



Department of Economics

Course Outline

Course:	Economics 355 [Canadian Public Finance]	Term:	Winter 2008
Time:	M 18:00 – 20:50	Section:	02
Instructor:	Todd Hirsch	Place:	ST 147
Office:	SS 405	Telephone:	815-2277
Office Hours:	TBA	E-Mail:	thirsch@ucalgary.ca

Textbook(s):

Required John Strick, *The Public Sector in Canada: Programs, Finance and Policy*, Thompson Educational Publishing, 1999 or latest edition.

Other current events readings and special reports will be assigned during the class, but will be made available through Blackboard.

Book(s) on Reserve:

None

Course Outline:

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 designed to follow the chapters in the textbook, but the lectures are intended to complement this material, rather than repeating it. In addition, there are some other compulsory readings, which will serve as the basis for class discussion and assignments. Current events and news clippings on public policy will also be used to motivate class discussions.

Topics and Required Readings:

- Government in the Economy – the Role of Government, Efficiency and Resource Allocation (Strick Chapters 1-4)
- The Growth and Theories of Government Spending (Strick Chapters 5-6)
- How Do We Pay for it All? Financing Government Spending (Strick Chapters 8-12)
- Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments: Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations (Strick Chapters 13-15)
- Fiscal Policy in Canada (Strick Chapters 16-17)

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Midterm Exam #1	30%	February 11	Chapters 1-6, plus lecture materials and assigned readings
Midterm Exam #2	30%	March 24	Chapters 8-12, plus lecture materials and assigned readings
Final Exam	40%	TBA	Chapters 13-17, plus lecture materials and assigned readings

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 value 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:

Brittany Sargent
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Students' Union Faculty Representative (Social Sciences)

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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 <http://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
