



## Department of Economics Course Outline

		<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2011
<b>Course:</b>	Economics 355 Canadian Public Finance	<b>Section:</b>	01
<b>Time:</b>	W 18:00 – 20:50	<b>Place:</b>	ST 147
<b>Instructor:</b>	Todd Hirsch		
<b>Office:</b>	SS 405	<b>Telephone:</b>	403-815-2277
<b>Office Hours:</b>	TBA	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:thirsch@ucalgary.ca">thirsch@ucalgary.ca</a>

### Textbook(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.

### 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 divided into 12 chapters -- one per class -- and each 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: Sept-Dec 2011

Sept 14:	CHAPTER 1: Introduction to Public Finance: Why It May Be the Most Interesting Economics Course You Ever Take!
Sept 21:	CHAPTER 2: Efficiencies, Externalities and Public Goods
Sept 28:	CHAPTER 3: Redistribution of Income: What's Fair?
Oct 5:	CHAPTER 4: Resource Allocation and Social Objectives
Oct 12:	<b>MID-TERM EXAM #1</b> + CHAPTER 5 Alternative Program Delivery Systems

Oct 19:	CHAPTER 6: Theory of Taxation
Oct 26:	<b>TBA</b>
Nov 2:	CHAPTER 7: Federal and Provincial Governments
Nov 9:	CHAPTER 8: Non-tax Sources of Government Revenue
Nov 16:	<b>MID-TERM EXAM #2 / TERM PAPER</b> + CHAPTER 9: Debt Financing
Nov 23:	CHAPTER 10: Constitutional Reform and Natural Resources
Nov 30:	CHAPTER 11: Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations
Dec 7:	CHAPTER 12: Public Finance Approaches to Environmental Policy

### Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Mid-term Exam #1	33.3%	Oct 12	All readings and materials for CHAP 1-4
Mid-term Exam #2	33.3%	Nov 16	All readings and materials for CHAP 5-8
Final Exam	33.3%	TBA	All readings and materials for CHAP 9-12

The midterm exams will be in-class, 1.5 hours 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 will be non-inclusive (i.e., it will cover only Chapters 9-12).

**OPTIONAL TERM PAPER:** in lieu of writing Mid-Term #2, any student may opt to prepare a 3,000 word term paper on a topic in Canadian Public Finance. The paper will be due on November 16<sup>th</sup> (the day of the second mid-term). It will be assigned a percentage grade, and weighted at 1/3 of the total course grade (same as Mid-Term #2). Possible paper topics will be discussed in class, or through direct meetings with the instructor.

Tests, term papers, and final 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

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

Non-programmable calculators WILL NOT be allowed during the writing of tests or final examinations.

There will be a Registrar scheduled final examination, lasting **2** hours.

Tests and exams WILL involve multiple choice questions.

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[www.ucalgary.ca/sue](http://www.ucalgary.ca/sue)

**Notes:**

- Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, etc.) should discuss their work with the Instructor *within fifteen days* of the work being returned to the class.
- 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: 403-220-5333  
Emergency Assembly Point – ICT Food Court

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