ECON 325 A01/A02
Public Economics
31930/33246

Summer Session: Second Term 2021 05 –Online Instruction

Instructor Name: Shannon Pendergast
E-Mail: smramage@uvic.ca
Online Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:30-6:20pm & by appointment

Course Content
This course provides a general introduction to the economics of government expenditures and taxation. We will consider the role of government in the economy and use economic analysis to predict and verify the effect of government intervention on the behaviour of individuals, households and firms. We will discuss the implications of policy for efficiency and equity. Throughout the course, relevant Canadian and British Columbia public policy will be discussed.

Lectures: Tuesdays 6:30-9:20pm
This course is being delivered online, but the overall delivery will be very similar to an in-person course. Lectures will be hosted on Zoom during the regularly scheduled day/time. Through Zoom you will be able to see me, hear me, see my PowerPoint slides and see graphs that I draw on my iPad in real-time, much like watching me write on the chalkboard in a classroom. You do not need to create a zoom account to access the lectures. After you install and open the Zoom software on your device, choose the “sign in using SSO” option. This will take you to the main UVic page where you must login with your UVic username and password.

Textbook
The textbook for this course is optional and the choice depends on your individual learning style. The textbook used is “Public Finance in Canada” (fifth edition) by Rosen, Gayer, Wen and Snodden. Note: You may also use the third or fourth edition of the text, although page numbers for readings will be different and some content is not covered in the third edition.

Some sections of the text are more difficult than required for this course and will not be suggested reading. For each chapter covered, specific chapter sections and page numbers that are suggested for this course will be listed in Brightspace.

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 these lecture notes are only high-level outlines of the actual lecture content.
- All announcements will be posted in Brightspace. Students are advised to check it frequently.
- Following lectures, I am also generally able to provide pdf copies of the diagrams and examples we work through together in class. These are provided as a courtesy and should not be viewed as a substitute for attending lectures.
Grading
Evaluation in this course will consist of weekly assignments, two midterms, and a comprehensive final exam. Exams will be held according to the schedule listed below. The determination of your final grade for the course will be based on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best exam*</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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*This additional 5% will be automatically allocated to either the midterm or the final exam, depending on which one you receive the highest score.

To receive a passing grade, you must write both of the midterms and the final exam. Failure to complete all of the exams will result an "N" grade. (For clarity, note that this does not mean that you should not do the assignments, because not completing them will significantly lower your overall grade.)

**Assignment(s):** There will be 10 weekly assignments (no assignments following midterms in weeks 5 and 9) designed to encourage personal reflection and understanding of the course material. As long as you make a satisfactory effort on each assignment, you will receive full marks for having completed it. By doing all 10 assignments, you can earn a full 10% towards your overall course grade. You are permitted to discuss the assignments with your classmates, but your answer must incorporate some of your own personal reflections and be written in your own words.

You will also receive a quality score (out of 10) on your assignments. Although the quality score does not count towards your overall course grade, it is a chance for you to obtain some feedback on your work in advance of the midterms and final exam, which will include some questions that are similar in style to the assignments.

**Midterm:** The midterm exams are scheduled for Tuesday, June 8 and Tuesday, July 6.

**Final exam:** TBD. August exam timetables are posted by the Registrar’s office at the end of June.

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F or N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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Students should review the University’s more detailed summary of grading.

**Examinations**
Exams will be held during regular class time and conducted online using Brightspace. All exams will be open book, meaning you are allowed to access lecture notes and other course materials. However, communication with other students (or any other person) during exams is strictly prohibited and will be considered a serious violation of academic integrity. You should not assume that open book exams will be “easier” than regular exams. They will not be easier, but you should not find them harder either – just different.

Attendance at all scheduled online examinations is mandatory. Consideration for missed examinations will be given only on the basis of documented illness, accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed final examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar.

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. There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Lecture 1</td>
<td>Introduction to Public Finance &amp; The Economic Role of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Lecture 2</td>
<td>Public Goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Lecture 3</td>
<td>Externalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Lecture 4</td>
<td>Public Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>Midterm 1: Covers Lectures 1-4 Taxation: Income Distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Lecture 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>Lecture 6</td>
<td>Taxation: Efficiency, &amp; Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>Lecture 7</td>
<td>Personal Income Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29</td>
<td>Lecture 8</td>
<td>Consumption Taxes/ Taxes on Wealth and Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 6</td>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>Midterm 2: Covers Lectures 5-8 Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Lecture 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Lecture 10</td>
<td>Health Care &amp; Public Pensions</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Lecture 11</td>
<td>Income Redistribution &amp; Social Welfare Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Lecture 12</td>
<td>Employment Insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Covers Lectures 1-12</td>
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### E-mail correspondence
Please limit email correspondence to administrative and urgent issues. Please see me during office hours for other questions.

### Public policy discussion
Throughout the course we will supplement our theory by discussing current public policy issues. You are encouraged to ask questions and participate in class discussions. We will consider multiple viewpoints with emphasis on an economist’s perspective. Please note that any viewpoints discussed in class are entirely my own and do not represent those of the university or any other organization.

### Course Policies
In addition to the policies outlined above, this course adheres to the [Undergraduate Course Policies](#) of the Department of Economics that deal with the following issues:
- Academic concessions
- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Late adds
- Late assignments
- Repeating courses
- Review of an assigned grade
- Sexualized violence prevention and response
• Students with a disability
• Term assignments and debarment from examinations
• Travel plans
• Waitlists

The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance.

**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 for Term One, or the first 2 class meetings for Term Two and Three courses, 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.

You will be asked required to complete a mandatory academic integrity quiz/pledge before you are eligible to write exams in this course. You must obtain a score of 100%. (It’s very straightforward, but if you have any difficulty, please contact me.)

Review [What is Plagiarism](#) for the definition of plagiarism. Note: Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

**University Policy on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness**

The University is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

See [General University Policies](#)

**Accessibility & Health Resources**

**Centre for Accessible Learning**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, you are free to approach me; however, you must register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) for formal arrangements to be made. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

**Health Services** - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.

**Support Connect** - a 24/7 mental health support service for students

- Toll-free (calls from North America): 1-844-773-1427
- International collect calls: 1-250-999-7621
Counselling Services - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.

Elders' Voices - The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Course Experience Survey (CES)
I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) 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.

When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to the CES log-in. You will use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be completed on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

- What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

Educational Technology involving storage outside Canada
The following educational technologies, which stores or accesses your personal information outside Canada, is required for this course: Zoom. I will make you aware if this list changes.

Personal information is required by the service. The privacy policy and the terms of use list the personal information stored outside of Canada and are available at https://zoom.us/privacy. I encourage you to read these documents.

If you are not comfortable with your personal information being stored outside of Canada, please speak to me within the first week of class about using an alternative (such as using an alias or nickname). Otherwise, by continuing in this course, you agree to the use of the educational technology in the course and the storage of personal information outside of Canada.

Sexualized Violence Prevention & Response
UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. Students are encouraged to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting www.uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Contact svpcoordinator@uvic.ca.