
**ECON 32200 (CRN# 41297, DISTANCE LEARNING): ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC POLICY
SPRING 2023**

Instructor: Dr. Amlan Mitra
Online Meeting: BRIGHTSPACE & ZOOM (January 9 – May 7, 2023)
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UNIVERSITY CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course examines and analyzes public finance practices and problems in a federal fiscal system. Various government activities with respect to government spending and taxation are analyzed by applying basic principles of economics. Topics include public education, social security, healthcare, environment, income tax, sales tax, property tax, etc. State and local government issues are also addressed. ***Pre-Requisite: ECON 210 or ECON 251.***

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Economics of Public Policy is designated as a service-learning course. It focuses on analyzing and evaluating government expenditures and finances to help policy makers formulate public policies on various government activities. We attend public schools; travel on streets, highways, and buses; receive clean water and dispose dirty water; have our trash collected; enjoy the security of police and fire protection; use public hospitals; vacation at parks and beaches; support the less fortunate with services and income maintenance; receive government funds; etc. This course will focus on these government activities. Using economic theories and concepts, we will study how government can efficiently allocate resources and how we evaluate and recommend public policies. Various government activities with respect to government spending and taxation will be analyzed by applying basic principles of economics.

This is an online course. We will use BRIGHTSPACE - Purdue Learning Platform. If you need help and training in BRIGHTSPACE, please follow this link below:

<https://purdue.brightspace.com/d21/le/news/6823/193896/view>. To learn how to personalize your account settings in BRIGHTSPACE, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYXbSBZ-VxI>

REQUIRED TEXT:

Title: Public Finance and Public Policy, 7th edition, Author: Jonathan Gruber.

Publisher: Macmillan Company, 2022.

E-book: ISBN:9781319399030

<https://store.macmillanlearning.com/us/product/Public-Finance-and-Public-Policy/p/1319281109>

OTHER RECOMMENDED MATERIALS:

In addition to the assigned text chapters, readings from other sources, such as lecture notes, articles, and videos for viewing will be posted in weekly folders. You may also visit Economics Resources Websites on my homepage:

<https://www.pnw.edu/faculty/amlan-mitra/economic%20resources/>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explain how the provision of government goods and services through political institutions differs from market provision of goods and services.
- 2) Examine and analyze taxes and subsidies with and without market failure.
- 3) Examine and analyze various types of government expenditures on public education, health care, social security, income assistance, unemployment compensation, etc.
- 4) Explain how cost-benefit analysis can be used to help government choose among alternative investment projects.
- 5) Apply public finance and public policy tools in real world applications through service-learning experiences.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Completing assigned readings, homework assignments, quizzes, and exams in CONNECT are the basic requirements to meet the five learning objectives. Each of these learning objectives will be assessed in the following way:

Learning Objective	Assessment Tools
1, 2	HW & Active Learning Assignments
3, 4	HW & Active Learning Assignments
5	Service-Learning Project

COURSE ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION POLICIES:

- 1. HW Assignments: 200 points**
- 2. Interactive Learning Assignments: 50 points**
- 3. Policy Paper (Service-Learning Project): 150 points**

GRADING POLICY:

A+: 390 – 400; A: 375 – 389; A-: 360 – 374
 B+: 350 – 359; B: 335 – 349; B-: 320 – 334
 C+: 310 – 319; C: 295 – 309; C-: 280 – 294
 D+: 270 – 279; D: 255 – 269; D-: 240 – 254
 F: Below 240

EXTRA CREDIT:

You can receive a maximum of 25 points extra credit if you take a leadership role in this class by organizing an interactive learning session and in any tasks related to the service-learning project. **Obtaining this extra credit could move up your course grade by a maximum of two letter grades.**

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

There will be homework assignments from each topic from the text and lecture materials. **These assignments will require you to provide detailed response to each question with supporting documentation from the text and other lecture materials. Your response and any opinion should be based on evidence and logical reasoning. These will be due by Sunday midnight (11:59 PM CST) before the new topics are assigned.**

INTERACTIVE LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS:

The purpose of these assignments is to provide hands-on/real life approach to learning through student engagement and guided social interaction. Interactive learning is a holistic methodology that make a complete educational experience. Students participate in interactive video assignments as per evaluation criteria. These assignments will be conducted using external learning tools integrated with BRIGHTSPACE. **Always use PNW email for BRIGHTSPACE and other learning tools.** Here are examples of learning tools:
FLIPGRID APP, VIDEO NOTE, ZOOM

POLICY PAPER (SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT): The policy paper from this service-learning course will focus on public policy on “**Homeownership and Housing Affordability**” in our Northwest Indiana region. The project will have several progress reports. We will discuss the guidelines on how to prepare and organize these reports. Detail guidelines will also be posted on BRIGHSPACE.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance Policy: This course will require that you log in to BrightSpace **at least twice before Friday**, every week. You must also participate regularly in interactive learning on **FLIPGRID learning platform**.

Assignment Policy: You must complete all graded and non-graded assignments. Please follow the course contract in meeting the guidelines to complete all assignments. Assignments are posted at least a week in advance. Therefore, it is your responsibility to manage your time to complete these assignments by the due dates.

Communication Policy: It is very important that we engage in active, effective and efficient communication in this course. This will require that you read the syllabus, course contract, class announcements, and emails very carefully before you contact the instructor with your questions/concerns. I will ONLY respond to emails with questions related to course materials/issues that have not been covered in the syllabus, course contract, announcements, emails, and any assignment instructions. I will try to respond to your emails with relevant concerns within 24 hours. However, any email received between Friday and Sunday will take longer time.

Make-up Policy: There are NO MAKE-UPS available due to the assignment policy.

OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

[Honor Code](#)¹ [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#)² [Classroom Civility Policies](#)³ [Students](#)

with Disabilities:

“Students who may need accommodations to address barriers caused by documented disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act need to register with the Disability Access Center (DAC) to receive accommodations. To request and receive accommodations, students schedule an appointment with the DAC to initiate review and approval of supporting documentation showing their disability, the barriers it causes, and the recommended accommodations. If documentation is approved, the DAC will email a letter to the student’s current semester faculty members outlining the accommodations needed to ensure accessibility. Accommodations will be provided from the date the letter originates from the DAC. It is important to register as soon as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. The DAC is located at the Hammond campus in the Student Union & Library Building (SUL) 341 and Westville in the Technology Building (TECH) 101. The DAC can be reached at (219) 989-2455 or emailing: dac@pnw.edu. [DAC website](#)⁴.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:

“Purdue University Northwest is committed to supporting and advancing the mental health and well-being of our PNW students. During the course of their academic careers, students often experience personal challenges that contribute to barriers in learning, such as drug/alcohol problems, strained relationships, chronic worrying, persistent sadness or loss of interest in enjoyable activities, family conflict, grief and loss, domestic violence, difficulty concentrating, problems with organization, procrastination and/or lack of motivation. Students also sometimes come to college with a history of learning difficulties (e.g., any form of special education), experience difficulties succeeding in a particular subject (e.g., math, reading), or have experienced some form of trauma be it emotional or physical (e.g., head injury). These mental health concerns can lead to diminished academic performance and can interfere with daily life activities. If you or someone you know has a history of mental health concerns or if you are unsure and would like a consultation, a variety of confidential services are available. The Counseling Center is located in Gyte 05 in Hammond and TECH 101 in Westville. You can also reach us at (219) 989-2366 or on [the Counseling website](#).⁴ [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)⁵ at (800) 273-TALK or on the web.

Non-Discrimination:

Purdue University Northwest prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. Any student who believes they have witnessed or experienced discrimination are encouraged to report the incident to the Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in Lawshe 231, Hammond or call (219) 989-2337 or in Schwarz 25, Westville or call (219) 785-5545. Additional information can be found on the [Diversity website](#).⁶

¹ www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/honor-code

² www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/purdue-university-northwest-academic-integrity-policy/

³ www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/toward-a-model-of-community-civility-student-guide-12006/ ⁴ www.pnw.edu/dac

⁴ www.pnw.edu/counseling/

⁵ suicidepreventionlifeline.org

⁶ <http://www.pnw.edu/diversity>

Emergency Preparedness:

“An information sheet, with instructions for various types of possible emergencies, is posted in each room on campus. These emergencies include criminal activity, severe weather, fire, medical emergencies, and noises sounding like gunshots. Students are strongly encouraged to review this instruction sheet carefully and acquaint themselves with these important guidelines. PNW will hold annual drills to prepare for emergencies such as severe weather, active shooter and fire. It is strongly encouraged that all students participate in these drills in an effort to strengthen our emergency preparedness efforts.” **COVID-19 Preparedness:**

To keep our students, faculty, staff, and community safe, students are required by the University to maintain [social distancing and face covering protocols](#) established by the Director of Public Safety. (Face coverings must cover both nose and mouth.) These are required while students are on campus or participating in University-sponsored activities. These same protocols will be followed in the classroom environment. Because of the importance of these protocols to the safety of the University community, failure and refusal to comply with the protocols will be treated as “obstruction or disruption of a University activity” as defined in the [Code of Conduct](#). If class is meeting face-to-face, students should utilize available cleaning supplies in the classroom to disinfect their desks, tables, and chairs before class begins. Full cleaning and disinfecting by facilities staff will occur nightly.

As we navigate through this unprecedented time, it may be necessary to move a class that is meeting fact-to-face to a remote course delivery. Depending on circumstances that may arise, students need to be prepared to continue taking a course while switching to a different modality. The University will do its best to communicate such changes with at least a 24 to 48-hour notice.

If you feel any symptoms, please stay at home. You will not be penalized for putting your health and those around you first, rather, such consideration is encouraged and praised.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please contact Colin Fewer, Dean of Students at 219.989.4141 or through email at fewer@pnw.edu.

Zoom Etiquette: Recommended Statement: Because Zoom meetings will serve as our “virtual classroom space,” the same [classroom civility policies](#) apply. When others are speaking, please mute your microphone. We encourage your active engagement in Zoom discussions and request that you use the “hand raise” function to allow the instructor to facilitate a respectful conversation. Please arrive to your Zoom sessions a few minutes early to allow the instructor time to get all members of the course admitted.

Course Engagement & Policies:

Student engagement in coursework and class activities is essential for learning and student success. Additionally, to comply with federal mandates related to financial aid, the university is required to track attendance and engagement in course activities. Depending on the delivery format of your course, attendance and engagement in the course may be defined and tracked in different ways. Meaningful engagement in a course may include attending live class sessions (in person or remotely), engaging with learning materials, participating in learning activities, completing assessments, and interacting with classmates and/or the instructor. Logging into the course site in Brightspace alone does not constitute meaningful engagement in a course. You are expected to be actively engaged in the course activities as explained in the course syllabus.

COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE):

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	CHAPTER READINGS
1	1/9 – 1/15	Introduction to Public Finance	1
2	1/16 – 1/22	Review of Microeconomics	Lecture Notes
3	1/23 – 1/29	Theoretical Tools of Public Finance	2
4	1/30 – 2/5	Empirical Tools of Public Finance Cost-Benefit Analysis	3 8
5	2/6 – 2/12	Budget Analysis State & Local Government Expenditures & Programs	4 10
6	2/13 – 2/19	Externalities & Public Goods	5 – 7
7, 8	2/20 – 3/5 3/5	Housing Affordability First Progress Report Due on “Introduction, Problem Statement, Theoretical Tools & Literature Review on Housing Affordability”	Lecture Notes
9	3/6 – 3/12	Data Analytics (Data Collection, Database Development & Analysis)	
10	3/13 – 3/19	SPRING BREAK	
11 - 13	3/20 – 4/9 3/26 4/7 4/9	Policy Analysis Second Progress Report Due on “Empirical Tools, Methodology & Data Collection.” Last day to drop class Third Progress Report Due on “Data Analysis & Results.”	
14	4/10 – 4/16 4/16	COORDINATION OF PRESENTATION SLIDES & REPORTS Fourth Progress Report Due on “Recommendations & Conclusions.”	
15	4/17 – 4/23 4/23	Preparation for PowerPoint Slides & Final Report PowerPoint Slides & Draft Final Report Due	
16	4/24 – 4/30 5/7	Policy Paper Class Presentation (TBA) Policy Paper Public Presentation (TBA) Final Report with PPT Presentation Slides due by Sunday midnight	