

## ECON 318-21 The Criminal Economy

Class and Tutorial Times: Tuesday 2:35-5:25

*Read Carefully the Instructions Below.*

*Beause of McGill's Instructions to deal with our Pandemic, the whole structure of this class has been dramatically altered.*

- 1) **Econ 318: the Criminal Economy** is an extension of Econ **316: the Underground Economy** By economics department rules if you did not complete 316 with a B+ or higher you are not permitted to take 318. (See McGill University, Department of Economics, Undergraduate Course Descriptions.) **There Are NO Exceptions.**
- 2) **In preCOVID** days in **316** all students did a “*case study*” for 50% of their grade. But in autumn 2020 the university asked us to avoid heavy papers in favor of multiple smaller tests. That meant that veterans of autumn-2020 **316** wanting to take **318** have **no experience** of how to do a serious crime-based *case study*.
- 3) **That means in 318** a student’s mark depends heavlvy on a **case study** that is longer and more complex even than the format used in *pre-COVID 316*. *Doing serious case studies of criminal activity is the whole reason 318 exists. The case itself counts for 75% and preparations including class presentations the other 25%.* If you do not know what a case study is you ought to go on-line to find different formats for case studies. For example: <https://essaymap.org/blog/case-study/>
- 4) **The work for 318** requires students to look closely at *real incidents* of illegal deeds and events. *The ones you answered in the three essays in 316 were inventions.* You need to understand the laws involved, locate and justify good sources, chase down often fuzzy information, and keep a critical eye on every “fact” in your research and interpretation. Do not hesitate to ask other students for assistance. You are all in the same boat, so lets keep it from rocking or sinking.
- 5) **Class format:** Econ **318** is NOT a lecture course; it is a **seminar**, and that means your opinion is important for us to hear. **After the (Zoom) introduction with Professor Naylor** each student will start to think about a research project and how to report in **three** stages.
 

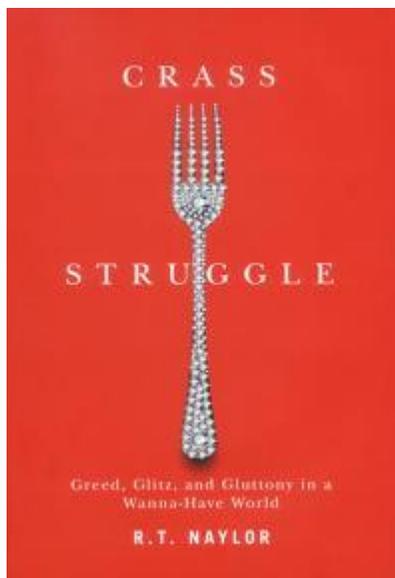
**First** a preliminary outline of their project, discussed with Professor Naylor then *shared with the whole group* who can ask questions and make recommendations. This outline, to be submitted by the end of January, is worth up to **15%** of the grade.

**Second** a **summary** of how you will expand the outline into logical sections with a preliminary list of sources. The **summary** highlighting your research efforts to date is due end of February and will count up to **25%**.

**Third** the **full project** of not more than **15 pages** (Word Document 12 pt type 1-1/2 line spacing NO PDFs!) including appendices and references is due the end of March and worth up to **60%** of the final grade. We will meet in April for a general presentation

of your projects to the whole class. A final **bonus of 5-10 marks** will go to students who made special contributions to the functioning of the seminar.

- 6) You will each work on a single topic - noted in 7) below. Once the topic is chosen and the outline accepted by Prof Naylor, there can be no changes of **topic** but you are free to make changes to the **text** until the due date. Since this is a formal paper - **max 15** pages with proper academic citations – the analysis is longer, better investigated, and more carefully referenced than work in **316**. It usually requires contacting people who were involved in some way in the issues you are examining. If so specify their credentials in your reference notes, and note if the person wanted anonymity.
- 7) **Each year** that this course has been given its overall theme is different. Last year it was mainly “banking and financial crimes;” the year before it had to do with “gunrunning;” at some point drugs featured. **This year** suitable topics for your major project focus on trafficking not in guns or drugs but in **high luxury objects** loved and coveted by the super-rich. You will understand better by looking at (8) below.
- 8) **Topics:** While there are no “textbooks” for this course, students will study one of my books: **Crass Struggle: Greed, Glitz, and Gluttony in a Wanna-Have World**. It is available for free as a e-book at <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/806255306> I spoke briefly about some of that material in **316** lectures; but this book is the full story. Your **first task** is to look at the **intro** and **conclusion** of this book to get a general point of view. I will question each of you.



- 9) Then each of you can locate in the book **your own choice of** a particular “luxury” item (**pick a few just in case**) – whether stolen, faked, smuggled etc. or otherwise ended up as yet another prize possession of someone with more money than morals or brains. You are not to repeat the text, you are to find something that intrigues you in the **same crime category** of whatever chapter seemed to be to your best interest. The text gives you leads about how to ask the questions and structure your argument. **Clear your choice with me**

**to ensure it works and does not just repeat the book's information. If the subject is clear but the cases are very wide in terms of size, time, value etc. consider doing a case where you create a general folio for your subject but then focus down on particular instances of the criminal activity.**

- 10) Crass Struggle** has 12 chapters all of which (except maybe Chapter 11) are focused on a single mega-subject – be it gold, diamonds, artwork, exotic pets etc. The idea is to use the book text as a general guide, and yourself pick a particular incident involving that particular type of item: if your favorite incident is not your favorite is not in the book, e mail Professor Naylor. Scan appropriate material in the book, decide which of the chapter topics you find most interesting, **then** decide what **particular object related to that chapter** strikes you as a possible topic for your case study. The more attraction you have to your object the better you are likely to do.
- 11) Before your final choice** and well before any variation from the conditions outline above needs to be cleared with me. Remember that some obvious objects can be overworked - for example certain species of parrots captured, smuggled, then sold illegally for massive sums, but might also have attracted massive prior attention - a 0.60 second search Google on parrots unveiled 3,750, 000 hits. There are also things **apparently** genuine with a huge price tag (like fake Stradivarius violins or phony antique furniture). Don't simply repeat material from the book or SLIDES from the **underground economy** class. When you are stuck, talk to me about alternatives – for example the traffic in **bear bile** popular in oriental medicine, or rackets that run **supposedly** luxury **cashmere** clothing. (In both those instances you need to understand the nature and habitat of the prey.) Once you begin researching you can get extra help and advice from Michael David Miller in the main library and perhaps with the McGill Law Library staff.
- 12) Marking:** I will be looking for excellent work with quality sources and/or personal information from people on whose word you can rely (and convince me as well). Fact-checking – i.e. **verification from more than one independent source** - is always important. Also use net things **ONLY** with a skepticism (perhaps to the point of nullification). The same applies to a lot of the crap in the mainstream media. I accept work based on personal interviews but you should include a short assessment of the credibility of your sources.
- 13)** The best time and way to contact me apart from during our formal class times (we might be lucky enough to occasionally have something akin to a seminar room – but no promises) is by e mail, *preferably* on Tuesday afternoons **if** there is no class– at [thomas.naylor@mcgill.ca](mailto:thomas.naylor@mcgill.ca). I will guarantee to be available then. I have other responsibilities and it may take some time for me to receive and read your message. **When I receive your message** I will reply and if appropriate ask you to **send me a Zoom link** or, if it is not working, an old fashioned phone call.

**The following are current recommendations from the university:**

*1) Students need to understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct. Students can submit*

*written work in English or French. If you have a disability – confirmed by a professional - that might affect your academic work Professor Naylor will find a reasonable accomodation to help meet your needs while respecting the structure and timetable of the course.*

*2) In the event of circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation schemes will be subject to change.*

*3) All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. You may use these only for your own learning (and research with proper referencing/citation). Your dissemination or sharing of these materials may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and be cause for disciplinary action.*

*4) For pedagogical reasons student attendance may be monitored and active participation expected or required both during fixed (synchronous) class time and on MyCourses. As such, you may be asked to turn on your camera and audio. If you do not have the necessary resources (e.g., adequate Internet bandwidth or equipment), inform your instructor at the beginning of term so accommodation, if possible, can be made .*

*5) If you are not comfortable attending a lecture or a course component in a recorded class you may log off Zoom and later watch the video recording in MyCourses. In addition to recording your image and voice, your name (or preferred name) may be displayed on screen, and your instructor may call your name during the lecture. By remaining in classes being recorded, you accept that personal information of this kind may be disclosed to others, during the lecture or when viewing the recording*

**NOTE I do not see any need for recording a seminar conversation. In my classes you are free to express yourself.**