

ECO 4504 – PUBLIC SECTOR ECONOMICS
FALL 2015, CRN 80631, MWF 2:00-2:50 PM, Lutgert Hall, Rm. 2202, 3 credit hours

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Office Hours: MWF 11-11:50 AM and 1-1:50 PM
And by appointment.

TEXTBOOKS

Required: Randall Holcombe, *Public Sector Economics: The Role of Government in the American Economy* (Prentice Hall, 2006), ISBN: 0131450425.

3 Scantron sheets: “Pearson NCS Test Sheets 100/100, Form No. 95679” (They are available at the FGCU Book Store.) **Forms that are wrinkled or torn are not readable by the grading machine. There will be a 5-point deduction if the machine cannot grade your exam.**

Recommended: William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (1999). (An online version of a previous edition is available here: [http://www.bartleby.com/141/.](http://www.bartleby.com/141/))

PREREQUISITES

ECO 2023 and ECO 2013 with a minimum grade of C.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (from catalog)

“The study of the role of government in a market economy, including how government budgetary policy (spending, taxing, borrowing, and debt management) affects the economy and its citizens.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is to enhance your understanding of the application of microeconomic principles to the public sector of the economy. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the following areas: the basic principles of public economics; economic efficiency, externalities, and public goods; public choice analysis; the economics of taxation; and the economics of government expenditure programs.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS COURSE OBJECTIVES

Grading: 25% - Exam 1 15% - Homework
 25% - Exam 2 10% - Participation
 25% - Exam 3

My grading scale is as follows:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	70-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82			D-	60-62		

EXAMS (75%)

The exams will consist of 1) multiple choice questions designed to assess your knowledge of the concepts discussed in class and in the textbook, and 2) essay questions and problems designed to assess your ability to apply those concepts. Some of the latter group of questions will be similar to the “Questions and Problems” at the end of each chapter of your textbook. We will occasionally work on some of those questions together in small groups in class. The best way to prepare for the exams is to familiarize yourself with the basic concepts in each chapter, answer the questions at the end of the chapter, and attend class regularly so that you will benefit from the classroom discussion and be there when we work questions together in class. You will need only a pencil, an eraser, a non-programmable calculator (such as the Texas Instruments BA2+), and a Scantron form for all exams. (Use “Pearson NCS Test Sheets 100/100, Form No. 95679.” They are available at the FGCU Book Store.) **Scantron forms that are wrinkled or torn are not readable by the grading machine. There will be a 5-point deduction if the machine cannot grade your exam.** You are NOT permitted to use programmable calculators, cell phones, scanners, or any other electronic devices on exams, **nor are you permitted to leave and reenter the classroom during an exam** (except in the case of an emergency). (Plan your bathroom trips accordingly.) There will be three exams during the semester. There is no comprehensive final exam. Exam #3 will only cover the material covered after Exam #2. It will be the same length as Exams 1 and 2, but it will be taken during our scheduled final exam period. **There will be NO make-up exams.** If you miss an exam without my prior approval you will earn a grade of zero on that exam.

HOMEWORK (15%)

Your primary activity outside of class will be to read the assigned chapters and other outside readings (to be distributed later) and be prepared to discuss them in class. To provide you a stronger incentive to do this, for each chapter and each outside reading you will have a homework assignment consisting of the following three parts:

- 1) A brief accurate description of the three most important concepts of that chapter (**one or two sentences per concept**), written IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Do NOT quote directly from the textbook. (The first violation of this rule results in a loss of credit for this section. The second violation results in a loss of credit for the entire assignment. Additional violations will be considered willful acts of plagiarism and appropriate official disciplinary actions will be taken, up to and including a failing grade in the course.)
- 2) A brief (**one or two sentences**) description of something you’d like to discuss in class related to the reading. It could be the concept that you found most difficult in that chapter or the one you found most interesting. (For example, “I did not understand _____.”; or “I found _____ most confusing.”; or “The concept I’d most like to discuss in class is _____.”)
- 3) Find an article in a newspaper, magazine, or blog, or a short video (less than 10 minutes long) that relates to the concepts in the chapter. **In three or four sentences**, identify the concept and describe IN YOUR OWN WORDS how the article pertains to that concept. Provide a website address for that article.

These assignments are due via email (send to dstansel@fgcu.edu) **BY 1:00 PM** on the first day that we discuss each reading. (The due dates will be announced in class.) The assignment should be **pasted into the text of the email and the reading to which it relates should be clearly identified. DO NOT SEND IT AS AN ATTACHED FILE.** You will earn 1 point for each of the three parts that you complete satisfactorily and 1 point if there are no more than two minor errors in writing (as described below). In addition to the specific guidelines above (failure to follow those instructions will result in the deduction of points) the specific grading rubric is as follows:

1) Part 1

Full credit (1 point): There are three important concepts that pertain to the chapter. They are labeled in a way that makes it clear that there are three (that is: 1, 2, 3, or a, b, c). Each one of those three is described correctly in **exactly one or two sentences (no more, no less)**. They are written **in your own words**. It is clear that you have read all of the chapter and understood the important concepts.

2) Part 2

Full credit (1 point): There is at least one concept listed. It is written **in your own words**. It is specific. It is **NOT just the title of a graph or a section of the chapter**. It is communicated in **exactly one or two sentences (no more, no less)**.

3) Part 3

Full credit (1 point): You have identified one concept. You have described how it's illustrated in the article. You have done so in **exactly three or four sentences (no more, no less)**. It is written **in your own words**. You have provided the article title and a website address.

4) Writing quality

Full credit (1 point): Parts 1-3 are all written in the form of complete sentences. There are no more than two minor errors in writing: that includes punctuation, spelling, grammar, and basic clarity.

Strunk and White's classic book, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed., is an excellent resource to help you improve your writing. An online version of a previous edition is available here:

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.

Your grades will be given via email. If you did not get full credit (4 points), there will be a number in parentheses identifying the part of the assignment on which you did not get full credit. For example, a grade of "3 (3)" means that you got 3 points out of 4, and the reason you did not get the full 4 points is that Part 3 of the assignment needs substantial improvement; "3.5 (3)" means that Part 3 was on the border and needs some improvement. If there is more than one number in parentheses, the one listed first was the one that was most problematic. (Note that a 4 is an A, a 3 is a B, a 2 is a C, and a 1 is a D.) Assignments submitted later than **1:00 PM** on the due date will not be graded.

You will only be graded on 9 homework assignments. That 9 must consist of three assignments for each of the three sets of readings on which there will be an exam. That means by Exam 1, you must have done three assignments; by Exam 2, you must have done three more; and then by Exam 3, you must have done three more. If you do fewer than three from one of those three sets of readings, you can NOT replace one of those with an extra assignment from one of the other sections.

I will post a mid-term homework grade on Canvas about half-way through the semester. Your final homework grade will be the numeric average of your homework grades, converted to a 0-100 scale.

PARTICIPATION (10%)

Since this will not be a traditional lecture-style class, you will be expected to be an active participant in classroom discussion. You will be expected to read the assigned chapters and be prepared to discuss them in class. I will call on you individually, and **if you are unprepared to participate that will adversely impact your participation grade, as will violations of the classroom conduct policy (below)**. Failure to actively participate in classroom discussion WILL lower your participation grade. I will keep track of attendance. The primary factors in determining your overall participation grade will be your attendance record and, more importantly, how often you make useful contributions to classroom discussion. **My expectation is that each of you will be present and will make useful contributions**

(meaning more than one) to classroom discussion every day that we have class. Your participation grade will reflect how well you live up to that expectation. I will post a mid-term participation grade on Canvas about half-way through the semester. (Note that “useful contributions to classroom discussion” can include asking good questions or bringing up good discussion topics, like those from Part 2 of your homework assignments.)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Since you can't participate if you are not present in class, failure to attend class will adversely affect your participation grade. (See discussion above under “Participation.”) I believe that it will also indirectly have an adverse effect upon your homework and exam grades.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Because they can create a distraction that can reduce classroom discussion, **the use of laptop computers (or other electronic devices, including cell phones) is NOT permitted in the classroom.** Students have been found to remember lectures better when they take handwritten notes rather than using a laptop. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>) During class time please turn off your cell phone or set it to vibrate only. Violations of this policy will adversely impact your participation grade, as will any other behavior that creates a distraction (such as chatting amongst yourselves while others are talking).

EMAIL

I will often communicate with the class via FGCU EagleMail. If you do not have an EagleMail account you need to establish one right away (<http://eagle.fgcu.edu/>). Outside of my official office hours, the best way to reach me is via email (dstansel@fgcu.edu). Please include “ECO 4504” in the header of your email. **Do NOT expect me to reply to messages asking questions that can be answered by simply reading the syllabus.** Excellent advice on how to communicate professionally via email can be found here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>. I strongly suggest you read this and make use of the suggestions.

IMPORTANT DATES

Mon. 9/7	NO CLASS: Labor Day Holiday
Mon. 9/21	EXAM #1 (Ch. 1-6 & Ch. 1 of <i>Economics in One Lesson</i>) (BRING AN UNWRINKLED, UNTORN SCANTRON)
Mon. 10/26	EXAM #2 (Ch. 7-11, 13, 16) (BRING AN UNWRINKLED, UNTORN SCANTRON)
Tues. 11/3	Last day to withdraw from classes without academic penalty
Wed. 11/11	NO CLASS: Veteran's Day Holiday
Wed. 11/25	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Fri. 11/27	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Mon. 12/7	12:30-2:45pm, EXAM #3 (Ch. 17-22 & 24) (BRING AN UNWRINKLED, UNTORN SCANTRON)

VERIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE IN CANVAS

As of fall 2015, all faculty members are required to confirm a student's attendance for each course by the end of the first week of classes (that's the end of the day on Tues. 8/25) through the use of an activity in Canvas. (Details on that activity will be discussed in class and via email.) Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid. The confirmation of attendance is required for all students, not only those receiving financial aid.

UNIVERSITY-REQUIRED STATEMENTS:

Academic Behavior Standards and Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to demonstrate honesty in their academic pursuits. The university policies regarding issues of honesty can be found in the FGCU Student Guidebook under the ***Student Code of Conduct*** and ***Policies and Procedures*** sections. All students are expected to study this document which outlines their responsibilities and consequences for violations of the policy. The FGCU Student Guidebook is available online at <http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/judicialaffairs/new.html>

Disability Accommodations Services

Florida Gulf Coast University, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the university's guiding principles, will provide classroom and academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you need to request an accommodation in this class due to a disability, or you suspect that your academic performance is affected by a disability, please contact the Office of Adaptive Services. The Office of Adaptive Services is located in Howard Hall 137. The phone number is 239-590-7956 or TTY 239-590-7930

Student Observance of Religious Holidays

All students at Florida Gulf Coast University have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observance. Where practicable, major examinations, major assignments, and University ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day. A student who is to be excused from class for a religious observance is not required to provide a second party certification of the reason for the absence.
