

ECONOMICS 4440
Spring 2019
Public Finance
T/TH 11:00-12:15

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Mary Mathewes Kassis

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

On Campus Office Hours: T/Th 8:45 am- 11:00 am and 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm, and by appointment.

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. CourseDen email is the best way to reach me outside of office hours.

REQUIRED TEXT:

David N. Hyman Public Finance: A Contemporary Application of Theory to Policy 11th ed., Cengage Learning, 2014, (ISBN 978-1-285-17395-5).

Used versions of this book can be purchased relatively cheaply (under \$100) and it can also be rented. If you have more than one textbook published by Cengage, you may want to consider [Cengage Unlimited](#). **Do not pay \$300+ for the new textbook.** It would be cheaper to purchase Cengage Unlimited.

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 will learn about the economic effects of various government programs including income assistance for the poor, social security, 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: The Economics Department's website has a complete list of the [Economics Department's Learning Goals](#).

SEATING ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be asked to fill out a seating chart on the third day of class (January 15) 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 for bringing a No. 2 pencil for each exam.**

Examination Schedule:

Exam #1 – February 7

Exam #2 – March 12

Exam #3 – April 25

Comprehensive Final Exam - Tuesday, May 7, 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.

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.

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 7**. The final paper should be 4-5 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font) and is due in class on **April 4**. 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. Professional sources can be found using the library database ECONLIT.) The textbook does not count as one of the three required 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 a quiz (regardless of the reason) will have to use that quiz as their dropped quiz grade. Students who miss two exams or quizzes will only be allowed to makeup the second missed exam or quiz 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 or quiz to make arrangements for a makeup exam or quiz. **Students who do not contact the professor within one week of missing the second exam or quiz will not be allowed to makeup the exam.**

WOLF PACT

The Wolf Pact is a commitment by the Richards College of Business family to honesty, integrity, professionalism, accountability for ethical behavior, and to respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others.

We are committed to a culture of academic integrity, where members adhere to our shared values in all academic and non-academic endeavors.

We believe these values are essential to student development; whether personal, academic, or professional. Most importantly- establishing yourself as an honest person of integrity, who acts in a professional and ethical manner- will be as important as the academic skills you learn in the Richards College of Business.

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 about [plagiarism](#) from the UWG Writing Center.

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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Please carefully review the information at the [UWG Student Information Link](#). 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	Individuals and Government
Chapter 2	Efficiency, Markets and Government
Chapter 3	Externalities and Government Policies
Chapter 4	Public Goods
Chapter 5	Public Choice and the Political Process
Chapter 7	Government Subsidies and Income Support for the Poor
Chapter 8	Social Security and Social Insurance
Chapter 9	Government and Health Care
Chapter 10	Introduction to Government Finance
Chapter 11	Taxation, Prices, Efficiency, and the Distribution of Income
Chapter 12	Budget Balance and Government Debt
Chapter 13	The Theory of Income Taxation
Chapter 14	Taxation of Personal Income in the United States
Chapter 16	Taxes on Consumption and Sales
Chapter 18	Fiscal Federalism and State and Local Government Finance

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.