

The Federal Budget

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Office Hours: MW 4:00-5:00pm and by appointment, Silsby 225

Class Meeting: MWF 1:45-2:50 (X period Th 1-1:50), Life Sciences Center, Room 201

This course will investigate the U.S. federal budget. Students will come to understand the recent history of, contemporary practices in and future trajectory of U.S. expenditure and revenue generating policies. Students will study major areas of government expense in-depth. This course will also cover the process by which policymakers pass an annual budget including what is supposed to happen and what actually happens in pursuit of a budget compromise. Substantial course time will be spent considering possible reforms that can be made to the federal budget.

All readings are available electronically or will be distributed in class.

Requirements:

1. Regular attendance and participation.
2. Report and presentation. Students will write a 3-5 page report (1" margins, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman font) and deliver a short presentation describing a federal government agency that costs taxpayers money. Major agencies will be covered in our readings and class discussion so students will select a small federal government agency for this task.
3. Midterm Exam. Everyone will take a midterm exam. The exam may consist of multiple choice, short answer or essay questions. It may include any material covered in the readings or in class.
4. Final Exam OR Final Paper. Students will have the option to take a final exam or write a research paper. The final exam will be formatted similarly to the midterm and focus largely (although not entirely) on the material covered after the midterm. If you select the research paper option, you will write a 12-18 page research paper on a topic that you will choose and I approve (1" margins, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman font). The paper can explore any facet of American budgetary politics.

Grading:

Attendance and participation = 15%

Report and Presentation = 15%

Midterm = 35%

Final or Research paper = 35%

Academic Honor Principle:

Students are responsible for understanding the academic integrity rules in place at Dartmouth. Explanations of integrity rules and principles can be found at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja>. Ignorance of the Academic Honor Principle will not be considered a mitigating excuse if a violation occurs. Beyond any penalties imposed as a consequence of an Academic Honor Principle investigation, any student who is found to have cheated or plagiarized on course work will receive a failing grade. Details on citing sources are available at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>

Religious Observances:

Some students will participate in religious observances during this academic term. If this conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me in advance to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic

adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646–9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Introduction to Class, Overview of the Federal Budget and Contemporary Budget Issues

Jan 6: Introduction

Jan 8: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Introduction to the Federal Budget Process”, “Where Do Our Federal Tax Dollars Go?”, flow chart on the budget process

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/3-7-03bud.pdf>

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/4-14-08tax.pdf>

<http://www.agiweb.org/gap/legis106/budget2.jpg>

Jan 10: Polarization, The Budget Control Act and Kicking the Can Down the Road

Bafumi, “Polarization and the Fiscal Future of the United States.” *The Forum*
(to be emailed)

<http://www.pattonboggs.com/files/News/513e89a7-2618-4063-86e9-0214098cec0e/Presentation/NewsAttachment/5d3d908c-1eee-4469-b135-3107cd202c19/CapitalThinkingSpecialEdition.pdf> (pages 1 to 4)

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/16/politics/shutdown-showdown/>

In-depth Study of Federal Government Revenues and Expenditures

Jan 13: Joint Committee on Taxation, “Overview of the Federal Tax System”

<https://www.jct.gov/publications.html?func=startdown&id=4498>

Jan 15: CRS report, “FY2013 Defense Budget Request”

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42489.pdf>

Jan 17: CRS report, “Social Security Primer” and “Social Security: The Trust Fund”

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42035.pdf>

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33028.pdf>

Jan 20: MLK holiday

Jan 22-24: CRS report, “Medicare Primer” and “Medicare Financing”

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40425.pdf>

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41436.pdf>

Jan 27: CRS report, “Medicaid Financing and Expenditures”

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42640.pdf>

Jan 29-31: Presentations on smaller budget items

Long-Term Fiscal Outlook

Feb 3: GAO report

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/653719.pdf>

Feb 5: CRS report

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43068.pdf>

Feb 7: Carnival holiday

Feb 10: Midterm Exam

Feb 12-14: CBO report

https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/44521-LTBO2013_0.pdf

Reform Ideas

Feb 17-19: The Fiscal Commission Report

http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/TheMomentofTruth12_1_2010.pdf

Feb 21-24: Bipartisan Commission Report

<http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/BPC%20FINAL%20REPORT%20FOR%20PRINTER%2002%2028%2011.pdf>

Feb 26-28: President's and House Republican Budget Proposal

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/overview> (links 2 to 5)

<http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/pathtoprosperity2013.pdf>

The Public and Elected Leaders on the Budget

Mar 3: Elected Officials and the Federal Budget

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7963633>

Mar 5: Former Senator Judd Gregg visits class

Mar 7: Public Opinion and the Federal Budget, Review for final

http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/mar11/BudgetComparisons_Mar11_rpt.pdf