

Department of Economics presents

David S. Saurman

Provocative Lecture Series 2019



David Skarbek, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Brown University

“The Social Order of the Underworld: How Prison Gangs Govern the American Penal System”

When many people think of prison gangs, they think of chaotic bands of violent, racist thugs. Few people think of gangs as sophisticated organizations (often with elaborate written constitutions) that regulate the social and economic life of the prison. David Skarbek argues that gangs form to create order among outlaws, producing alternative governance institutions to facilitate illegal activity. His award-winning book, *The Social Order of the Underworld: How Prison Gangs Govern the American Penal System*. New York: Oxford Univ. , 2014. is a fascinating look into the seemingly irrational, truly astonishing, and often tragic world of life among the society of captives.

Dr. Skarbek studies the political economy of institutions and institutional change, with a focus on collective action, norms, and ethnic conflict. His current project explains the operation of informal institutions within prisons globally. His work has appeared in both economics and political science journals, including the *American Political Science Review* and the *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*.

<http://www.davidskarbek.com/>

Thursday,
September 18th

**Student Union
Theater**

5:15-6:45p.m.

Free and open
to the public

The Department of Economics invites students, faculty, and the general public to consider intellectual arguments on controversial topics. Presenters are noted for outstanding scholarship and public speaking ability. This series fosters the tradition of higher education to challenge ideas and develop critical thinking in an environment of respect for intellectual discourse. Our goal is that you engage critical thinking skills to reach your own informed position on controversial issues. We invite you to attend, relax, ponder, and enjoy the thought process. For more information or to be added to our events list, please contact: Justin.Rietz@sjsu.edu