Eco 499 paper assignment

This assignment constitutes 20% of your course grade.

Assignment: You are to complete a research paper on a topic of your choice. Unless I give you permission to pursue a different kind of paper, your paper should be a literature review, in which you read, summarize, and synthesize several papers from academic journals.

You are to choose your own topic, though please feel free to discuss potential topics with me at any time. Your paper should either examine a topic related to the economics of crime that we did not discuss in class, or it should explore a topic we did discuss in significantly more detail. Your topic must be distinct with your debate topic, unless you convince me prior to starting your work that it would be useful to do a debate and presentation on similar topics. Papers that simply rehash class materials will receive a poor grade.

Good papers will apply the empirical tools from class to their topic. You are not expected to develop original theories or perform original empirical estimation (although feel free to do so if you are ambitious). Some things to keep in mind:

1. When in doubt, narrow your topic. It is far easier to extend a seemingly small subject than to adequately summarize a vast subject in a short paper.

2. Good papers may be either normative (advocating a particular position/policy) or positive (describing an issue).

3. Your grade will largely depend on the contribution that your paper makes beyond what was discussed in class.

4. Although this is not a writing class, expect that the quality of your writing may affect your paper grade. Keep in mind that this assignment is due during a very busy time of the year. I make no apologies for the fact that a clearly presented paper is likely to score better than a poorly written paper, even if the underlying quality of the economic analysis is the same.

Deadlines and submission: The final paper is due Friday, December 13th, by 5pm. You may turn in a printed copy to me by handing it me, leaving it in my mailbox, or placing it under my door, or you may email me a pdf copy.

If you would like to submit a draft for me to read in advance of the final version, this is fine, however to give me time to comment on the paper and for you to incorporate the comments, the draft must be turned in to me by Monday, December 2, in class.

I will schedule individual office meetings with each student some time in November. At this meeting, you should be able to describe your topic to me, even if you are still having trouble narrowing it appropriately, and should be able to tell me what you've done so far (such as papers you've found that can be included in a literature review).

Your completed paper must meet the following requirements or I will not accept it:

1. 12pt font, 1 inch margins, 1.5 or double spaced.

2. The maximum page limit is 15 pages, which does not include references, figures, nor a title page.

Academic dishonesty: Any paper may be electronically analyzed to verify that they constitute original work. You are required to properly cite others' work. This includes giving credit whenever you quote or paraphrase another person's work, or when you borrow their ideas. Restating a sentence does not absolve you of your obligation to give credit. If you need help or have questions, then ask. Failing to properly cite is a common form of unintentional plagiarism and will adversely affect your grade.

Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate or unreasonably careless representation of another's work as your own, either as a portion of your paper or as its entirety. This includes, but is not limited to, purchasing a paper that someone else wrote, using a friend's paper, downloading a paper from the Internet, or knowingly aiding in another student's intentional plagiarism. Intentional plagiarism represents academic misconduct and I intend to fully pursue all instances. Although all cases are judged individually, previous penalties for intentional plagiarism in this course have included a failing grade for the entire class. In one egregious case, this failure was listed on the student's transcript as failure due to academic misconduct.