



Department of Economics

Course Outline

Term:	Winter 2009		
Course:	Economics 355 [Canadian Public Finance]	Section:	01
Time:	M 18:00 – 20:50	Place:	ST 147
Instructor:	Todd Hirsch		
Office:	SS 405	Telephone:	815-2277
Office Hours:	TBA	E-Mail:	thirsch@ucalgary.ca

Required Readings(s): 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.

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 used to discuss policies such as public health insurance, education, social welfare, and progressive income taxation.

The course is divided into 11 chapters, 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. There will also be GUEST LECTURERS as available.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS AND TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

Jan. 12:	CHAPTER 1: Introduction to Public Finance: Why It May Be the Most Interesting Economics Course You Ever Take!
Jan. 19:	CHAPTER 2: Efficiency In the Allocation of Resources
Jan. 26:	CHAPTER 3: Poverty and Equity: What's Fair?
Feb. 2:	CHAPTER 4: Resource Allocation and Growth of Government Sector
Feb. 9:	FIRST MID-TERM EXAM
Feb. 16:	READING WEEK - NO CLASS
Feb. 23:	CHAPTER 5: Alternative Program Delivery Systems Theory of Taxation
Mar. 2:	CHAPTER 6: Theory of Taxation
Mar. 9:	CHAPTER 7: Federal and Provincial Government Taxation
Mar. 16:	SECOND MID-TERM EXAM
Mar. 23:	CHAPTER 8: Non-tax Sources of Government Revenue
Mar. 30:	CHAPTER 9: Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations: Historic Developments
Apr. 6:	CHAPTER 10: Public Finance Approaches to Environmental Policy
Apr. 13:	CHAPTER 11: Debt Financing / LAST CLASS .../2

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Midterm Exam #1	33%	Feb. 9	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 1-4
Midterm Exam #2	33%	Mar.16	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 5-7
Final Exam	34%	TBA	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 8-11

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.

Each of the three exams (2 mid-terms, 1 final) are weighted equally toward the final course grade. The final exam is non-inclusive (i.e., it will cover only Chapters 8-11).

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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Students' Union Faculty Representative (Social Sciences)

Teale Phelps Bondaroff
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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

TH/mi
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