

## Syllabus – PhD Course Proposal

### Course Title: PhD Course “Economics of Crime”

#### Instructor:

Dr. Francesca Maria Calamunci, University of Catania & IZA

#### Course Description:

This course introduces students to the economics of crime, with a focus on organized crime, corruption, and policy interventions. It combines economic theory with empirical evidence to explore how incentives, opportunity costs, and institutional factors shape criminal behavior. Students will gain the skills to critically assess research on crime, evaluate policy effectiveness, and understand the economic mechanisms underlying criminal activity. The course is designed for PhD students in economics, political economy, or public policy, as it combines rigorous microeconomic modeling, empirical strategies, and policy evaluation. It provides a foundation to conduct independent research and engage with policy-relevant questions in the field.

#### Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Understand core economic models of crime, deterrence, and criminal behavior.
- ✓ Evaluate empirical evidence on crime and anti-crime policies.
- ✓ Analyze the role of institutions, corruption, and organized crime in shaping criminal activity.
- ✓ Apply economic reasoning to critically assess research and policy interventions.

#### Prerequisites:

Students are expected to have a solid foundation in microeconomics at the graduate level and familiarity with econometrics, including regression analysis and causal inference methods (differences in differences, regression discontinuity design, synthetic control methods, IV...).

A working knowledge of statistics is required, as well as experience with data analysis using software such as Stata, R, or Python.

No prior specialized knowledge of criminal justice or law is necessary, but students should be comfortable interpreting empirical research and applying quantitative methods to policy questions.

#### Course Structure and Schedule (15 hours): 6 sessions, each approximately 2.5 hours

Session	Topic	Key Readings
1	Introduction: Economics of crime, deterrence and incapacitation	Becker, G. S. (1968); Drago, F., Galbiati, R., & Vertova, P. (2009); Drago, F., & Galbiati, R. (2012); Philippe, A. (Forthcoming)

2	Detention and electronic monitoring	Mastrobuoni, G., & Terlizzese, D. (2022); Di Tella, R., & Schargrodsky, E. (2013); Calamunci, F., Daniele, G., Mastrobuoni, G., & Terlizzese, D. (Working Paper); Mueller-Smith, M. (2015); Garin, A., et al. (2023)
3	Alternatives to prison & Police and crime	Hansen, B. (2015); Donohue III, J. J. (2015); Levitt, S. D. (1997); Draca, M., Machin, S., & Witt, R. (2011); Di Tella, R., & Schargrodsky, E. (2004); Masera, F. (2021); Barbosa, D., Fetzer, T., Souza, P. C., & Vieira, C. (2021)
4	Opportunity cost & Immigration and crime	Machin, S., Marie, O., & Vujić, S. (2011); Bell, B., Costa, R., & Machin, S. (2022); Britto, D. G., Pinotti, P., & Sampaio, B. (2022); Baron, E. J., & Gross, M. (2022); Bianchi, M., Buonanno, P., & Pinotti, P. (2012); Mastrobuoni, G. & Pinotti, P. (2015); Pinotti, P. (2017)
5	Corruption and political incentives	De Vries, C. E., & Solaz, H. (2017); Daniele, G., & Dipoppa, G. (2023); Aassve, A., Daniele, G., & Le Moglie, M. (2023); Ferraz, C., & Finan, F. (2008); Timmons, J. F., & Garfias, F. (2015); Dunning, T., et al. (2019); Ferraz, C., & Finan, F. (2011); Coviello, D., & Gagliarducci, S. (2017)
6	Organized crime	Bandiera, O. (2003); Dimico, A., Isopi, A., & Olsson, O. (2017); Buonanno, P., Durante, R., Prarolo, G., & Vanin, P. (2015); Acemoglu, D., De Feo, G., & De Luca, G. (2020); Buonanno, P., & Pazzona, M. (2014); Pinotti, P. (2015); Di Cataldo, M., & Mastrococco, N. (2022); Le

		Moglie, M., & Sorrenti, G. (2020); Calamunci, F., Drago, F. (2020); Calamunci, F. M. (2022); Calamunci, F. M., Ferrante, L., & Scebba, R. (2022); Daniele, G., & Dipoppa, G. (2017)
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### Teaching Methods:

Lectures.

### Assessment:

Students will be assessed based on the development of a research idea. Submissions can take the form of a research proposal, a long abstract, or a short presentation.

Guidelines:

- Select an empirical research question related to the topics covered during the course. Any question is acceptable as long as it can be addressed empirically.
- Demonstrate originality and a critical approach to the chosen topic.
- Present a clear and coherent structure, including the identification of relevant datasets and how they will be used (which method).
- Show the ability to connect the chosen topic with other topics discussed during the course.

### Bibliography:

- The Economics of Crime: An Introduction to Rational Crime Analysis 2nd Edition- di Harold Winter.
- A Modern Guide to the Economics of Crime - Buonanno, Paolo, Paolo Vanin, and Juan Vargas. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022.
- Papers mentioned during the course.
- Crime Papers Database [Link](#)
- Corruption Papers Database [Link](#)

### Preferred Bimester:

March–April