

PLSC 476: Empirical Legal Studies

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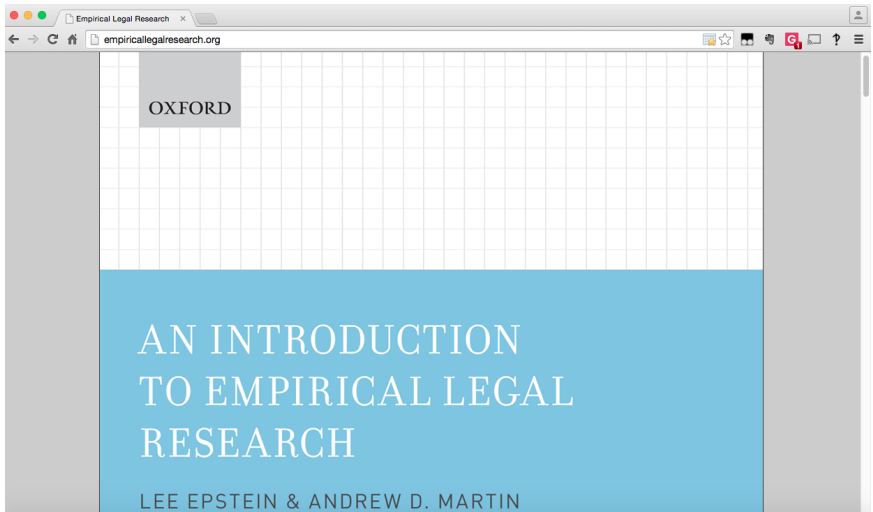
Course Goals

1. Understand and apply empirical (quantitative) methods and tools to inform aspects of U.S. legal / judicial systems.
2. Further develop research skills and tools that will allow you to conduct your own research.

Logistics

- Course meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:05-10:20 p.m. ET.
- Location is Chambers 104
- No class on October 30 (wellness day) or November 25 & 27 (Thanksgiving break)
- Teaching Assistant: Tyler Suman (wts5131 [at] psu [dot] edu)
- Course materials are at:
<https://github.com/PrisonRodeo/PLSC476-FA2025-git/>

The Course Text



Grades will be based upon:

- Four research modules / short papers (15% each)
- A take-home final examination / project (40%)

Class participation will *not* be a component of the grade in PLSC 476.

Communication, etc.

- (Non-virtual) Office: 545 Susan Welch Liberal Arts Building
- Zoom: <https://psu.zoom.us/my/prisonrodeo>
- Office Hours: By appointment
- E-mail: zorn@psu.edu
- Mobile Phone / Text: 803-553-4077
- Bluesky: [@prisonrodeo](#)

Things To Do Before Thursday

1. Bookmark: <https://github.com/PrisonRodeo/PLSC476-FA2025-git>
2. Download and install the following:
 - **R** (v. 4.5.1, from cran.r-project.org), and
 - **RStudio (Desktop)** (v. 2025.05, from <https://posit.co/products/open-source/rstudio/?sid=1>)
3. Read over the “Useful R Resources” document on the github repository