

# THE DARK WEB: CRIME TRENDS AND PUBLIC POLICY RESPONSES

Dr. Eric Jardine, Virginia Tech



## About the Talk:

During the trial of the Dread Pirate Roberts (aka. Ross Ulbricht, the mastermind behind the illegal Dark Web marketplace Silk Road), the defense advanced a novel argument: the Court should be lenient with sentencing because Ulbricht's illegal market was actually helping take drugs and violent crime off the streets. The legal defense failed, but no empirical tests of the underlying logic of the claim have been done, largely do to the purposeful obfuscation of location and identity data by the technologies of the Dark Web. In this project, we use big data sources to estimate the plausible effect of dark web illegal markets on physical-world crime rates in the United States. The findings have clear implications for policy.

## About the Speaker:

**Eric Jardine** is an assistant professor of political science at Virginia Tech and a CIGI Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). His research focuses on the uses and abuses of the Dark Web and the measurement of cybersecurity trends. He is the author, with Fen Hampson, of *Look Who's Watching: Surveillance, Treachery and Trust Online*. His

scholarly work has been published in *New Media & Society*, *Terrorism & Political Violence*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, *First Monday*, and the *Journal of Cyber Policy*, among numerous other outlets.

## DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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**Date:** Friday, October 19, 2018  
**Time:** 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Social Science Rm 729  
**ALL WELCOME !**