



Department of Economics Course Outline

Course:	Economics 355 [Canadian Public Finance]	Term:	Winter 2010
Time:	M 18:00 – 20:50	Section:	01
Instructor:	Todd Hirsch	Place:	ST 147
Office:	SS 405	Telephone:	403-815-2277
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.

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: Jan-April 2010

Jan 11:	CHAPTER 1: Introduction to Public Finance: Why It May Be the Most Interesting Economics Course You Ever Take!
Jan 18:	CHAPTER 2: Efficiencies, Externalities and Public Goods
Jan 25:	CHAPTER 3: Redistribution of Income: What's Fair?
Feb 1:	CHAPTER 4: Resource Allocation and Social Objectives .../2

Feb 8:	MID-TERM EXAM #1 + CHAPTER 5 Alternative Program Delivery Systems
Feb 15:	READING WEEK (no class)
Feb 22:	CHAPTER 6: Theory of Taxation
Mar 1:	CHAPTER 7: Federal and Provincial Governments
Mar 8:	CHAPTER 8: Non-tax Sources of Government Revenue
Mar 15:	MID-TERM EXAM #2 + CHAPTER 9: Debt Financing
Mar 22:	CHAPTER 10: Constitutional Reform and Natural Resources
Mar 29:	CHAPTER 11: Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations
Apr 5:	CHAPTER 12: Public Finance Approaches to Environmental Policy
Apr 12:	Guest lecture (to be announced)

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Mid-term Exam #1	33.3%	Feb 8	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 1-4
Mid-term Exam #2	33.3%	Mar 15	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 5-8
Final Exam	33.3%	TBA	All readings and materials, CHAPTERS 9-12

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 will be non-inclusive (i.e., it will cover only Chapters 9-12).

Tests and final exams are marked on a numerical (percentage) basis, and will then be 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 (but given the nature of the questions, they are unnecessary).

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

Tests and exams will involve multiple-choice questions.

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Students' Union Vice-President, Academic

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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 403-220-8237. 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 – SS Food Court

TH/mi

2010-01-05