

SYLLABUS, SPRING 2022

ECN340/PUB640: GOVERNMENT FINANCE (PUBLIC ECONOMICS)

Tuesday, Thursday; 12:30pm

Instructor: Dr. Laura Crispin

Location: Bellarmine 217

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Address: 107D Barbelin Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, (Zoom or In-Person) 2:15pm-3:15pm; Wednesdays (Zoom) 10am-11:30am; other times by appointment. Please book via Starfish:

<https://sju.starfishsolutions.com/starfish-ops/dl/instructor/serviceCatalog.html?bookmark=connection/11015/schedule>

Email policy: I try to return emails as quickly as possible (usually within 24-48 hours), but during peak times, it may take me longer to respond. Please make sure to include your name in your email sign-off (I can't always tell who you are from your email address alone). If I don't respond to your email within two business days, please feel free to email me again – I am currently receiving an unimaginable volume of email and occasionally miss one.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes called “public finance” or “public economics,” this course is an upper-level economics & public policy elective that considers the role of government in the economy, including the provision of public goods and market interventions. Public economics is applied economics: using the tools of economics applied to the most important policy issues of the day. It applies the core tools of microeconomics (and a little macro) to analyze several important government programs and policies, including social insurance programs such as Social Security and Medicare and programs that target the poor such as Medicaid and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The emphasis of the course is on developing students' ability to apply economic reasoning to public economics issues.

Throughout this course, there will be opportunities for reading about, writing about, and discussing current policies, problems, and events that are relevant to the study of public economics. In order to gain the most from these discussions, students are required to take on an active role in these discussions.

OFFICIAL PREREQUISITE: ECON 101 - Introduction to Microeconomics

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE: ECON 301 - Microeconomic Theory

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students must be able to:

- Understand the budgeting process and taxation for the federal, state, and local governments
- Understand the theories of public goods, externalities, and government intervention in markets
- Learn the core tools that economists use to analyze government policies and develop the ability to apply these tools to new situations
- Learn about how economists analyze the most important tax and expenditure policy issues facing the US today and the evidence about the effects of these policies

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the above through in-class exercises, in-class discussions, homeworks, and exams.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Public Finance and Public Policy. Jonathan Gruber. 6th ed. Worth Publishers.

This book is available as an e-book or a hard copy book. Previous or used editions may be found through various sites, though the content may not be identical.

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the course and the citation information will be provided in advance in class and on Canvas.

MASKING

All students, regardless of vaccination and booster status, are expected to wear KN95, KF94, or N95 masks, fully covering the nose and mouth, inside all academic buildings and during the entire class period. Appropriate masks are available to students in their dorms, the Dean's Office, and in Campion 229. Food and beverages are prohibited in the classroom at least until January 31 and at other times of COVID-19 surges, in accordance with the University's health and safety guidelines. Students who are in violation of the mask policy will be asked to leave the classroom in order to protect the health and safety of all students, marked absent, and reported to Public Safety. If you are symptomatic or test positive, please complete the COVID-19 Self-Disclosure Form.

Masks can be obtained at these locations: • OPSS Service Center, Campion 229 • Library Circulation Desk • Writing Center • All Dean's Offices • All Advising Centers • Commuter Lounge

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (Source: Dr. Cecilia M. Orphan, University of Denver)

In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that conversations and interactions that could potentially be divisive turn instead into opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment.

A dedication to inclusiveness requires respecting what others say, their right to say it, and the thoughtful consideration of others' communication. Both speaking up and listening are valuable tools for furthering thoughtful, enlightening dialogue. Respecting one another's individual differences is critical in transforming a collection of diverse individuals into an inclusive, collaborative and excellent learning community. Our core commitment shapes our core expectation for behavior inside and outside of the classroom.

GRADING

As indicated above, your grade for this course will be based on a variety of assignments. The fraction of the points allocated to each is shown below. Attendance is not accounted for specifically in your grade, but I expect all students to attend each class. Only four "unexcused" absences allowed. Only documented, university-approved absences will be considered "excused" absences. There will be no "extra credit" given.

ECN340 Students	Grade Breakdown
Homework (5% each)	20%
Class Participation	10%
Midterm	35%
Final	35%

PUB640 Students	Grade Breakdown
Homework (5% each)	20%
Policy Paper	20%
Presentation	10%
Midterm	25%
Final	25%

You are responsible for all material in the classes and book. The final exam will be comprehensive with an emphasis on new material. More details on the format and allowed materials will be provided later in the semester.

PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION AND IN-CLASS EXERCISES

Your participation grade will be based on your attendance as well as participation in classroom discussions, in-class exercises, online discussion boards, and lecture “check-ins” via Canvas. Additionally, graduate students will be assigned to small groups and each group will be given a paper to present during class and will facilitate the class discussion on that day. Active participants will receive full credit.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the semester, there will be four homework assignments, requiring students to use their knowledge of public finance and economics to solve problems, research policies, and discuss relevant issues. Homework assignments are to be submitted via Canvas on or before the due date. Students will have three “late” passes for the entire semester. You may use your late passes for one assignment (i.e., three days late) or for different assignments. Once you have used your late passes, late assignments will not be accepted.

MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions related to material from the first half of the semester. It will be held during a normal class period. Please bring a calculator, #2 pencil, and pen. The exam will be closed book.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions that incorporates material from the entire course. It will be held during the assigned final exam period. The format will be discussed prior to the final exam. Please bring a calculator, #2 pencil, and pen. The exam will be closed book.

PUB640 POLICY PAPER AND PRESENTATION

Students in the 4+1 MS Public Policy program have an additional requirement to write a policy paper and present to the class during the last weeks of the semester. The paper will be 10-15 pages long about a policy of your choosing, related to the history, implementation, and outcomes (intended or unintended). A draft of the paper will be due following spring break and the final paper will be due on our last day of class. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes long, highlighting key details of your work, with opportunities for Q&A following your presentation. More details will be provided during class.

MISSED CLASS POLICY

As discussed above, class attendance and participation is critical in this fast paced, discussion intensive study of government finance and public policy. However, emergencies may arise and force you to miss class. **If you are ill and/or contagious, please do not come to class! If you are too ill to attend class, please send me an**

email to let me know. If you may have COVID, you MUST fill out the form with the University!

In these circumstances, you are required to get the lecture notes and materials from a classmate BEFORE the next lecture. You are encouraged to come to my office hours to discuss any questions regarding the materials.

MAKE UP POLICY

Students missing the midterm or final for unavoidable and formally verifiable reasons will be given a makeup exam. Exams missed for avoidable or for unverifiable reasons will be assigned a grade of 0. I cannot change the date/time of an exam to accommodate students' travel plans. Students must plan their end of semester travel arrangements accordingly.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Texting, cell phone, and laptop use during class is distracting to your peers and to me, and therefore, the use of laptops and cell phones is not permitted during class. Should you need to make a phone call or send a text message, please do so before or after class. Students who are texting during class will receive a zero for their class participation grade. If your texting during class becomes a distraction, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to be familiar with the **SJU Academic Honesty Policy**, published in the Student Handbook and University Catalog, and to adhere to it at all times. Unauthorized use of notes or assistance during an exam will result in failure of the assignment.

Specifically, with respect to plagiarism, the policy is defined as "plagiarism, the appropriation of information, ideas, or the language of other persons or writers and the submission of them as one's own to satisfy the requirements of a course. Plagiarism thus constitutes both theft and deceit. Compositions, term papers, or computer programs acquired, either in part or in whole, from commercial sources or from other students and submitted as one's own original work shall be considered plagiarism. All students are directed to the standard manuals of style or reference guides for discussions of plagiarism and the means by which sources are legitimately acknowledged, cited, quoted, paraphrased, and footnoted—whether presented in an oral report or in writing," (<http://www.sju.edu/int/resources/registrar/ahpolicies.html>). **You are responsible for knowing what does and does not constitute plagiarism.** If you have any questions or concerns, please schedule an appointment with Dr. Crispin to discuss.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with state and federal laws, the University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. For those who have or think that you may have a disability requiring an accommodation (learning, physical,

psychological) should contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Room G10, Bellarmine, 610-660-1774 (voice) or 610-660-1620 (TTY) as early as possible in the semester for additional information and so that an accommodation, if appropriate, can be made in a timely manner. You will be required to provide current (within 3 years) documentation of the disability.

For a more detailed explanation of the University's accommodation process, as well as the programs and services offered to students with disabilities, please go to www.sju.edu/studentlife/studentresources/sess/ssd. If you have any difficulty accessing the information on-line, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at the telephone numbers above.

THE WRITING CENTER

You may also wish to take advantage of the Writing Center, where undergraduate and graduate student tutors can assist you at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting to revising. For hours and additional information, visit the Writing Center website at www.sju.edu/writingcenter.

“OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM” INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS: I am glad to write recommendation letters for great students, and it is easier to write them for students whom I know. I encourage you to come to office hours so I can meet with you and talk about the position that you are applying to. Please note that I require at least two weeks' notice for all recommendation letters. Please include your resume and unofficial transcripts, along with any other helpful materials with your email request.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Saint Joseph's University recognizes that physical and mental health strongly impact one's ability to do well in school and in life. As a result, there are many helpful campus resources designed to help students to care for their physical, mental, and spiritual health. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle and challenges. If you are experiencing concerns, seeking assistance sooner rather than later is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. The resources below can help you to cope with stress and to achieve your academic and personal goals.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS) provides free confidential mental health counseling for all Saint Joseph's University students. Currently, CAPS therapists are conducting tele-mental health counseling for students via a secure version of Zoom. In addition, counselors are available after office hours and over weekends to attend to

urgent mental health concerns. To access 24/7 mental health counseling, students can call the CAPS office at 610-660-1090. <https://sites.sju.edu/counseling/>

ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES:

- Fitness & Recreation- <https://www.sju.edu/health-well-being/fitness-recreation>
- Student Success - <https://sites.sju.edu/thesuccesscenter/student-success/>
- Center for Inclusion and Diversity: <https://sites.sju.edu/oid/>
- Campus Ministry - <https://sites.sju.edu/campusministry/>

SJU POLICY PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION: “As a Catholic, Jesuit University, Saint Joseph’s is committed to the just and respectful treatment of students, faculty, and staff. To this end, Saint Joseph’s prohibits unlawful discrimination against, and harassment of, its employees, students, or applicants for employment or admission on the basis of any characteristic protected by state or federal law. The prohibition extends to discrimination, harassment and retaliation by third parties visiting campus or participating in University-sponsored activities” (excerpted from page 1 of the policy). The [full policy](#) includes information about available resources and confidentiality.

SJU SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY: POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL ASSAULT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, OR STALKING: “Saint Joseph’s University...is committed to providing an institutional environment where all persons may pursue their studies, careers, duties, and activities in an atmosphere free of the threat of sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking (for purposes of this Policy, this conduct may be referred to, collectively, as “Sexual Misconduct”). Sexual Misconduct directed toward students, employees or any member of the University community, including third parties, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, interferes with the expectation that all individuals at the University will learn and work in an environment that is free from discrimination. Sexual Misconduct, as defined by the University, may also constitute a crime” (excerpted from page 3 of the policy). For support, resources, and reporting related to sexual misconduct, please visit [Sexual Misconduct: Support & Resources](#) page and read the [full policy](#).

BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING: “Bias- or hate-motivated conduct creates barriers to inclusion and trust, and all campus members are responsible to respond to harmful incidents quickly and effectively in order to ensure the wellbeing of targeted individuals and groups, to facilitate collective learning, and to re-establish clear norms that forestall future incidents. Bias incidents affect not only the targeted individual or group, but often make an entire group or community feel vulnerable and unwelcomed” (Excerpt from [full description](#)).

“The Saint Joseph’s University [Non-Discrimination Statement](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, race, age of 40 or over, color, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, marital status, and military and military veteran status, and any other status protected by law in the administration of its admission, educational, financial aid, employment, athletic, or recreational policies or programs.”

IF YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED A BIAS INCIDENT, PLEASE CONSIDER REPORTING THE EXPERIENCE BY COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING A [BIAS INCIDENT FORM](#); CONTACTING PUBLIC SAFETY AT 610-660-1111 OR VISITING THE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE IN BARBELIN HALL; OR REACHING OUT TO THE BIAS INCIDENT COORDINATOR - DR. MARY-ELAINE PERRY – AT 610-660-1145. READ MORE ABOUT [DEFINITIONS](#) AND THE [PROCESS](#) ON SJU'S [BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING](#) WEBPAGE.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Part 1: Introduction and Background

Tuesday, Jan. 18: Syllabus and General Information; Read & Discuss articles; Overview of Government Finance & Public Policy (Ch. 1)

Thursday, Jan. 20: Theoretical Tools of Public Finance (Ch. 2)

Part 2: Market Failures & Government Intervention

Tuesday, Jan. 25: Externalities (Ch. 5); **Last day of Add/Drop period**

Thursday, Jan. 27: Externalities (cont'd) ; Graduate students - **Brainstorming Paper Topics**

Tuesday, Feb. 1: Externalities (cont'd); Externalities in Action: Health & Environment (Ch. 6); Public Goods (Ch. 7)

Thursday, Feb. 3: Public Goods (cont'd)

Monday, Feb. 7: Homework #1 Due by 11:59pm

Tuesday, Feb. 8: Cost-Benefit Analysis (Ch. 8)

Thursday, Feb. 10: Cost-Benefit Analysis (cont'd); Graduate students - **Paper Topics Due via Canvas before class**

Part 3: Government Budget & Finance and Government Expenditures

Tuesday, Feb. 15: **Online class** - Dr. Crispin's testimony before the PA House Democratic Policy committee (live starting at noon)

Wednesday, Feb. 16: Day of Dialogue – all students will attend

Thursday, Feb. 17: Budget Analysis and Deficit Financing (Ch. 4); Political Economy (Ch. 9)

Tuesday, Feb. 22: Political Economy (cont'd) State and Local Government (Ch. 10)

Thursday, Feb. 24: State and Local Government (cont'd)

Monday, Feb. 28: Homework #2 due by 11:59pm

Tuesday, Mar. 1: Education (Ch. 11)

Thursday, Mar. 3: Education (cont'd)

Tuesday, Mar. 8: Social Insurance and Social Security (Ch. 12 & 13)

Thursday, Mar. 10: Midterm

March 14-March 20: Spring Break; Dr. Crispin's 40th birthday!

Monday, Mar. 21: Graduate Students - Draft of paper posted to Canvas at or before 11:59pm

Tuesday, Mar. 22: Social Insurance and Social Security (cont'd)

Thursday, Mar. 24: Labor-related Social Insurance (Ch. 14)

Tuesday, Mar. 29: Health Insurance 1 (Ch. 15)

Thursday, Mar. 30: Health Insurance 2 (Ch. 16)

Part 4: Government Revenue-Taxation

Tuesday, Apr. 5: Taxation, Equity Implications, and Inefficiencies (Chs. 18, 19, 20)

Thursday, Apr. 7: Taxation, Equity Implications, and Inefficiencies (Chs. 18, 19, 20)

Monday, Apr. 11: Homework #3 due by 11:59pm

Tuesday, April 12: More on Taxation (Chs. 18-20; 21-25); Graduate students - Drafts returned with peer and professor comments

Thursday, April 14: More on Taxation

Tuesday, April 19: Other topics; **Last day to withdraw from Spring 2022 classes**

Thursday, April 21: Other topics (cont'd)

Tuesday, April 26: In-Class Paper Presentations

Thursday, April 28: In-Class Paper Presentations

Monday, May 2: Homework #4 due by 11:59pm

Tuesday, May 3: In-Class Paper Presentations

Thursday, May 5: Dr. Crispin presents research, discussion of current events, review for the final; Graduate students: **Final papers due via Canvas by 11:59pm**

Final Exams: 5/9/22-5/13/22