

ECONOMICS 4440
Spring 2016
Public Finance
T/TH 11:00-12:20

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Mary Mathewes Kassis

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

On Campus Office Hours: T/Th 8:30 am- 9:30 am and 12:20 pm - 2:20 pm, and by appointment.

Online Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:00am-10:00am and by appointment.

To talk with me during the online office hours, please email me in CourseDen, and we can meet in the CourseDen chat room.

Office Location: Miller Hall 1310

Office Phone Number: 678-839-4777

Email: There are two methods for contacting me by Email.

1. CourseDen mail found in your CourseDen course on the course toolbar.
2. UWG email: mkassis@westga.edu

Please use CourseDen mail for all course correspondence. My UWG email should be used in emergencies only.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Laurence S. Seidman, *Public Finance*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2009.

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/1718.php>).

SEATING ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be asked to fill out a seating chart on the third day of class (January 19) 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, a 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 a 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. The final exam will be **comprehensive** and will consist of multiple choice questions. **The lowest exam grade will be dropped.** Each exam is worth 20% of your grade. **You are responsible a No. 2 pencil for each exam.**

Examination Schedule:

Exam #1 – February 11

Exam #2 – March 10

Exam #3 – April 21

Comprehensive Final Exam - Tuesday, April 26, 11:00am-12:30pm

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 3.

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, bibliography 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 exam (regardless of the reason) will be required to take the final exam. Students who miss two exams will only be allowed to makeup the second missed exam in the case of a **DOCUMENTED medical emergency**. All makeup exams will be given on a Friday morning. Students should contact the professor as soon as possible after missing the exam to make arrangements for a makeup exam. **Students who do not contact the professor within one week of missing the second exam will not be allowed to makeup the exam.**

WOLF PACT

By enrolling and continuing in this course you agree to the following.

Having read the Honor Code for the University of West Georgia, I understand and accept my responsibility to uphold the values and beliefs described therein and to conduct myself in a manner that will reflect the values of the Institution and the Richards College of Business so as to respect the rights of all UWG community members. As a UWG student, I will represent myself truthfully and complete all academic assignments honestly and within the parameters set by my instructor. I understand and accept that if I am found guilty of violations (through processes due me as a UWG student and outlined in the UWG Student Handbook), penalties will be imposed. I also recognize that my responsibility includes willingness to confront members of the UWG community if I feel there has been a violation of the Honor Code. Ultimately, I will conduct myself in a manner that promotes UWG as the best place to work, learn, and succeed for my generation, and those to come!

ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINES

Any quiz or exam, given online or in class, is an individual assignment where collaboration is not allowed. All written assignments should be written in the student's own words and all sources should be cited. Using another person's words or ideas without citing them is plagiarism. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please review the information from the Department of English and Philosophy at the following link: http://www.westga.edu/english/1138_2219.php

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.

CREDIT HOUR POLICY (3 credit hours)

For approximately fifteen weeks, students in this class will generally spend 150 minutes with direct faculty instruction (either face-to-face or online) and work about 360 minutes outside of the classroom each week. This out-of-class work may include, but is not limited to, readings, assignments, projects, group work, research, and test preparation.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Please carefully review the information at the following link:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

The document at this link contains important information pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

Chapter 1	Introduction to Public Finance
Chapter 2	Externalities and the Environment
Chapter 3	Public Goods and Political Economy
Chapter 4	Cost-Benefit Analysis
Chapter 5	Social Security
Chapter 6	Health Insurance
Chapter 7	Tax Incidence and Inefficiency
Chapter 8	Income Taxes
Chapter 9	Consumption Taxes
Chapter 10	State and Local Public Finance
Chapter 11	Education
Chapter 12	Low-Income Assistance
Chapter 13	Government Borrowing

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.