

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE
Master of Public Administration Program

PAD 503 WEB
Section: 01
Economic Analysis for Managers

Spring 2009
3 Hours Credit
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The instructor pledges to teach this course under the university guidelines for the academic honor code. UNCP has a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Students of the university pledge to neither give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming a personal commitment to honor and integrity. You are requested to read UNCP's Honor Code as found in the 2008-2009 Student Catalog. Included in that publication are rules and regulations governing student rights and responsibilities, the university judicial system, disciplinary sanctions, penalties, violations, and type of offenses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Objectives & Intended Outcomes

PAD 503 WEB is a course on public economics. As such the content of the course covers some of the basic principles of public finance and applies those principles to major policy issues. While the class primarily addresses the United States the experience of other nations will also be examined when and if appropriate. Specifically, by the end of the course participants will be able to:

1. Comprehend the size and scope of the public sector.
2. Understand the nature of public and private goods, externalities, and the need for government.
3. Describe the income distribution of an economy, how it is measured, and redistributed.
4. Discuss collective decision making in a representative democracy.
5. Explain the essentials of benefit-cost analysis and its uses in public finance.
6. Explain the economics of government production of public goods & services.

In summary, by the end of the course students will be able to apply rudimentary economic concepts so as to make informed recommendations in terms of public policy.

Textbooks (Required)

John E. Anderson (2003). Public Finance. The text may be purchased from UNCP's Bookstore.

Steven E. Roads, (1985). The Economist's View of the World: Government, Markets, & Public Policy. The text may be purchased from UNCP's Bookstore.

Other Materials (Required)

Computer and Internet Access

Students will need to have access to a computer and the internet. Proficiency in working with an electronic word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word®) will be required for completing the work in this course. Materials will also be posted on Blackboard which can be accessed through UNCP's website.

Other Materials (Optional)

Spreadsheet and Calculator

Proficiency in working with an electronic spreadsheet (e.g., Microsoft Excel®) may be desirable for completing some of the work in this course. A calculator is also likely to be of use. Ultimately the acquisition and use of such tools is left up to the student.

TEACHING METHODS

The online nature of this class necessarily requires a non-traditional approach for learning. The approach used here divides the course into 13 modules. Each individual module corresponds to a particular course topic and typically runs a seven day cycle; that is 8:00 a.m. Monday ^{Beginning} through 8:00 a.m. Monday ^{Ending}. For example, Modules 1 and 2 begin at 8:00 a.m. on Monday March 09, 2009 and end at 8:00 a.m. on March 16, 2009. Modules 3 and 4 then begin at 8:00 a.m. on Monday March 16, 2009 and end at 8:00 a.m. on Monday March 23, 2009, etc. Exceptions to this cycle, if they occur, will be announced.

The general content of a module consists of a) module instructions outlining specific learning objectives, reading assignments, practice assignments, and instructor comments, and b) a PowerPoint lecture on relevant subject matter. Supplemental lecture notes or additional readings may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Students will also participate in a series of online discussions which will be posted using the discussion board feature of Blackboard. Beyond the regular course facilitation modules, students will ultimately be expected to turn in a book review and successfully pass a final examination in order to be awarded credit for the course.

Expectations

The online nature of this class is obviously not meant for anyone who is not a self starter and procrastination is likely to be fatal. The material of this course is cumulative and comprehension of later material will entail an adequate grasp of earlier concepts and techniques. In addition, the course structure requires students to complete two major assignments by a specific date and time in order to receive credit. Bottom line: **THE INSTRUCTOR CAN ADJUST THE COURSE FOR EVERYONE IF NEEDED. BUT INDIVIDUALLY YOU MUST NOT FALL BEHIND!**

The course is designed for students without any background in microeconomics and mathematical computations are kept to a minimum. However, students are expected to have a reasonable grasp of simple algebra and to be minimally proficient in what are now considered to be everyday technological skills (e.g., using a word processor, calculators, etc.). Course participants anticipating difficulties in either of these areas are advised to take action early in the eight week semester.

Students are also expected to be active participants within the class by being prepared to discuss current topics pertinent to public finance and economics in general. Therefore, members should review outside websites, newspapers, magazines, journals, etc. that will facilitate this process.

A final expectation is that students will not ignore their responsibilities. If the instructor contacts a student via email, postal mail, fax, blackboard, or telephone the student is expected to respond in a COURTEOUS and TIMELY manner. As a general rule, three unsuccessful consecutive attempts to contact a student (with at least one public attempt) will be considered a breach of a student's responsibility and reflected in the evaluation of his or her class participation.

EVALUATION METHODS*

Final grades will be based on a comprehensive examination, a book review, and class participation.

Evaluation Method		Proportion of Final Grade
Examination	Comprehensive	65%
Book Review	"The Economist's View"	20%
Class Participation	Honest Effort, Discussion Board, Etc.	15%

*NOTE: No late work will be accepted under any conditions. This includes the exam. There will not be any extra credit assignments to raise your course grade. Students are responsible for keeping backup copies of all their work. Your grade will be based on the requirements in this syllabus. You are responsible for any and all announcements posted on Blackboard. Any student requiring special assistance should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Grading Scale	Interpretation of Performance
94 - 100 = A	Exceptional
90 - 93 = A-	Very Good
87 - 89 = B+	Good
84 - 86 = B	Average
80 - 83 = B-	Marginal
70 - 79 = C	Deficient
< 70 = F	Failure

Examination

There will be one comprehensive examination during this course. The exam will be “take home” and posted online nine days prior to the designated due date. Students should note that the examination is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. on April 20, 2009 and end at 8:00 a.m. on April 29, 2009. The format of the exam will entail a variety of queries including written answers, problem solving, and analysis.

Due to the importance and weight of the examination in determining final grades, students will be required to deliver a hard copy of their final exam to the instructor by the assigned date and time. This is in addition to a “backup” copy that must be sent, by the assigned date and time, via the digital drop box on Blackboard.

My suggestion is that all secondary non-electronic submissions (e.g., via postal mail) be **postmarked no later than April 27, 2009**. Students who are intent on a primary “personal delivery” may bring their examinations to the instructor’s office at any time up to the assigned date and time.

Students are NOT permitted to work together on the examination. Due to the overall purpose of these types of evaluations I am requiring that you include the following statement at the beginning of the exam:

I Student first & Last Name have neither given nor received help on this exam (date in parentheses).

Book Review Assignment

Students will be required to complete a book review of Steven E. Rhoads “The Economists View of the World: Government, Markets, & Public Policy.”

The book review is due by 12:00 p.m. on April 13, 2009.

Additional instructions for the book review assignment may be found in the folder titled “PAD 503 Instructions for the Book Review Assignment.” The folder is located in the course documents section. Students are encouraged to preview the assignment as soon as possible,

NOTE: All work that is submitted electronically must be in the form of a word processed document. MS Word promises the least amount of difficulties in terms of compatibility. Therefore, I recommend that you use this product.

Class Participation

The nature/teaching methods of this course obviously require/emphasize group discussions. As an incentive fifteen-percent of a student’s grade will be awarded in terms of class participation. The evaluation of this criterion will be a subjective assessment by the instructor as to the QUANTITY and QUALITY of a student’s involvement in the course.

Non-Credit Work: Practice Assignments

In preparation for the examination students are encouraged to complete a semester long series of practice assignments which will appear within the instructions for a designated module. Given the nature of the course I strongly advise you to be diligent about this and suggest that you work together if necessary. Unless you are already strong with this type of material your success in all probability will depend on a persistent and honest effort!

While work will not be submitted for credit, the instructor will post “Model Answers” for the practice assignments following the conclusion of a corresponding module. For example, Module 2 formally concludes at 8:00 a.m. on March 16, 2009 when Modules 3 and 4 begin. Thus, at 8:00 a.m. on March 16, 2009 model answers for the assigned practice problems in Module 2 will appear in the “Model Answers” folder which is located under the Course Documents button. Students should compare individual responses with those of the instructor to verify progress and enhance understanding.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Office Hours

By Appointment.

Contact Information

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COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule details assigned modules and topics for the semester. This schedule also includes **due dates and times for the book review assignment and examination**. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course schedule if necessary. If and when the course schedule is altered an announcement will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Date	Modules & Topics*
1	Mar 09 Mar 16	Class members unfamiliar with web based education should attend the orientation given by the Office of Distance & Continuing Education.
1	Mar 09 Mar 16	Assignment: Complete Module 1 Topic: "Course Introduction"
1	Mar 09 Mar 16	Assignment: Complete Module 2 Topic: "Economics of the Public Sector"
2	Mar 16 Mar 23	Assignment: Complete Module 3 Topic: "Measurement & Methods in Public Finance"
2	Mar 16 Mar 23	Assignment: Complete Module 4 Topic: "Welfare Economics & Public Goods"
3	Mar 23 Mar 30	Assignment: Complete Module 5 Topic: "Externalities"
3	Mar 23 Mar 30	Assignment: Complete Module 6 Special Topic: The Economist's View of the World Part I
4	Mar 30 Apr 06	Assignment: Complete Module 7 Special Topic: The Economist's View of the World Part II
4	Mar 30 Apr 06	Assignment: Complete Module 8; Optional Special Topic: The Economist's View of the World Part III
5	Apr 06 Apr 13	Assignment: Complete Module 9 Topic: "Income Distribution & Transfer Programs"
5	Apr 06 Apr 13	Assignment: Complete Module 10; Book Review Due by 12:00 p.m. on April 13 Topic: "Collective Decision Making"
6	Apr 13 Apr 20	Assignment: Complete Module 11 Topic: "Program Evaluation: Benefit Cost Analysis"
6	Apr 13 Apr 20	Assignment: Complete Module 12; Topic: "Government Production & Pricing of Public Goods & Services"
7	Apr 20 Apr 27	Assignment: Begin Module 13 Topic: Final Examination
8	Apr 27 Apr 29	Assignment: Complete Module 13; Final Exam Due by 12:00 p.m. on April 29 Topic: Final Examination

*Additional materials and readings may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Questions & Answers

Q. What is the best way to go about working on a module?

A. You should always start by reading the module instructions. These instructions will give explicit directions on how to best proceed. Suggestions for additional non-graded work will often be provided. Module materials will always be placed within individual folders and posted under the **Course Documents** button on Blackboard.

You might wish to note that the entire course, less examination materials, is immediately available. Therefore, you may essentially work at your own speed using the course schedule as your benchmark for the minimum point that you should be at during any period in the semester.

Q. Should I contact the instructor if I am experiencing technical problems with Blackboard (or other computer difficulties)?

A. You may wish to let the instructor know that you are having difficulties. However, if a technical problem does exist, there is nothing that the instructor can do about it. The Division of Information Technology's "Help Desk" is probably a route you should try. A link to their site is posted under the **External Links** button on Blackboard. Please note that it is not the instructor's responsibility to constantly walk you through all of Blackboard's possibilities. If you are new to this form of online learning then you should participate in the orientation sessions.

Q. What software is best to use when working on assignments?

A. At this time it is best to stick with Microsoft products such as MS Word and MS Excel. MS present the least possibility of problems in terms of compatibility.

Q. When may I submit my assignments?

A. *Book Review:* Of course you may work on the book review assignment whenever you feel ready to proceed. However, in the interest of maintaining order, please do not submit your work until one week prior to the assignment actually being due. For example, the book review is due by 12:00 pm on April, 13 2009. So, the earliest that this assignment should be submitted is 12:00 pm on April 06, 2009.

Examination: The examination may be submitted at any time, prior to the official due date, after materials are posted on Blackboard.

Q. What is the best way to contact the instructor?

A. Email through Blackboard is probably the best way. Be sure to include this (**PAD 503 WEB**) in ANY email heading so that I know it is from a member of this class and can direct my attention towards it. If you prefer voice, you may wish to contact me by telephone. Or, perhaps you might prefer to physically come by, if that is possible. In that case you should schedule an appointment.

Q. How much time should I expect to spend on this course?

A. My answer to this question is “whatever it takes.” The less proficient you are with certain rudimentary skills, the more time you can expect to spend on completing PAD 503. However, I do think that most of you can anticipate putting more time in during the last half of the semester.

Referencing this latter acknowledgement I encourage you to work ahead of schedule. This is possible as the “regular” modules are always available. You may also want to consider re-organizing your life (professionally and/or personally) when the examination module comes online. It will be important for you to do as well as you can on that assignment.