



RUTGERS-NEWARK

School of Public Affairs and Administration

Public Finance and Public Policy (20:834:548) [3 credits]

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of critical public expenditure and related policy issues in the United States. The goal of the course is to understand the reasons for government intervention in the economy, the extent of that intervention, and the responses of individuals and firms to the government's actions. Specific topics include public goods, environmental and health externalities, political economy, fiscal federalism, education finance and policies, healthcare finance and policies, and welfare programs.

The course is designed for students with a basic understanding of microeconomics. Therefore, it is recommended that students complete *Economics for Public Administration* (20:834:541), a mandatory core course in the MPA program at SPAA, before enrolling in this course.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the economic rationale behind government intervention in the economy.
- Understand key policy issues and debates from an evidence-based perspective in the U.S.
- Assess the impact of government expenditures and policies on social and economic outcomes.

Requirements

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- Class sessions
- Weekly discussions
- Five problem sets
- One Policy Memo
- Final Exam

Schedule / Outline of Topics

- Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- Week 2: Theoretical Tools of Public Finance
- Week 3: Empirical Tools of Public Finance
- Week 4: Government Budgeting & Deficit Financing
- Week 5: Externalities: Environmental & Health Policies
- Week 6: Public Goods: Challenges & Strategies
- Week 7: Political Economy
- Week 8: Education Finance and Policy
- Week 9: Social Insurance
- Week 11: Social Security
- Week 12: Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance, and Workers' Compensation
- Week 13: Health Insurance: Medicare, Medicaid, and Health Care Reform
- Week 14: Final Exam

Texts / Materials / Resources

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

This is a sample syllabus. Students should always obtain syllabi for their current courses from their professors.
(v.7/23/24)



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- Jonathan Gruber, *Public Finance and Public Policy*, Seventh Edition. Worth Publishers
- In addition to the textbook, a few supplementary readings will be assigned. These articles are mostly taken from popular sources of news and analysis such as the New York Times and The Economist, and high-quality academic journals such as *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Education Finance and Policy*, *Public Finance Review*, *Journal of Public Economics*, etc.