Economics 4116/5116-001, Public Finance
Tues-Thurs 2:00 – 3:15 pm, Kennedy 236
Spring 2015

Instructor:  Dr. Matt Metzgar
Office:  223B Friday Building
Phone:  (704) 687-7188
Email:  mmetzgar@uncc.edu

Office Hours:  Monday & Wednesday  1:00 – 3:00 pm

Teaching Assistants:  Dhara Shah (dshah20@uncc.edu)

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Clicker (required):  You will need a Turning Technologies Clicker for every class.  Exams and class activities will be given via clickers.  NXT ResponseCard Clicker, ISBN: 9781934931455.

Course Description:  Revenue and expenditure problems of governmental units, intergovernmental financial relationships and the impact of federal fiscal policy upon the American economy.

Course Objectives:  This course focuses on the two sides of public finance: government spending and taxation.  Students will learn how to properly apply cost-benefit analysis to government spending programs.  Students will learn how to optimize tax structures for revenue generation and equity.

Prerequisites:  ECON 3122. It is assumed that you have not only completed this course but have also mastered the material.  Students with deficient backgrounds will need to commit extra time to this course.

Grading Basis:  Grades will be based upon four categories:

- Daily Team Clicker Activities
- Peer Evaluations
- Individual Exams
- Team Exams

Class Activity Clicker Questions:  During every class, questions will be presented overhead that are to be answered via clickers.  Some of these questions will be graded on participation, and some of these questions will be graded as right/wrong.  Right/wrong questions are typically scored as 95% for an incorrect answer and 100% for a correct answer.  In-class homework questions may be scored differently.  The lowest 4 days will be dropped (by lowest percentage).  If the clicker score for a certain day appears inaccurate, the instructor must be notified within 1 week, or else the instructor reserves the right to leave the score unchanged.
Importantly, these are team-based clicker questions, though each individual must respond to the questions to receive credit. Individual answers that are not in unison with the team will receive only 50%, regardless if the answer is actually correct or not. The person on each team with the last name closest to “A” will be viewed as having the definitive team answer.

**Peer Evaluations:** Students will evaluate themselves and their team members via the online system at catme.org. Exact weights and calculations of the total peer evaluation score will be available on Moodle at a later date. The instructor reserves the right to alter any bogus peer evaluation score.

**Exams (Individual):** There will be two individual exams during the semester plus the final individual exam taken via clickers. These exams are cumulative. Exam 1 covers the material from the first half of the course. Exam 2 covers the material from both the first half and the second half, though it will be weighted more towards the second half. The final exam is cumulative. This is done to promote long-term retention of the material.

Students who arrive late for an examination will be permitted to sit the test provided that no student has turned in their paper prior to the student’s arrival. Once a paper has been turned in, late arriving students will not be permitted to begin the test or exam. A student who begins a test late will not be given extra time at the end of the examination period.

**Final Examination (Individual):** The final exam will be taken via clickers. The final exam is cumulative.

**Exams (Individual) and Clickers:** All individual exams are taken via clickers. If a student forgets his clicker for an exam or the final, the score is zero (though remember one exam can be dropped).

**Makeup Exams (Individual):** If traveling on official University business, a similar multiple-choice makeup individual exam will be available. For all other absences, no makeup exams will be given.

**Team Exams:** Team exams will be a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Each team will submit one copy and all members will receive the same score.

**Exam Drop:** There will be five total exams: 2 individual semester exams and the individual final, and two team exams. The lowest of the five exams will be dropped – it does not matter if it is team or individual. Yes, the individual final can be dropped if a student is satisfied with his or her first four exam grades.

**Grading (Undergraduate):**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Team-Based Clicker Questions</td>
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Grading Scale:

A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F Below 60%

Grades are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Example: 89.5% will round to an A, while 89.49999% will not.

Graduate Students: Each graduate student in the class will be required to complete a critique on a published cost-benefit analysis on a public finance issue. A short summary of the plan should be emailed to the instructor before the midterm exams for approval. The paper should be no more than 10 pages. The paper is due via Moodle through TurnItIn by midnight on Tuesday, May 5. See the last page of the syllabus for information on the paper and graduate student grading.

Attendance: Attendance is not taken though students who miss class will obviously lose exam points and/or in-class clicker points. There may be a multi-point clicker question at the beginning of class to make sure students arrive on time.

Academic Integrity: Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student’s work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is a lowering of the course grade by one letter grade. For second offenses, in almost all cases, the course grade is reduced to an F. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

Using another student’s clicker to enter responses in their absence is a violation of the academic integrity code. To that end, there is no plausible motive for possessing another student’s clicker other than to obtain points for an absent student. Consequently, possession of another student’s clicker will be taken as evidence of intent to violate the academic integrity code and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed under the UNC-Charlotte Academic Integrity Code.

If you are caught using someone else’s clicker, both students will have their course grades dropped by one letter grade.

Cell Phones: Cellular Telephones and pagers are to be turned off and stowed out of sight for all classes and exams. Under very extraordinary circumstances (such as someone providing emergency care for a family member), students will be permitted to leave their cell phone or pager (using silent ring options) on during class, but never during a test or exam. Students who confront such emergencies must obtain prior approval from the professor.
Exam Schedule: The University has very specific guidelines regarding the circumstances under which students are permitted to reschedule final examinations. These guidelines will be followed to the letter. Students who do not meet the specific guidelines set forth by the university will not be permitted to take the final examination at a time other than the officially proscribed period for any reason. The semester ends with the final examination. There will be no accommodation for students who want to take an early exam for any reason other than representing the university. Students representing the university must provide written documentation from appropriate university personnel.

Diversity: The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

FAQ:

*Do you give partial credit on individual exams?* No. I teach large classes so this is not feasible.

*If I forget my clicker, then I can’t take the individual exam?* This is correct. I will enforce the policy.

Outline: Chapters 1 - 21

Schedule:

Thurs, Jan 8
Welcome, Hand out Syllabus, Discussion of Teaching Methods

Tues, Jan 13
Clicker Overview, Chap 1 - 6

Thurs, Jan 15
Chap 7

Tues, Jan 20
Chap 7

Thurs, Jan 22
Chap 8

Tues, Jan 27
Chap 8
Thurs, Jan 29
Chap 9
Tues, Feb 3  
Chap 9

Thurs, Feb 5  
Chap 10

Tues, Feb 10  
Chap 10

Thurs, Feb 12  
Chap 11

Tues, Feb 17  
Chap 11

Thurs, Feb 19  
Chap 12

**Tues, Feb 24 – Individual Exam #1**  
Individual Exam

**Thurs, Feb 26 – Team Exam #1**  
Team Exam

**Tues, Mar 3 – Spring Break**  
No class

**Thurs, Mar 5 – Spring Break**  
No class

Tues, Mar 10  
Chap 14

Thurs, Mar 12  
Chap 14

Tues, Mar 17  
Chap 15

Thurs, Mar 19  
Chap 15

Tues, Mar 24  
Chap 16

Thurs, Mar 28  
Chap 16
Tues, Mar 31
Chap 17

Thurs, Apr 2
Chap 17

Tues, Apr 7
Chap 18

Thurs, Apr 9
Chap 18, Chap 19

Tues, Apr 14
Chap 20

Thurs, Apr 16
Chap 21

**Tues, Apr 21 – Individual Exam #2**
Individual Exam

**Thurs, Apr 23 – Team Exam #2**
Team Exam

Tues, Apr 28
Wrap Up

**Tues, May 5 - Final Exam (Individual), at 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm, in the same classroom**

**References:**


Graduate Student Paper:

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

For this assignment, write a critical analysis of a cost-benefit analysis published in an academic journal, by a government agency, or by an economic think-tank (E.G., the Brookings Institution, the Hoover Institution, or the National Bureau of Economic Research)

Your paper must be clearly written, rigorously organized, and adhere to these guidelines:

1) The paper must include:

   a) a separate cover page, including your name, the title of the cost-benefit you critique, the author of the cost-benefit analysis you critique, and details that allow me to locate the cost-benefit analysis on the Library website.

   b) approximately 8 – 10 numbered pages of typed, double-spaced text, with 1inch margins on each side (font size 11).

   c) an introductory section that describes the subject of the cost-benefit analysis and its economic importance.

   d) a section that describes the details of the cost-benefit analysis

   e) a section that provides a detailed critique of the cost-benefit analysis. A critique can describe positive contributions, as well as errors, oversights, or similar problems

   f) a concluding section that summarizes the issues and draws conclusions.

2) Use footnotes sparingly. Keep footnotes brief. Use footnotes only to provide comments on issues that are not central to the text, but are, nevertheless, important.

3) Keep quotes to a minimum. Citations of quoted passages must provide page numbers.

4) The paper will be checked against the TurnItIn database for plagiarism.
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