

## Syllabus

This course examines the economics of government taxation and expenditure policy. Particular emphasis is paid to the role of government intervention in the absence of markets, the effects of such intervention, and the manner in which the government finances its activities. Theories of the choice of various economic policies are discussed briefly as well.

Pre-Requisites: Economics 301 or 311. Full knowledge of the material in these courses is expected. If you do not feel comfortable with this material, or your knowledge of it has decayed sufficiently, you should review this material.

Textbook: *Public Finance and Public Policy* by Jonathan Gruber, 2005, published by Worth, available at the bookstore. Readings from Gruber for each lecture are listed on the accompanying class schedule.

Course Website: <http://wilcoxen.cp.maxwell.syr.edu/courses/ecn431/>

Grading: This course will be team taught, with, roughly speaking, Professor Engelhardt teaching the first half and Professor Wilcoxon the second half. The course grade is composed as follows: ten problem sets worth one percent each and two exams each worth forty-five percent of the final grade. The first exam will be on Wednesday, March 9, and will cover material through March 2. The second exam will be during the regularly scheduled final exam period in early May. The second exam will cover only the material after March 2. Historically, the median grade earned in this class has been a B. The problem set due dates and the date of the first exam are listed on the attached class schedule as well. They will not be rescheduled to meet the specific needs of students. Students must notify Professor Engelhardt by January 28, of all religious holidays and intercollegiate athletic events they plan to take part in during the term so that the exams will not be scheduled in conflict. Students competing in NCAA national competitions or tournaments should contact Professor Engelhardt as soon as possible after qualification for such events to resolve any scheduling conflicts.

Office Hours: Professor Engelhardt will have office hours on Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:00, or by appointment, in 426 Eggers, and may be reached by e-mail at [gvengelh@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:gvengelh@maxwell.syr.edu). Professor Wilcoxon will have office hours on Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment, in 400G Eggers, and may be reached by e-mail at [wilcoxen@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:wilcoxen@maxwell.syr.edu).

Teaching Assistant: The T.A. for this course is Jesse Bricker. He will hold regular office hours in 041 Eggers Hall on Tuesday, 11:00-12:00, Thursday, 11:00-12:00, and Friday, 9:30-10:30, or by appointment. He may be reached by telephone at 443-9264 or by e-mail at [jebricke@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:jebricke@maxwell.syr.edu). The T.A. primarily will be responsible for grading the problem sets. Questions about the grading of problem sets first should be directed to

the T.A., and then, if need be, to the appropriate professor. All questions about the exams should be directed to the appropriate professor.

Attendance: We do not take attendance. Because the course material is based heavily on lectures, notes, and handouts, it is in your best interest to attend class regularly. Empirically, good attendance is highly correlated with a good course grade (but it is not necessarily a causal relationship!). However, in the interest of public health, you should not come to class or office hours if you feel unwell. If you miss class, you should get the class notes from a classmate. You may get any handouts from a classmate or you may download them from the course web page. All textbook and reserve readings are listed on the attached class schedule. Once you have reviewed the appropriate class notes, handouts, and readings, we gladly will answer specific questions during office hours on the material missed in class. However, we will not give a make-up lecture on missed material during office hours.

#### Conduct for Problem Sets:

1. Problem sets are due to the receptionist in the Center for Policy Research, 426 Eggers Hall, by noon on Fridays. Problem sets turned in late will be given a failing grade. Obviously, problem sets may be turned in early with no penalty.
2. Students may work alone or in pairs on each problem set. A student may be a member of only one pair per problem set. Students who worked in pairs must indicate their partner's name on their solutions. Any student listed in more than one pair for a problem set will receive a failing grade. Each student must turn in written solutions to the problem set questions. No group copies. (The T.A. and we are good at reading handwriting. So, these solutions do not have to be typed, but if that is easier for you, then fine.) Allowing your work to be copied verbatim by another person, even your problem set partner, and copying verbatim another person's work, even your problem set partner's, on a problem set are considered violations of academic honesty.
3. Violations of academic honesty on a problem set at a minimum will result in a failing grade for that problem set.
4. Extensions for problem set deadlines will be given for religious reasons and intercollegiate athletic events. However, students must notify Professor Engelhardt by the date noted above of all religious holidays and athletic events that will conflict with problem set due dates. Students in NCAA national competitions or tournaments should contact Professor Engelhardt as soon as possible after qualification for such events to resolve any scheduling conflicts.
5. Extensions for problem set deadlines will be given in the event of a death of a friend or extended family member. The student must notify in writing (e-mail) in advance of the due date the appropriate professor, the T.A., their faculty advisor, and their dean in such circumstances. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade.

6. Extensions for problem set deadlines will be given for medical reasons for students that could not meet the regular deadline because they were receiving medical care at an off-campus hospital or clinic. In addition, extensions will be given for medical reasons for students who could not meet the regular deadline because they were *admitted* to the University infirmary. In all cases, the student must notify in writing (e-mail) the appropriate professor, the T.A., their faculty advisor, and their dean. We will consider extensions on a case-by-case basis for those students who were seen at the University infirmary but not admitted, as long as the student notifies the appropriate professor the T.A., their faculty advisor, and their dean at least 1 hour prior to the regularly scheduled deadline in such circumstances.

#### Conduct for Exams:

1. Collaboration of any kind on an exam or assistance of any kind from texts, notes, or any other type of communication during an exam is not allowed. Allowing your work to be copied by another person and copying another person's work on an exam are considered violations of academic honesty. Violations of academic honesty on an exam at a *minimum* will result in a failing grade for that exam.
2. Calculators may be used during exams, but may not be shared. Laptop and desktop computers and hand-held computing devices, such as, but not limited to, Palm Pilot or Newton, may not be used during exams. Cell phones and any other form of text messaging may not be used during exams. Use of such devices on an exam will result in a failing grade for that exam.
3. Failure to show up for a scheduled exam will result in a failing grade for that exam. An exception will be given for medical reasons for students that were receiving *emergency* medical care at the starting time of the exam at an off-campus hospital or clinic. In such cases, the student must notify the appropriate professor, T.A., faculty advisor, and their dean as soon as practically possible. An exception will be given for medical reasons for students that were *admitted* as an in-patient at a hospital or the University infirmary at least one hour prior to the starting time of the exam. In such cases, the student must notify the by e-mail the appropriate professor, T.A., faculty advisor, and their dean. We will not inquire as to the nature of the medical care, but we will ask the dean to ask you to provide to the dean written verification from the health services provider that care was given during the time of the exam. In the event of a death of a friend or extended family member on or around the date of an exam, the student should contact the appropriate professor about taking the exam.

Disabilities:

1. Students with disabilities that may affect their learning or testing environment should contact us as soon as possible to discuss ways in which the coursework can be made more accessible.
2. By law, we are required to give reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities that have been documented and registered with the University's Disability Services. Once a student has done that and contacted us in a timely manner as required by law, we will do the following:
  - a. Contact University's Disability Services to ensure that the appropriate documentation is on file.
  - b. Let the appropriate University personnel advise us as to what accommodations are reasonable based on the documentation on file.
  - c. Gladly administer the accommodations.
3. For disabilities that affect day-to-day learning such as lectures and problem sets, we define timely notification as a week in advance. For disabilities that may affect testing or the administration of exams, we define timely notification as a week in advance.