

**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION**

DOCTORAL SEMINAR

Government Budgeting & Resource Acquisition (26:834:605)

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Office Hours: Mondays 11-12PM; Wednesdays 3-4PM, and by appointment

NOTE: I am flexible regarding appointments, but please call or e-mail ahead except during office hours

Class Times: Wednesdays 2:30-5:10 PM

Class Location: Center for Urban and Public Service, Room 215

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a seminar focused on theoretical issues in public budgeting and public financial management. The course is appropriate for Ph.D. students. The aim of the seminar is for the student to understand the central issues and questions in the areas of public budgeting and public finance, and the place of this field of study within the larger context of public administration, thus enabling the student to incorporate public budgeting and finance concepts into their research agenda. Students should come to appreciate both the insights and the limitations of different theoretical perspectives. They should be able to apply these theoretical perspectives in their own research, and to be able to operationalize these theories for application to empirical research. Finally, students may be able to generate research in this area of study relevant to the academic community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The prerequisite for this course is standing as a doctoral student in public administration. Evaluation will be based on a research proposal (50%), two short (2-3 pages, single spaced) critical reaction papers (20%), and class participation (30%).

Research Proposal: The research proposal should be on a topic approved by the instructor. A two page, double spaced version of your proposal is due on September 25th. Each student will be given time to present their research proposal and to gain feedback from the class on October 16th. Students will present their completed work to the class on December 11th. The final version of your research proposal is due on or before **December 18th**.

Critical Reaction Papers: For two different classes of your choosing, please prepare a two-page, single-spaced paper that explores key concepts or issues raised by that week's readings. Choose a topic that intrigues you; it can relate to one or more of the week's readings. Do not simply summarize a paper's arguments; critically assess those arguments in light of other readings or theoretical models – either from this week or earlier readings in the course. How would one author, or one theoretical approach, critique another? What conclusions do **you** draw?

Class Participation: This class is a doctoral seminar, meaning that group discussion is the primary pedagogical activity. My job is to pose interesting questions, encourage participation, facilitate productive conversations and to know not only the class readings, but the larger set of debates to which they contribute. I ask that you be familiar with the weekly readings, to have some kind of opinion or judgment about them, and to be interested in others' opinions. My hope is that we have lively, provocative, and informed discussion and exploration of ideas and concepts.

Beginning in week 2, each presentation will be assigned to one student who will take particular responsibility to prepare it for class discussion. For all presentations, whether they are your "assigned" presentation or not, think about the following questions for each reading:

- What is the basic argument of the paper? What is the author trying to prove?
 - To the extent that you can figure it out, what conversation is the author engaged in? What arguments and/or which scholars is s/he responding to? In other words, what is the theoretical framing of the paper?

- What is the theoretical contribution of the paper? That is, what are the constructs and what are the relationships among the constructs?
 - What is the research question?
 - What is the unit of analysis?
 - Diagram the theoretical model, using boxes and arrows or through charts.
 - What are the underlying assumptions?

- Is the argument plausible? Why or why not? If not, what would it take to convince you?
- What are the critical differences between this author's arguments and others you have read?

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Unless explicitly assigned to work in groups, all students are expected to work independently. All assignments should be the student's own work – unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, copying from previous semester answer keys or assignments, and other forms of academic dishonesty are expressly prohibited. Rutgers University's Office of Academic Integrity maintains a website explaining the university's academic honesty procedures:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

The web site also provides resources for students. It is the student's responsibility to understand the definition of academic honesty, but if you are ever in doubt, please ask me before you do something that could put your academic career in jeopardy!

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide me with a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS.

Accommodations are not provided retroactively, so please let me know about them as early as possible. Further information is available at the ODS website,

<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>.

Lecture Topics

Week 1, September 4: Introduction to research

Week 2, September 11: What is public budgeting?

Week 3, September 18: Performance measurement

Week 4, September 25: Public debt

Week 5, October 2: Bond markets

Week 6, October 9: Debt management

Week 7, October 16: Risk

Week 8, October 23: Tax administration

Week 9, October 30: Tax evasion and tax incidence

Week 10, November 6: State pensions

Week 11, November 13: Education finance and Tiebout sorting

Week 12, November 27 – Federalism, tax competition and economic development

Week 13, December 4: Financing Medicare

Week 14, December 11 – FINAL STUDENT PRESENTATIONS, LAST DAY OF CLASS