**Project Title:** Myths that Cause Crime, Revisited

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**Project Description:** Criminology is the study of the causes of crime and what we might do to reduce criminal behaviors.

The current research project will continue updating research conducted in 1984 by Paul Jesilow and Harold Pepinsky in their award-winning book, Myths that Cause Crime. These scholars debunked ten myths: (1) crime is increasing, (2) most crime is committed by the poor, (3) some groups are more law abiding than others, (4) white-collar crime is nonviolent, (5) regulatory agencies prevent white-collar crime, (6) rich and poor are equal before the law, (7) drug addiction causes crime, (8) community corrections is a viable alternative, (9) the punishment can fit the crime, and (10) law makes people behave. This past year we collected updated information for each of these myths.

This portion of the project is to expand the scope of the original research. There are some additional myths that can be discussed, such as every case has useable DNA evidence, most terrorism is committed by foreigners, immigration increases crime, incarceration rehabilitates the inmate, more guns reduce crime, among others. The overall goal is to warn and educate people about how these myths underlie criminal justice policies that cause, rather than alleviate, crime.

This research project will be engaging for research assistants, who will be expected to add their own thoughts on what the most common crime myths are in their generation. Research assistants will learn how to use the SSU library databases, since assistants will be locating references (such as academic studies and government reports).

**Student Contributions:**
Research assistants will help collect data and locate references for each myth and meet weekly via ZOOM for one hour with Professors Grant and Burton.