

University of Oklahoma Department of Economics
ECON 4353: Public Finance- Issues in Taxation (Fall 2023)
Cate Center One 237, M&W: 1:30-2:45

Instructor: Professor C.L. Rogers (email via course Canvas page)

Office Location and Hours: Room 423 Cate 1, Tuesdays 1-3 pm in-person/zoom & by appointment

Course Format/Meeting Time and Location (essential component)

This is an in-person, synchronous course.

Course Prerequisite: a grade of C or better in 1113 and 1123.

Course Description (essential component)

Do you pay taxes? Use public goods? Encounter regulations? This class discusses the role of government as an economic agent. We will start with an overview of Public Finance, including theoretical and empirical tools of economic analysis. We will discuss government expenditures and revenues by category and identify trends for different levels of US governments. We will discuss market failure as a justification for government interference in markets. The second half of the semester will focus on the theory and practice of taxation, including methods of distributing tax burdens; implications of taxation on equity, tax inefficiencies, as well as taxation on labor supply, business income, and wealth.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Students will gain knowledge about how Government action impacts the economy. Students will gain experience applying economic principles to questions in public finance. Students will complete an independent analysis of a government of their choice. Students will gain experience giving oral and written economic analysis of topics in public finance.

Texts and Materials (essential component)

- Required Text: Jonathan Gruber. *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 6th edition (2019). Worth Publishers, Macmillan Learning, New York. ISBN-13: 978-1-319-10525-9
- Other materials and assignments will be provided on Canvas course page

Teaching Philosophy & Inclusion Statement:

My goal is to encourage student engagement and application of core economics topics, through assignments, readings and in-class discussions. We will strive to build an inclusive, respectful learning community. Economics is all about accounting for different preferences. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have concerns about the class environment.

Learning Activities, Assignments, and Assessments:

- **Class Attendance and Engagement Activities:** [20 points, 20%]. Attendance here will be taken at least 10 times during the semester. Students will provide response to class discussion and receive 1 point for submitting + 1 point for a thoughtful response.

- **Problem sets**: [3 at 10 points each =30, 15%]. Problems will be assigned from the Gruber text. About 5 per set will be graded. See schedule and Canvas for due dates. These will serve as study guides for the exams!
- **Midterm Exam** [October 11, 50 points, 25%] This will cover Chapters 1-7 with questions drawn from problem sets and class discussion/notes. The format will be short answer and problems.
- **Student Projects** Students will pick a tax or regulation imposed by a governmental jurisdiction (federal, state, local) or government agency (EPA, DEQ, etc.). Students will provide economic analysis of the (1) economic justification/rational for the tax or policy, (2) impact of tax/policy using basic economic analysis, (3) discussion of distributional aspects (who pays); and (4) assessment of the effectiveness of the tax/regulation. Detailed project descriptions will be provided on canvas.
 - **Poster Presentation of Projects [20 points, Nov. 27 and 29th]** students will present to small groups of peers with multiple students presenting concurrently.
 - **Submission of Presentation Slides to Canvas [30 points, Dec 2 by 11:59 pm]**
- **Final Exam** [Friday, December 15, 8-10 am, 50 points, 25%] This will cover chapters discussed after the midterm and student projects. It will follow a similar format as the midterm.

Assigning Grades: There are a total of 200 points. The Grading scale is as follows:

- A: at least 90% or at least 180 points
- B: at least 80% or at least 160 points
- C: at least 70% or at least 140 points
- D: at least 60% or at least 120 points

Note: Rounding will be to the second decimal place. An 89.99% will be assigned a "B".

Course Policies:

Make-up Policy

Exams: Accommodations will be made for documented, university approved absences (activities or illness) with prior notification (or as early as possible if you are ill). Homework sets and applications: you may be given an extension if the absence is prolonged. For prolonged periods of absence, please see me for accommodations.

Absences

You are responsible for materials discussed during class whether you attended or not. For excused absences, please provide proper documentation to initiate a conversation about accommodations, which could include reweighting or the opportunity to make up the points.

Late Assignments

We will try to grade assignments within a day of the due date. If something unexpected happens and you want an extension, then your best bet is to reach out *before* the due date to discuss options.

Tentative Schedule – Check Canvas for updates and revisions.

Week	Date	Topic/Gruber Chapter [homework]	Assignment
1	21-Aug	Intro/meet and greet	
	23-Aug	Chap 1: Facts on Gov [C1: 2,4, 7-9]	
2	28-Aug	Chap 2: Econ review [C2: 4-6,9]	
	29-Aug	Chap 3 - Empirical methods, causality [C3:2,5,7,10]	
3	4-Sep	Labor Day - no class	
	6-Sep	C4: Budget analysis/debt financing [C4: 1,2,6,8,14,18]	
4	11-Sep	Chap 5: Externalities	Problem Set 1: C1-C4
	13-Sep	Externalities con'td [C5:3,7,11-14]	
5	18-Sep	Chap 6: Externality Apps [C6:1,6,7,14]	
	20-Sep	Chap 7: Public Goods	
6	25-Sep	Chap 7: Public goods policy [C7: 1,2,10,12,13]	
	27-Sep	Global public goods... carbon fee	
7	2-Oct	Public goods, review	
	4-Oct	Catch Up	Problem Set 2: C5-C7
8	9-Oct	Review Homework Problems	
	11-Oct	Midterm	
9	16-Oct	Chapter 9: Political Economy	
	18-Oct	Chapter 10: State & Local Gov	
10	23-Oct	Chapter 18: taxation	
	25-Oct	Chapter 18 - part 2	
11	30-Oct	Pick gov and tax/regulation	
	1-Nov	Chapter 19: Equity/Tax Incidence	
12	6-Nov	Chapter 19	
	8-Nov	Chapter 20: Optimal Taxation	
13	13-Nov	Chapter 20- Laffer curve	
	15-Nov	Chapter 21: Taxes on Labor Supply	Prob Set 3: C9,C10,C18-C20
14	20-Nov	In class work on projects	
	22-Nov	Thanksgiving	
15	27-Nov	Poster Sessions	
	29-Nov	Poster Sessions	Presentations due
	2-Dec	Presentation Slides due 11:59 pm	
16	4-Dec	Chapter 24: Taxation of Business Income	
	6-Dec	Chapter 23: Taxation on Risk Taking and Wealth	
	15-Dec	Final 8 - 10 am	

Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences Student Success Center

"The Student Success Center (SSC) is a resource for current students majoring in the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences (DFCAS). The SSC prepares students for lives of professional accomplishment, civic engagement, personal fulfillment, and lifelong learning, and to ensure that financial and logistical barriers never stand between a student and their goals. The SSC can assist students with the following: general questions, academic success strategies, finding campus involvement opportunities, major/internship/career exploration and planning, navigating campus resources, student advocacy, etc. Additionally, various events promoted and/or sponsored by the SSC will be held throughout the academic year. You can find more information here: <https://www.ou.edu/cas/students/student-success-center>."

University Policies and Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement Statement Provided by OU's Tribal Liaison office:

Long before the University of Oklahoma was established, the land on which the University now resides was the traditional home of the "Hasinai" Caddo Nation and "Kirikir?i:s" Wichita & Affiliated Tribes. We acknowledge this territory once also served as a hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route for the Apache, Comanche, Kiowa and Osage nations. Today, 39 tribal nations dwell in the state of Oklahoma as a result of settler and colonial policies that were designed to assimilate Native people. The University of Oklahoma recognizes the historical connection our university has with its indigenous community. We acknowledge, honor and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land. We fully recognize, support and advocate for the sovereign rights of all of Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations. This acknowledgement is aligned with our university's core value of creating a diverse and inclusive community. It is an institutional responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the people, culture and history that make up our entire OU Community.

Copyright Syllabus Statement for In-Person or Online Courses

Sessions of this course may be recorded or live-streamed. These recordings are the intellectual property of the individual faculty member and may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit, written consent of the faculty member. In addition, privacy rights of others such as students, guest lecturers, and providers of copyrighted material displayed in the recording may be of concern. Students may not share any course recordings with individuals not enrolled in the class or upload them to any other online environment.

Religious Observance

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays, without penalty.

Title IX Resources and Reporting Requirement (required)

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, the University offers a variety of resources. To learn more or to report an incident, please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at 405/325-2215 (8 to 5,

M-F) or smo@ou.edu. Incidents can also be reported confidentially to OU Advocates at 405/615-0013 (phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Also, please be advised that a professor/GA/TA is required to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination to the Sexual Misconduct Office. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies can be directed to University Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Coordinator at 405/325-3546 or smo@ou.edu. For more information, visit <http://www.ou.edu/eoo.html>.

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues (required)

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact your professor or the Disability Resource Center at 405/325-3852 as soon as possible. Also, see <http://www.ou.edu/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html> for answers to commonly asked questions.

Final Exam Preparation Period

Pre-finals week will be defined as the seven calendar days before the first day of finals. Faculty may cover new course material throughout this week. For specific provisions of the policy please refer to OU's Final Exam Preparation Period policy

Emergency Protocol

During an emergency, there are official university [procedures](#) that will maximize your safety.

Severe Weather: If you receive an OU Alert to seek refuge or hear a tornado siren that signals severe weather 1. LOOK for severe weather refuge location maps located inside most OU buildings near the entrances 2. SEEK refuge inside a building. Do not leave one building to seek shelter in another building that you deem safer. If outside, get into the nearest building. 3. GO to the building's severe weather refuge location. If you do not know where that is, go to the lowest level possible and seek refuge in an innermost room. Avoid outside doors and windows. 4. GET IN, GET DOWN, COVER UP. 5. WAIT for official notice to resume normal activities. [Link to Severe Weather Refuge Areas](#), [Severe Weather Preparedness - Video](#)

Armed Subject/Campus Intruder: (required)

If you receive an OU Alert to shelter-in-place due to an active shooter or armed intruder situation or you hear what you perceive to be gunshots:

1. GET OUT: If you believe you can get out of the area WITHOUT encountering the armed individual, move quickly towards the nearest building exit, move away from the building, and call 911. 2. HIDE OUT: If you cannot flee, move to an area that can be locked or barricaded, turn off lights, silence devices, spread out, and formulate a plan of attack if the shooter enters the room. 3. TAKE OUT: As a last resort fight to defend yourself.

For more information, visit <http://www.ou.edu/emergencypreparedness.html>

[Shots Fired on Campus Procedure - Video](#)

Fire Alarm/General Emergency: (required)

If you receive an OU Alert that there is danger inside or near the building, or the fire alarm inside the building activates: 1. LEAVE the building. Do not use the elevators. 2. KNOW at least two building exits 3. ASSIST those that may need help 4. PROCEED to the emergency assembly area 5 ONCE safely outside, NOTIFY first responders of anyone that may still be inside building due to mobility issues. 6. WAIT for official notice before attempting to re-enter the building.