



ECON 325 A01

Public Economics

Fall 2025

11:30-12:20 TWF, Cornett B147

CRN: 11107

1.5 Units, 3 contact hours

UVic Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Instructor Name: Martin Farnham

Office: BEC 354

Method of contact and availability: mfarnham@uvic.ca

I can't always respond to student inquiries immediately. I will try to respond reasonably quickly, but sometimes may take as many as two business days to respond. If you haven't heard from me within two business days, please send me a reminder email. Note that I won't respond to inappropriate emails (see email policy below)

Office Hours: In person. Fridays 12:30-2:00pm, BEC 354

TA Name: Yuan Yin (Yuan will help with admin of the course, so will not hold office hours)

Teaching and assessment modality statement

This course is face to face and all exams are held in person.

Course Content

Introduction to the role of government in the economy. Topics include: examination of public goods, externalities, and information asymmetries; market failures resulting from these conditions and policies to address those market failures; taxes, expenditures, and collective decision-making under majority voting. Policy applications include welfare, education, health care spending, and tax policies such as income taxes, consumption taxes, and taxes on carbon emissions.

Course prerequisites/corequisites

One of ECON 103, ECON 103C, ECON 180.

Textbook

1. **Required Textbook:** There is no required textbook for the course.
2. **Optional Textbooks.** You may find Rosen, et al. "Public Finance in Canada" useful to supplement the lecture notes. I will keep a copy on reserve at the library.

Brightspace

Brightspace is used extensively for the course. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system. The lecture notes will be posted in *Brightspace*. Please note that the lecture notes online are only outlines of the actual lectures.

All announcements will be posted in *Brightspace*. Students are advised to check it frequently.

Lectures will be much easier to follow if you read lecture notes ahead of lecture. I will generally endeavor to post lecture notes online ahead of lecture.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how to analyze a variety of tax and expenditure policies using partial equilibrium models. They will develop an understanding of how such policies alter behaviour of firms and consumers in the economy.

Course Structure, Assessments, and Grading

Statement about learning components

Lecture notes will be posted online, but students will benefit additionally from attending lectures in person. In general, I don't record and post lectures.

A series of ungraded problem sets will be distributed throughout the course. While these will not be graded, you are strongly encouraged to work through the problem sets to develop and gauge your understanding of the material. Most students will find that careful practice solving problems significantly increases their understanding of the material. Students are encouraged to work on these problems in groups after first attempting them individually.

Use of AI

The course has no take-home assessment.

Grading Scheme

The course grade is determined as follows:

Best of 2 midterms (no makeup midterm exams will be given): 50%

Final Exam: 50%

Mandatory/Essential Course Components

The final exam is essential and thus deferrable.

Midterms are not mandatory and therefore not deferrable. *Students who fail to complete at least one midterm will receive a midterm score of zero, no exceptions.* If you miss both midterms (for any reason including illness) you should drop the course and take it in a later term. To maximize your grade in the course, you should take both midterms. Skipping the first midterm leaves you extremely vulnerable to sickness or missing the bus on the day of the second midterm, so don't play with fire.

Dates of Assessments, Due Dates of Assignments

Assignments: There are no graded assignments in this course.

Midterms: The midterm exam(s) is/are scheduled for

Midterm #1: Wednesday October 1 (in class, in person), Topics 1-3 (primarily 2-3)

Midterm #2: Wednesday October 29 (in class, in person), Topics 4-5

Final exam: In person, all topics.

All exams are closed book, closed notes. Students who reference materials or electronic devices (other than a non-programmable calculator) during an exam are committing a violation of academic integrity.

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. Students do not qualify for an academic concession if travel plans conflict with the examination.

Grading Scale

A+	90-100%
A	85-89%
A-	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
C+	65-69%
C	60-64%
D	50-59%
F or N	0-49%

Students should review the University's more detailed [summary of grading](#).

Missing Assessments

Should students encounter a situation where they miss the final, they may qualify for an academic concession. Students are required to indicate the specific grounds on which they are requesting an academic concession and provide a justification outlining the impact of the circumstances on their ability to complete course requirements. In case you miss the final exam, fill in a [request for a deferral](#). I will not respond to informal requests of academic concessions.

If you miss a midterm, you will receive a grade of 0 on it. Since your midterm grade for the course is the better of your two midterm grades, your score on the other midterm will determine your midterm grade. If you miss both midterms, you will receive a score of 0 for the midterm component of your grade. In such a case, to pass the course you would need to receive 100% on the final.

Waitlist Policies

- Instructors have no discretion to admit waitlisted students or raise the cap on the course.
- Students on the waitlist should discuss with the instructor how to ensure they are not behind with coursework in the event they are admitted.
- Registered students who do not participate as specified in this outline during the first 7 calendar days from the start of the course may be dropped from the course.
- Registered students who decide not to take the course are responsible for dropping the course and are urged to do so promptly out of courtesy toward waitlisted students.
- Waitlist offers cease after the last date for adding courses irrespective of published waitlists.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University.

The University reserves the right to use a plagiarism software to detect violations of academic integrity.

Appeals

Depending on the nature of your concern, the order in which you should normally try to resolve the matter is:

1. Me, the course instructor
2. the Associate Chair: econassoc@uvic.ca
3. the Associate Dean of Academic Advising
4. the Senate.

If you're seeking a formal review of an assigned grade, you should also consult the regulations in the academic calendar regarding [review of an assigned grade.](#)"

I only respond to grading inquiries in writing. You must file your question within 1 week of issuance of your grade and the release of the answer key. Do not approach me after class to discuss grading concerns.

University Policies and Statements

Please note that this course is executed in a manner consistent with these University statements and policies.

- a. University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
- b. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- c. [Academic Integrity](#)
- d. [Academic Concession Regulations](#), [Academic Concession and Accommodation](#), Academic Accommodation – [Policy AC1205](#)
- e. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- f. [Student Conduct](#)
- g. [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- h. [Accessibility](#)
- i. [Diversity / EDI](#)
- j. [Equity statement](#)
- k. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- l. Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)

Resources for students

- a. [Student wellness](#)
- b. [Centre for Accessible Learning](#)

- c. [UVic Learn Anywhere](#). UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
- d. [Library](#) resources
- e. Centre for Academic Communication ([CAC](#))
- f. Learning Strategies Program ([LSP](#))
- g. [Academic Advising](#)
- h. Economics Undergraduate Advising: ecadvice@uvic.ca
- i. [Student Awards and Financial Aid](#)
- j. [International Student Advising](#)
- k. Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
- l. [Student groups and resources](#) including UVic [Ombudsperson](#)

Student Experience of Learning (SEL) Survey

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential SEL survey regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future.

Course Structure

Week	Topic	Lecture Notes #	Assessment
1	Role of Government in the Economy	T1	
2	Public Goods	T2	
3-4	Externalities	T3	Midterm 1 on October 1
5-6	Taxation and Income Distribution	T4	
7-8	Redistributing Income	T5	Midterm 2 on October 31
9-10	Employment Insurance	T6	
11-12	Universal Basic Income	T7	
13	Extra topics time permitting		Final exam (covers all topics) during exam period; Timing set by registrar.

This schedule and topics covered are subject to change.

Email Correspondence

Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the course name and number in the subject line. Questions on course material should be asked during office hours or in class, not by email. The standard format for writing a letter must be used. This means it should begin with a salutation (e.g. Dear....), include full sentences and it must conclude with a signature that includes your **full name and V#**. Text message lingo should not be used. If you send an email that asks a question that is covered on the syllabus or was addressed during lecture or on Brightspace, I reserve the right to ignore it. Please do your part to reduce email spam.

Electronic Devices

Please do not use electronic devices in a way that is distracting to anyone else in the classroom.
Lectures may only be recorded (audio or video) with the instructor's written permission.

Educational Technology involving storage outside Canada

Not applicable.