INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Mary Mathewes Kassis
Email: mkassis@westga.edu (This is the best way to reach me outside of office hours.)
Office phone: 678-839-4777
Office hours: T/Th 9:00am-9:30am, 12:15pm – 3:15pm, and by appointment
    I check my email regularly including in the evenings on Monday-Thursday

REQUIRED TEXT:


PREREQUISITES:

Economics 2105 and 2106.

EXPECTED LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This course involves an in-depth study of the equity and economic effects of government spending programs, taxes, and debt. To this end, students are expected to achieve the following learning objectives:

- Students should gain an understanding of the role of government in our society, including the importance of public goods and goods with externalities (LG7, LG8).
- Students should gain an understanding of cost-benefit analysis and its use in public sector decision making (LG6, LG8).
- Students will learn about the economic effects of various government programs including income assistance for the poor, social security, public education and health care (LG6, LG8).
- Students will gain a basic understanding of current government taxation and spending policies and their impact on economic efficiency and the distribution of income (LG6, LG8).
- The student’s communication and research skills will be improved through in-class discussion and writing assignments (LG1)

Note: A complete list of expected learning goals (LG) for the Economics Department can be found at the department web site (http://www.westga.edu/econ/index_12904.php)
SEATING ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be asked to fill out a seating chart on the third day of class (January 13) based on the seat that they have chosen for that day. Students will be asked to sit in the same seat every class period following.

ASSESSMENT:

You will be graded based on your performance on three tests, an optional final exam, homework, quizzes, class participation, and a public finance issues paper as described below. Extra credit is not an option in this course.

Tests and Final Exam – There will be three tests and an optional final exam. The tests will be a combination of multiple choice questions and discussion/short answer problems. The questions will be based on reading assignments (both the textbook and any assigned articles), lectures, homework, and class discussions. Each test is worth 20% of your grade. The final exam is optional and will be used to replace the lowest test grade. The final exam will be comprehensive and will consist of multiple choice questions. Students must notify the professor by noon on Monday, May 2 if they intend to take the optional final exam. You are responsible for bringing scantron sheets (Form 882-ES) and a No. 2 pencil for each exam.

Examination Schedule:

Exam #1 – February 8
Exam #2 – March 22
Exam #3 – April 26
Optional Final Exam - Tuesday, May 3, 11:00am-1:30pm

Class Participation – Students are expected to be prepared for class and to participate in class discussions. It is also expected that students will arrive on time and not leave early. Class participation will determine 3% of your final grade.

Although class attendance and participation are essential to success in the class, the professor will not drop students from the class due to nonattendance. Students who wish to withdraw from the class, must do so by contacting the registrar’s office directly. The last day to withdraw with a grade of W is March 2.

Homework – Homework will be assigned throughout the semester (usually in CourseDen). Homework will determine 5% of your grade. Homework will not be accepted late – NO EXCEPTIONS. The lowest homework grade will be dropped. To access CourseDen please go to http://westga.view.usg.edu.

Quizzes – There will be approximately 4 in-class quizzes during the course of the semester. The dates of the quizzes and the material to be covered will be announced one week before the quiz. Quizzes will be worth 15% of your final grade. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
Current Public Finance Issue Paper – Each student will select a current public finance issue to research and analyze. The paper should contain a description of the issues surrounding the topic and an economic analysis of those issues using some of the tools developed in the class. The topic and typed outline for the paper are due on March 3. The final paper should be 5-6 double-space typed pages and is due in class on April 7. The student is expected to consult at least 3 sources in researching their issue and should be careful to properly reference all the sources of their information and attach a bibliography. One source may be a business news publications such as Business Week, Economist, or the Wall Street Journal. The other two sources must be professional journals or other sources (for example, the Economic Report of the President, publications by the Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury, etc.) The textbook does not count as one of the three sources. The paper is worth 17% of your final grade and will not be accepted late. The paper must be original for this class – a paper written for another class is not acceptable.

Makeup Tests – Students who miss one test (regardless of the reason) will be required to take the final exam. Students who miss two tests will only be allowed to makeup the second missed test in the case of DOCUMENTED medical emergencies. Students should contact the professor as soon as possible after missing the test to make arrangements for a makeup test. Students who do not contact the professor within one week of missing a test will not be allowed to makeup the test.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Cheating and plagiarism are violations of the University’s Honor Code. The penalty for academic dishonesty may include an F in the class.

CLASS CANCELLATION:

In the event that classes are canceled on the day of an exam or that an assignment is due, the exam will be given or the assignment will be due on the first day following the cancellation.

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION:

All official communications from the university will be through campus email (MyUWG). The professor will use CourseDen for general class announcements. To access CourseDen please go to http://westga.view.usg.edu.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Office of Disability Services. A ODS Counselor will coordinate those services. See http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT:

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT:

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Introduction to Public Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Externalities and the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public Goods and Political Economy</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Cost-Benefit Analysis</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Social Security</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Tax Incidence and Inefficiency</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Income Taxes</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Consumption Taxes</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>State and Local Public Finance</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Low-Income Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Government Borrowing</td>
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There will be articles on these topics assigned throughout the semester. Information about these articles will be provided in class.

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. However, deviations may be necessary.