Colloquium on the Law, Economics and Politics of Urban Affairs
L10.3504
P11.2616

Professors Been, Ellen & Serkin

Course Information – Spring 2009

Meeting Times and Places:

The Colloquium will meet on Mondays, from 4:00 - 5:50 p.m. in Room 208 of Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Square South.

Schedule of the Course:
(Sessions highlighted in bold are open to the public)

Class 1 - January 12th
Introduction to Colloquium; background lecture on basics of research design and quantitative methods

Readings: Furman Center, Fears About Fears About The Neighborhood Impacts of Supportive Housing: How Should Courts Respond? (available on Blackboard)

Howell E. Jackson et al., Chapters 8 (Fundamentals of Statistical Analysis) and 9 (Multivariate Statistics), in Analytical Methods for Lawyers, 2003 (a not very good copy is available on Blackboard)

Been, Critiquing Empirical Work (available on Blackboard)

Note: No class on January 19th, Martin Luther King Day

Class 2 - January 26th
Background lecture on mortgage finance (Professor Been)

Readings: TBA

Class 3 – February 2nd
Paul S. Willen, Senior Economist and Policy Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Paper Topic: TBA

Class 4 – February 9th
Michelle White, Professor of Economics, University of California, San Diego; Research Associate, NBER
**Paper Topic:** Bankruptcy: Past Puzzles, Recent Reforms, And The Mortgage Crisis

**February 12-13th**

*Transforming America’s Housing Policy Conference*

**Class 5 - February 17th**

Class Cancelled, Students asked to attend at least one session of *Transforming America’s Housing Policy* on Febrary 12 or 13th, instead. Students must register to attend, indicating that you are a member of the Colloquium, at tahp@nyu.edu

**Class 6 - February 23rd**

**Carolina K. Reid,** Research Manager, Federal Reserve Bank San Francisco  
**Topic:** Lending in Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhoods in California: The Performance of CRA Lending During the Subprime Meltdown

**Class 7 – March 2nd**

Background lecture on rental housing (Professor Ellen)

Background Readings: TBA

**Class 8 – March 9th**

**Sandra J. Newman,** Professor of Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Director and Director of the Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies  
**Topic:** Owning Versus Renting and Children’s Outcomes

**Class 9 - March 23rd**

**Jens Ludwig,** McCormick Foundation Professor of Social Service Administration, Law, and Public Policy, University of Chicago, Co-Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Faculty Research Fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)  
**Paper Topic:** The Effects of Housing Assistance on Labor Supply: Evidence from a Voucher Lottery (with Brian A. Jacob)

**Class 10 – March 30th**

**David Varady,** Professor, College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, University of Cincinnati,  
**Paper Topic:** The Geographic Concentration of Housing Vouchers and Poverty over Time: A Study of the Metropolitan Cincinnati Market.

**Class 11 – April 6th**

Background lecture on land use and sustainability (Professor Serkin)
Background Readings: TBA

Class 12 - April 13th  
Myron Orfeld, Julius E. Davis Professor of Law; Executive Director, Institute on Race & Poverty, University of Minnesota Law School 
**Paper Topic:** TBA

Class 13 - April 20th  
John Quigley, I. Donald Terner Distinguished Professor, and Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, Goldman School of Public Policy and the Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley; Berkeley Program on Housing and Urban Policy 
**Paper Topic:** Doing Well by Doing Good? Green Office Buildings (with Piet Eichholtz and Nils Kok)

Class 14 - April 27th  
Yan Song, Assistant Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of North Carolina 
**Paper Topic:** How Differences in Property Taxes within Cities Affect Urban Sprawl

Course materials:

Course materials will be distributed in class, and posted on Blackboard, in several installments throughout the semester. Required readings include the papers authored by our speakers and background readings assigned for each of the preview sessions.

Assignments:

The colloquium will consider nine papers, listed above in the course schedule. For each paper, students must submit two questions to address to the author about the paper. Those questions must be e-mailed to the faculty at Professor Serkin’s email -- SerkinC@exchange.law.nyu.edu -- by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the colloquium session attended by the author (in order to give the faculty time to suggest refinements in the questions).

Students also are required to submit a critique of five of the ten papers. The critiques must be e-mailed to the faculty by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday following the presentation. Each critique should be between 800 and 1000 words. The critique should assume that the reader is familiar with the paper, and should not summarize its contents. Instead, the critique should analyze such questions as:
What flaws does the argument contain?
What is unclear or imprecise in the argument or methodology?
What assumptions underlie the argument, and are they unjustified?
How, if at all, would relaxing assumptions underlying the argument change the result?
Are there any flaws in the study's methodology?
Does the methodology actually test the hypothesis?
What questions did the author ignore that should have been considered?
Are there alternative explanations for the study's findings?

These questions are suggestions only, and are not meant to be exhaustive. A critique should tackle just one or a few of the questions, not all of them.

Course requirements:

1. Class Participation: Students will be expected to attend and participate in each class and to submit questions in advance of each session with an outside speaker. Class participation will count for 25% of a student's grade.

2. Papers: The five critiques will collectively count for 75% of a student's grade.

Professors' Contact Information:

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