



Department of Economics

Course Outline

Course:	Economics 355 [Canadian Public Finance]	Term:	Fall 2008
Time:	M 18:00 – 20:50	Section:	01
Instructor:	Todd Hirsch	Place:	ST 139
Office:	SS 405	Telephone:	815-2277
Office Hours:	TBA	E-Mail:	thirsch@ucalgary.ca

Textbook(s): None

Journal articles, special reports, topical papers, and current events readings will be assigned throughout the course, and will be made available through Blackboard. The goal is to use timely readings on issues of the day.

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This course provides a practical overview of the institutions and economic rationale for Canadian government policy relating to public expenditures and taxation. Notions of efficiency and equity are developed and used to discuss policies such as public health insurance, education, social welfare, and progressive income taxation. The course is divided into 11 segments, each of which will be accompanied by special readings posted on Blackboard. Current events and news clippings on public policy will also be used to motivate class discussions.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS AND TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

September 8:	Introduction to Public Finance: Why It May Be the Most Interesting Economics Course You Ever Take!
September 15:	Government Involvement In the Economy: Public Goods, Externalities and Efficiency
September 22:	Income Redistribution: Rationale and Issues
September 29:	Government Programs and Spending: Federal and Provincial
October 6:	FIRST MID-TERM EXAM / Alternative Program Delivery Systems
October 13:	THANKSGIVING - No Class
October 20:	Theory of Taxation
October 27:	Federal and Provincial Government Taxation
November 3:	SECOND MID-TERM EXAM / Municipal Government Taxing and Spending

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November 10:	READING WEEK - No Class
November 17:	Non-tax Sources of Government Revenue
November 24:	Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations: Historic Developments
December 1:	Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations: Current Issues / LAST CLASS

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Midterm Exam #1	30%	October 6th	All readings and materials Sept.8-29th classes
Midterm Exam #2	30%	November 3rd	All readings and materials Oct.6-27th classes
Final Exam	40%	TBA	All readings and materials, entire course Inclusive

The midterm exams will be in-class, 1 hour each. You may only miss a midterm if you have a valid medical note indicating illness, or in the case of other extenuating circumstances as judged by the instructor. Otherwise, a grade of zero is assigned. In the case of a legitimately missed midterm, there is no make-up test: the weight of the final exam will be adjusted.

All exams are marked on a numerical (percentage) basis, then converted to letter grades. The course grade is then calculated using the weights indicated above. As a guide to determining standing, these letter grade equivalences will generally apply:

A+	90-100	B	73-76	C-	60-62
A	85-89	B-	70-72	D+	56-59
A-	80-84	C+	67-69	D	50-55
B+	77-79	C	63-66	F	0-49

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, *at the instructor's discretion, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.*

A passing grade on any particular component of the course is not required for a student to pass the course as a whole.

There will be a Registrar scheduled final examination, lasting 2 hours and held in the classroom. Tests and exams may involve both multiple choice questions and short essay answers.

Non-programmable calculators will be allowed during the writing of tests or final examinations.

Students' Union Vice-President Academic:

Pamela Weatherbee

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Society of Undergraduates in Economics (S.U.E.):

www.ucalgary.ca/sue/

Notes:

- Contacting the Instructor: You are asked to observe and respect my office hours. If you wish to meet me outside of these times, please make an appointment with me beforehand. You are welcome to write me via e-mail to ask questions about the course materials. I will respond as soon as I can.
- Make-up tests/exams and deferred tests/exams will not be given. In cases of documented illness, documented family emergency, or documented religious observance, extra weight will be given to the final examination.
- Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work should discuss their work with the Instructor *within fifteen days* of work being returned to the class.
- This course will make use of Blackboard – students who are registered in this course can log in at <https://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/webapps/login/>. Please note that Blackboard features a class e-mail list that I will use. It is your responsibility to ensure that Blackboard uses the e-mail address of your choice. The default is your University of Calgary e-mail address.
- It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

Safewalk / Campus Security: 220-5333
