ECON 325 A01
Public Economics
CRN #21077

Winter Session: 2023 09 – 2023 12
Course meeting time: Monday and Thursday, 4:30-5:50pm
Course meeting location: Cornett Building A221

UVic Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Instructor Name: Dr. Jason Hicks
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E-Mail: jasonhicks@uvic.ca
Phone: 250.472.5948
Office Hours:
Tuesday, 3:00-4:00pm
Thursday, 10:00-11:00am
Or by appointment

Version 1 (September 6th, 2023)
Please note this syllabus is subject to small changes during the semester.

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 examine public goods, externalities, and information asymmetries, as well as market failures resulting from these conditions and policies to address those market failures. We will discuss the implications of policy for efficiency and equity. Throughout the course, relevant Canadian, United States, and other international public policy will be discussed.

Textbook

The required text is Public Finance in Canada (6th Canadian Edition) by Harvey S. Rosen, Lindsay M. Tedds, Trevor Tombe, Jean-Francois Wen, and Tracy Snoddon. Some sections of the text are more difficult than the material that will be covered in the lectures, so the pages and sections that should be read in each chapter will be provided.

Students can purchase the e-book through the UVic Bookstore. After the e-book is purchased, students will be provided access to Connect, which is an online learning platform that is used in the course. The document “Connect_ECON 325_Fall 2023” on Brightspace provides instructions on how to register to use McGraw Hill Connect. In addition to the e-book, students can purchase looseleaf text of the book for an additional $30 if a printed version of the book is desired.

Optional readings from outside of the textbook will be provided on the Brightspace page under “Optional Readings.”
Grading

Given student performances on the requirements listed below, final grades will be assigned based on the university’s grading scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Requirement</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date of requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading questions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Completed before the start of each class on Monday,</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beginning the second week of class (Sept. 11).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class exercises</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Each class except when there is an exam, beginning the</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>second week of class (Sept. 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thursday, October 5th, 2023</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thursday, November 2nd, 2023</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:
Students should review the University’s more detailed summary of grading.

This course is designed to provide students opportunities to improve their grades based on effort. The table below lists each course requirement that will determine a student’s final grade.

Below is a description of each requirement with late/missing penalties described.

1. **Reading questions (10%)** – There will be 11 online reading assignments (question sets) that each student needs to complete online through Smartbook on McGraw Hill Connect. These assignments need to be completed before the beginning of class on Monday each week (beginning September 11th and ending on December 4th). For weeks six and ten, the reading assignments must be completed before the classes on Thursday, October 12th and Thursday, November 16th. There will be no reading assignment for week five.

   The question sets will typically take 15-20 minutes to complete and will be based on the assigned readings from Public Finance in Canada. The reading assignment will be made available on the Thursday before the reading assignment is due. If a student completes the reading assignment, they will receive full credit for the assignment.

   Reading assignments that are not submitted by the time the assignment is due cannot be made up. However, for students who register for the class after the first day (Thursday, September 7th), the ability to retroactively complete reading assignments will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

2. **In-class exercises (20%)** – Unless there is an exam, each class will have an in-class exercise. In-class exercises will be comprised of practice problems or analytical questions that must be completed and submitted during class for assessment. The exercises will typically take 15-20 minutes to complete. Only students who are physically present in class can complete and submit an in-class exercise. In-class exercises cannot be submitted for students who are not present in class. In rare circumstances, we may not have an in-class exercise. In these situations, you will be given full credit for attendance at class.

   If you miss a class, the in-class exercise cannot be made up. However, each student will be given four excused absences from in-class exercises. Each excused absence will reduce the total number of in-class exercises that contribute to a student’s overall grade for the in-class exercises. For example, if a student misses one in-class exercise, the student’s grade for the in-class exercises will be calculated out of a point total for 17 in-class exercises. If a student misses two in-class exercises, the student’s grade for
the in-class exercises will be calculated out of a point total for 16 in-class exercises, etc. For students who register for the class after the first day (Thursday, September 7th), the ability to retroactively complete in-class exercises will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

3. **Midterm 1 (20%), Midterm 2 (20%), and Final Exam (30%)** – The content of the midterms and final exams will primarily come from the lectures and in-class exercises; however, some questions may come from information provided in the textbook that is not explicitly discussed in lectures. 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 final examination timetable has been finalized. First Term (December) exam timetables are posted at the end of October. 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.

**ECON 325 Winter 2023 Course Calendar**

*Note:* The specific weeks that topics are covered, and the specific topics covered may change depending on the progress made in the course.

The course calendar is below. It lists each week of the course, the potential topics covered that week, and the chapter of Public Finance in Canada (6th Edition) associated with the topic. It also lists the exam dates in red text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Class Introduction; Introduction to Public Finance (Ch. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 11-14</td>
<td>Introduction to Public Finance (Ch. 1); Fundamentals of Welfare Economics (Ch. 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 18-21</td>
<td>Public Goods (Ch. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 25-28</td>
<td>Public Goods (Ch. 4); Externalities (Ch. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td><strong>Midterm 1 (Thursday, Oct. 5)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Externalities (Ch. 5); Income Distribution (Ch. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 16-19</td>
<td>Social Welfare Programs (Ch. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct. 23-26</td>
<td>Health Care (Ch. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct. 30-Nov. 2</td>
<td>Tax Incidence (Ch. 14); <strong>Midterm 2 (Thursday, Nov. 2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Tax Incidence (Ch. 14); Taxation and Efficiency (Ch. 15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov. 20-23</td>
<td>Personal Income Tax (Ch. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov. 27-30</td>
<td>Personal Taxation and Behavior (Ch. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Consumption Tax (Ch. 19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Syllabus changes**

The syllabus is subject to change throughout the term. For example, the instructor may remove/add a topic. Please stay up to date by using the most recent version uploaded on Brightspace.
Brightspace
- *Brightspace* is used extensively for the course. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system.
- Narrated presentations and other materials that review key microeconomic concepts and provide a foundation for understanding the concepts covered in this course are provided in *Brightspace*.
- Evaluation and feedback for the in-class exercises and midterm exams will take place using Crowdmark in *Brightspace*.
- The lecture notes will be posted in *Brightspace*. Some slides may only be outlines of the slides used in the actual lecture.
- The specific pages or sections of for each chapter will be provided before the reading assignment is made available and the chapter is covered in lecture.
- All announcements will be posted in *Brightspace*. Students are advised to check it frequently.

E-mail correspondence
Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as 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. 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.

Course Policies
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 attend a class during their first 7 calendar days in the course will 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.
- The last day to add the course is September 22nd.
- The last day for withdrawing from the course without penalty of failure is Tuesday, October 31st.
- 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.

Review What is Plagiarism for the definition of plagiarism. The University reserves the right to use a plagiarism
software to detect violations of academic integrity (including unauthorized use of ChatGPT and other Artificial
Intelligence).

Student Code of Conduct
The Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences Faculties have adopted this Student code of conduct. Please,
review.

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
The University of Victoria offers a number of resources to support international students as they pursue their
studies. UVic’s International Centre for Students is the primary office supporting international students on campus
at the university-wide level and provides various supportive program through the UVic Global Community
Initiative, including a Mentorship Program and Conversation Partner Program. For academic advising-related
questions, students in the Economics Department are also encouraged to meet with the Economics
Undergraduate Advisor (Prof. Kenneth Stewart, ecadvice@uvic.ca) as well as an academic advisor in the
Academic Advising Centre early in their studies to help map out a plan to declare a major and complete
university program requirements. Other resources include the Centre for Academic Communication and the Math
and Stats Assistance Centre. The International Student Liaison in the Economics Department is Prof. Paul Schure
who can help you connect with other international and domestic students in the Department. His email address
is schure@uvic.ca. Please, reach out if you are interested.

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.

**Mandatory Course Components**

The final exam is an essential course requirement, meaning, it must be attempted to pass the course. Aside from the final exam, no other individual requirement for this course is “mandatory.” For example, any midterm exam not completed will be assigned a score of zero but will not individually result in an immediate N grade.

Students must pass (earn a mark of 50% or greater) at least one of the exams in the course (Midterm 1, Midterm 2, or Final Exam) to pass the course. If a student does not pass at least one of the exams, they will receive a final mark of 40% in the course.

**Electronic devices**

Students can use laptops and tablets to take notes during lectures, reviews, and discussion sections. Mobile phone use is prohibited in the course unless they are being used to access lecture notes. Electronic devices may not be used in the exam; however, calculators that do not also serve as a communication device can be used when taking exams.

**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.