PLSC 476: Empirical Legal Studies

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August 26, 2025

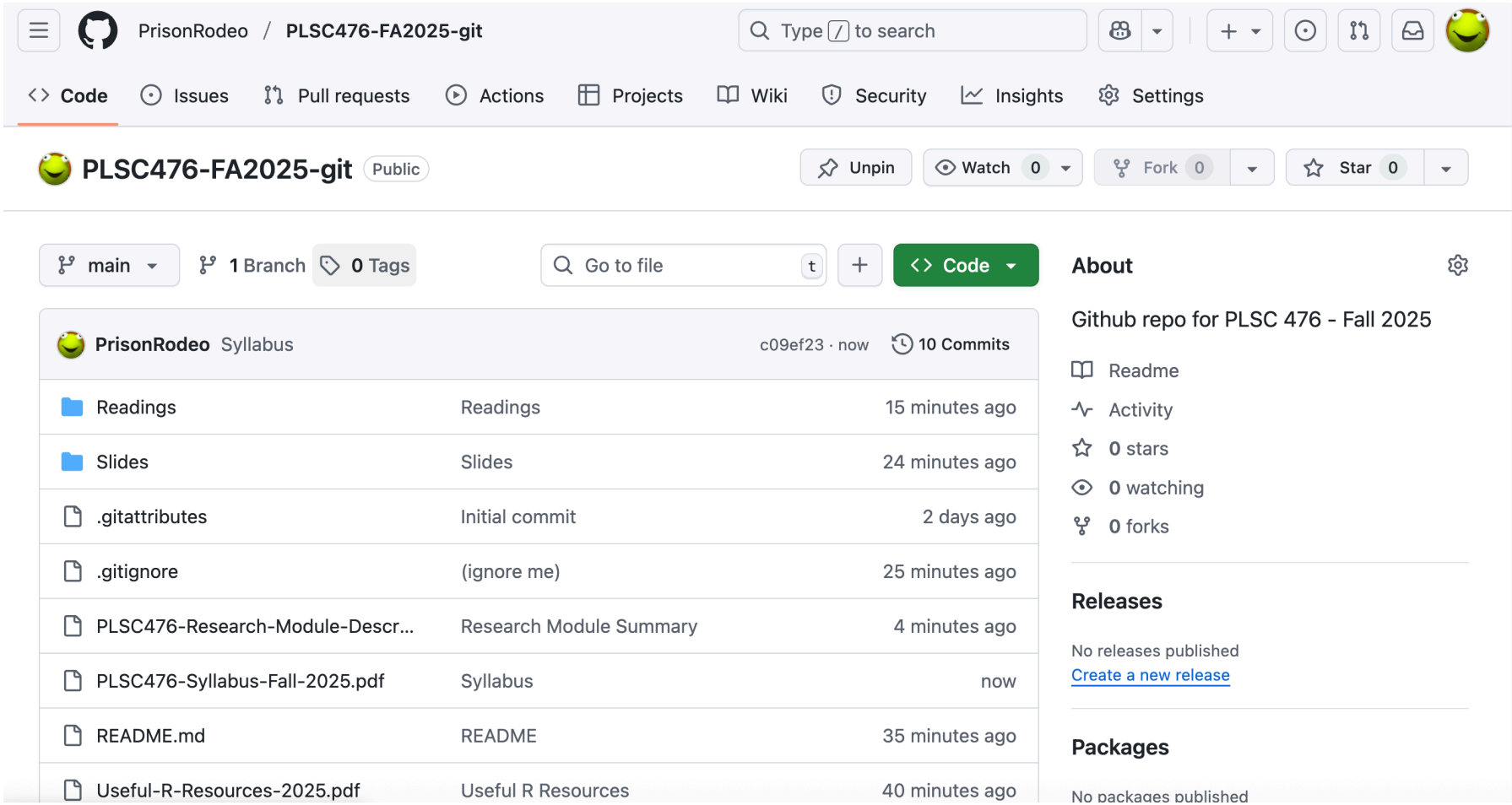
Course Goals

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/`


PrisonRodeo / PLSC476-FA2025-git
Type / to search
Code
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Code
PrisonRodeo Syllabus
c09ef23 · now
10 Commits
Readings Readings 15 minutes ago
Slides Slides 24 minutes ago
.gitattributes Initial commit 2 days ago
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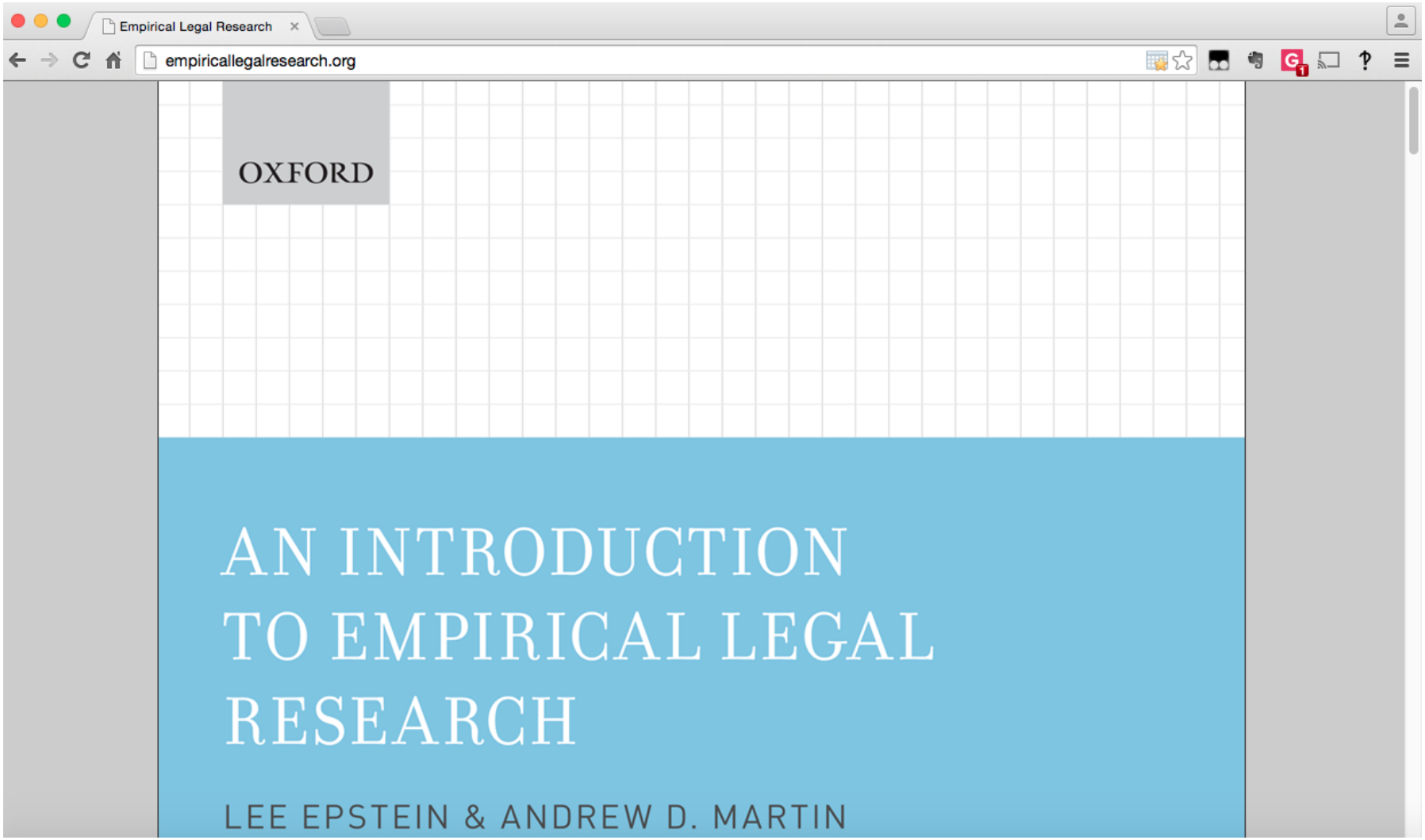
PLSC476-Research-Module-Descr... Research Module Summary 4 minutes ago
PLSC476-Syllabus-Fall-2025.pdf Syllabus now
README.md README 35 minutes ago
Useful-R-Resources-2025.pdf Useful R Resources 40 minutes ago
About
Github repo for PLSC 476 - Fall 2025
Readme
Activity
0 stars
0 watching
0 forks
Releases
No releases published
Create a new release
Packages
No packages published

The Course Text



Grading

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