh-Soon Tay in Criminal Justice Ethics 6(3) 1987, 3-29.
Assignments:
* Week 2 Readings Exercise: Three Schools
* Discussion: Ask a question ABOUT THE COURSE in the “Introduction” Forum

Current Events: COVID-19 and the Economy
Week 3 Ends September 13
Readings:
* “What to know about the report on America’s COVID-hit GDP” by Lucia Mutikani (31 Jul 2020) on The World Economic Forum website.
* “Coronavirus: A visual guide to the economic impact” by Lora Jones, Daniele Palumbo & David Brown (30 June 2020) from the BBC.
* “How the Covid-19 economy is hurting US Latinos more than any other group” by Chauncey Alcorn on CNN.com.
* Optional: “Ensuring an Economy That Works for Black Women” from The Center for American Progress (August 7, 2020).
Assignments:
* Week 3 Readings Exercise: COVID-19 & The Economy
* Discussion: Ask a question about COVID19 and the Economy in the “Introduction” Forum
* Debate: Get to know your groupmates!
Current Events: Race, Justice & Economics
Week 4 Ends September 20
Readings:
* “For too long, economists have dodged the issue of racism and discrimination” by Kai Ryssdal and Maria Hollenhorst (June 18, 2020) on Market Place.
* Statement from the AEA Executive Committee (On Blacks in Economics), Member Announcement, June 5, 2020.
Assignments:
* Week 4 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Ask a question about Race, Justice, and Economics in the “Introduction” Forum
* Debate: Submit “Action Plan”

Unit 2: Mainstream Approach: Rational Acts

The Seminal Paper
Week 5: Ends September 27
Readings:
* Optional Video: The Economics of Crime and the Law (A tribute to Gary Becker)
Assignments:
* Week 5 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Answer one of the Professor’s Questions in the “Mainstream” Forum
* Debate: Submit draft of “Opening Argument”

Mainstream Empirical
Week 6 Ends October 4
Readings:
Assignments:
* Week 6 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Comment on another student’s answer in the “Mainstream” Forum
* Debate: Submit Opening Arguments
Update on Mainstream Empirical  
**Week 7 Ends October 11**

**Readings:**  
https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/what-caused-crime-decline

**Assignments:**  
* Week 7 Readings Exercise  
* Discussion: Respond to a comment on your answer in the “Mainstream” Forum. You can respond to either a student or the professor’s comment.  
* Debate: Anti groups submit First Questions

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**Unit 3: Behavioral Economics**

**Behavioral Experiments**  
**Week 8 Ends October 18**

**Readings:**  
* Ariely: Chapters 1 through 5

**Assignments:**  
* Week 8 Readings Exercise  
* Discussion: Answer one of the Professor’s Questions in the “Behavioral” Forum  
* Debate: Pro groups submit First Answers and their First Questions (two separate documents)

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**Social Aspects of Behavioral**  
**Week 9 Ends October 25**

**Readings:**  
* Ariely: Chapters 6 through 10

**Assignments:**  
* Week 9 Readings Exercise (1 point)  
* Discussion: Comment on another student’s answer in the “Behavioral” Forum  
* Debates: Anti groups submit First Answers and their Second Questions (two separate documents)

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**Behavioral and Violence**  
**Week 10 Ends November 1**

**Readings:**  

**Assignments:**  
* Week 10 Readings Exercise  
* Discussion: Respond to a comment on your answer in the “Behavioral” Forum. You can respond to either a student or the professor’s comment  
* Debates: Pro groups submit Second Answers and their Second Questions (two separate documents)
Unit 4: Radical Heterodox Approaches

Critiques of Criminal Justice
Week 11 Ends November 8

Readings:
* “The Marxian Critique of Criminal Justice” by Jeffrey Reiman in Criminal Justice Ethics 6(3) 1987, 30-49.

Videos:
* “The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison” by One Trip Little on Cheap Bibles, Published on Jan 28, 2016.
* “The Ballad of Tom Joad” by Woody Guthrie
* “The Ghost of Tom Joad” by Bruce Springsteen

Assignments:
* Week 11 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Answer one of the Professor’s Questions in the “Radical Heterodox” Forum
* Debates: Anti groups submit Second Answers

Heterodox Approaches to the Police
Week 12 Ends November 15

Readings:

Assignments:
* Week 12 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Comment on another student’s answer in the “Radical Heterodox” Forum.
* Essay #1

Crime and Minorities
Week 13 Ends November 22

Readings:

Assignments:
* Week 13 Readings Exercise
* Discussion: Respond to a comment on your answer in the “Radical Heterodox” Forum. You can respond to either a student or the professor’s comment.
* Debates: Final Arguments
Reforming the Criminal Justice System
Week 14 Ends December 6
Readings:
* “Criminal Justice Reform” on the Equal Justice Initiative website
* “The Conservative Case for Criminal Justice Reform” by Arthur Rizer and Lars Trautman in The Guardian, August 5, 2018
Assignments:
* Week 14 Reading Exercise
* Discussion: Answer one of the Professor’s Questions in the “Review” Forum
* Debates: Voting and Comments!

Reforming Society: Crime, Race, Poverty & Climate
Week 15 Ends December 13
Readings:
* 5 Things to Know About Communities of Color and Environmental Justice by Jasmine Bell April 25, 2016 on Center for American Progress website
* Environmental & Climate Justice on NAACP website
* “America's Coming Conservative Climate Offensive” by Drew Bond and John Hart, May 07, 2020, in on RealClearEnergy.org
Assignments:
* Week 15 Reading Exercise
* Discussion: Comment on another student’s answer in the “Review” Forum
* Essay #2