

Amherst College
Department of Economics
Economics 66
Fall 2010

The Research Paper

As the final exercise in the Law and Economics course, you are to write a research paper on any topic of your choice that uses the tools we have developed. The paper should not be excessively long (5-7 or so pages should suffice), but it should be well researched and carefully argued. It should look something like a law review article in which the footnotes are used not only as references but also to convey considerable substantive information that might otherwise interrupt the flow of the paper itself. The primary criterion in grading the paper will be the extent to which you use careful economic analysis to examine some aspect of the law.

Paper Topic

To get you started on the research paper, you are asked to write a one paragraph description of the topic you intend to write about. This paragraph should include at least one reference. To find an article on a topic that interests you, a good approach would be to browse through the past ten years of *The Journal of Law and Economics* and *The Journal of Legal Studies*. You might also check out footnotes in the *Shavell* text. The paragraph describing your topic **is due Friday, December 3 at 4:00PM**. I will return these with my comments in lecture on Monday, December 6.

Completing the Research Paper

Completion of the research paper will require you to read more on the topic you chose for your paper (a minimum of three references is expected) and to write a more detailed treatment of the topic. In rare cases it will be OK to change topics, but you should check with me before doing so. I would suggest that your final paper follow approximately this outline:

- I. Introduction – what is the issue?
- II. Economic Theory—how does economic theory treat your issue?
- III. Legal Analysis – how should the law achieve economically desirable outcomes (this section might involve some case references or empirical data)?
- IV. Conclusion – summary and possible generalizations.

The **research paper is due Friday December 17 at 12 Noon at my office, 316 Converse**. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss your paper during the period December 9-10,13-15. Please make use the sign-up sheet that will be on my office door. I will not meet to discuss papers after December 15.