

ECO 4532: Economic Analysis of Politics

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Summer C, 2019

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Office Hours: MTWRF 11:00am-12:00pm

Office: BEL 273

Emails will be responded to within 24 to 48 hours

Class Time: MTWRF 9:30-10:45am

Class Room: BEL 202

Course Description

This course uses economic models to analyze political decision making. A theory of constitutions is developed and applied to the U.S. Constitution. Models of majority rule decision making and bureaucratic supply are used to develop an understanding of supply and demand in the public sector.

Required Materials

- The Economic Analysis of Public Policy, Author: Bellinger, William K., Publisher: Routledge, Edition: 2nd, Year Published: 2015. ISBN: 9781138796348
- The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior Is Almost Always Good Politics, Author: Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Alastair Smith, Publisher: PublicAffairs, Year Published: 2012. ISBN: 9781610391849
- A computer with internet access and Microsoft Office or similar data analysis and word processing software

Technology Requirements

Course content is accessible through Canvas. Students will need to be able to view videos, write and upload assignments, post to discussion boards, and take assessments. Students should have access to high-speed internet and updated software. Mobile devices may be used to view course content, upload assignments, and take assessments as determined by the instructor. To view the most current technology requirements, visit the FSU Canvas support site.

Canvas Support

Need help with Canvas? Contact FSU Canvas Support:

Email: help@campus.fsu.edu

Phone: (850) 644-8004

Website: distance.fsu.edu/canvas

Hours: 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday

Prerequisites

ECO 2023 or instructor permission

Course Objectives

1. Students will develop an understanding of the economic conditions dictating how politicians create public policy to simultaneously address society's problems and best serve their voting constituency.
2. Students will learn the process of providing goods through legislation, and how incentives facing representatives dictate policy.
3. Students will be able to analyze policy initiatives from a cost/benefit approach, identifying those who the policy will benefit and those who it will harm, and will be able to recommend policy improvements through cost/benefit analysis.

Course Structure

Problem Sets

Throughout the semester, students will have two problem set assignments, each worth 20% of the grade. These assignments will consist of three to five multi-part, short-answer questions applying the material taught in lecture. As this is an economics class, there will be some mathematical components to the problems on the problem sets; however, it will not require skills above the mathematics background required to understand our text book. Problem sets can be worked on in groups, and students are encouraged to bring questions regarding the problem sets to me in office hours. Problem sets are due at 9:30 AM, at the beginning of class as noted in the course schedule.

Idea Presentation and Write-Up

To ensure progress is being made towards a final research paper and presentation, students will present an 2-5 minute proposal on an idea they are working on for their research paper. This presentation should cite at least two academic sources from an economics or political science journal. Google scholar and jstor are excellent places to find research sources. Additionally, students will produce a two to three paragraph summary of their research idea that will be no longer than one page, along with a references page listing their academic sources. The research topic can be on any matter relating to the public policy discussions in class, or another analysis of policy.

Final Paper and Presentation

By the end of the course, students will produce a research paper relating to public policy analysis. Resources on how to write an economics paper analyzing public policy will be posted on the course Canvas page, and will be discussed on the first day of class. Papers should be written in APA formatting, and a helpful guide will be posted on the course Canvas page. A rubric will be provided for a successful research paper; however, students should expect to write a 7-10 page paper with a minimum of three academic sources from either economics or political science journals. Additionally, in the final week of class, students will present their research paper with a slide-show presentation lasting 7-10 minutes. A rubric for this slide show will also be provided. Combined, the presentation and paper will make up 55% of the student's grade. Through a careful following of the rubrics provided, students should find getting A's on both assignments quite manageable. However, given the time required to produce quality academic work, **I highly recommend working on these projects throughout the semester.** Students who wait until the final week of

class to write their paper and make their presentation will likely struggle to do well on these final assignments. **Do not procrastinate on either your paper or your presentation.**

Grading Policy

The typical Florida State University grading scale will be used. I reserve the right to curve the scale dependent on overall class scores at the end of the semester. Any curve will only ever make it easier to obtain a certain letter grade. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- **40%** of your grade will be determined by 2 problem sets, (20% each).
- **30%** of your grade will be determined by the final research paper
- **25%** of your grade will be determined by the presentation of your final paper
- **5%** of your grade will be determined by an idea presentation and one page write-up for your final paper

Grading Scale as follows:

- A: 93% and above
- A-: 92%-90%
- B+: 89%-87%
- B: 86%-83%
- B-: 82%-80%
- C+: 79%-77%
- C: 76%-73%
- C-: 72%-70%
- D+: 69%-67%
- D: 66%-63%
- D-: 62%-60%
- F: 59% and below

Note: Assignment percentages match the points possible in the assignment. For example, one problem set is worth 20% of your grade, or 20 points possible. Additionally, I like rewarding participation and will give out extra credit points for particularly insightful comments in class. Further extra credit opportunities may arise throughout the semester and will be announced both in class and on Canvas. Please note: **I will not give points at the end of the semester to bump your final grade. You can easily earn extra credit throughout the course, so *you* have the power to marginally impact your grade.**

Course Policies

Late Work Policy

Assignment due dates are posted in the course schedule. Assignments may be emailed to me, handed it at the beginning of class, or placed in either my mailbox or under my office door, prior to 9:30 am when the assignment is due. You are always welcome to turn work in early; however, **I will not accept late work without a university sanctioned excuse.** If you know you're going to be gone on the day an assignment is due, please turn your work in early and let me know ahead of time. Your computer crashing or forgetting an assignment is due are not valid excuses for late work.

Final Paper Policy

Replacing your final exam, I am having your turn in your final papers at the beginning of class on Friday, August 2nd, 2019. This is your university appointed final exam time for this class. Papers may be emailed to me or handed to me in person. I will accept papers prior to the deadline; however, **I will not accept any emails time-stamped after the beginning of class, nor papers handed in by late students.** Please plan accordingly! This paper represents 30% of your grade, and you do not want to get a zero due to poor time management!

Presentation Policy

Final paper presentation dates are set for August 1st and 2nd in the course schedule. Dependent upon class size, this could change throughout Week 6. If you need to present at an earlier time, **please let me know as soon as humanly possible!** I understand it is the summer, family members get married, or you need to leave early for whatever reason. That is fine, but please let me know so we can have you to present in advance. If you do not present, I cannot give you a presentation grade. Unexpected absences will require a university sanctioned reason to allow for a make-up presentation. **Non-excused absence presentations will be given a zero!**

University Excused Absences and Late Assignments

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. Late assignments will be accepted for no penalty if a valid excuse is communicated to the instructor before the deadline. After the deadline, assignments will be accepted for a 50% deduction to the score up to 2 days after the deadline. After this any assignments handed in will be given 0.

Email Communication

- For email, please respond to your instructor's and peers' messages within a 24-hour period.
- Use a brief description in the subject line that outlines the topic of discussion.
- Avoid using slang or profane words.
- Use your instructor's correct title he or she prefers for communication.
- Avoid using emoticons, such as smiley faces, and maintain a professional demeanor.
- Sign your email messages using your full name.
- AVOID USING ALL CAPS. This makes the message visually difficult to read and is perceived by the reader as "shouting."
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, just as you would for any communication.
- Ask yourself whether you would be comfortable if someone other than the intended receiver were to read it. Remember, email is not a completely secure form of communication.
- Refrain from "flaming," which is expressing a strongly held opinion without tact or regard for others. Don't assume that recipients will know the intent of the message (e.g., "just kidding"). It reads differently when it's in print (electronic or not).
- Report any inappropriate communication considered to be of a serious nature to your instructor, as it may be a violation of University policy.
- Treat others with respect by making messages clear and succinct.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (For more details see the FSU Academic Honor Policy and procedures for addressing alleged violations.)

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other

class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center (Tallahassee Campus) 874 Traditions Way 108 Student Services Building
Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167 (850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD) Email: sdrc@admin.fsu.edu

Students Disability Resource Center (Panama City Campus) Dr. Kimberly Leath Office of Student Affairs 2nd
Floor Barron Building (Room 215) Email: kleath@fsu.edu or sds@pc.fsu.edu (850) 770-2172 (office) (866) 693-7872 (toll free)

On-Campus Tutoring

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance are available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' website or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Syllabus Change Policy

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."

Weekly Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. The chapters outlined allow us to cover the contents of both the Dictator's Handbook and the Economic Analysis of Public Policy. Discussions based on the later will be a traditional lecture format and will primarily be the basis for the problem sets, while the former will be more open class discussion on real world application of textbook concepts. Some chapters may not be covered due to time constraints, and students will not be responsible for knowing the content from those chapters. Assignment due dates are not flexible, and all assignments are due at 9:30 am, the beginning of class. Presentation dates are subject to change based upon class size.

Week 1, 06/24 - 06/28:

- Dictator's Handbook: Chapter 1
- Economic Analysis of Public Policy: Chapters 1-3

Week 2, 07/01 - 07/05:

- Dictator's Handbook: Chapters 2-4
- Economic Analysis of Public Policy: Chapters 4-5
- Thursday, July 4th, No Class.
- Problem Set 1 Due, Friday July 5th.

Week 3, 07/08 - 07/12:

- Dictator's Handbook: Chapters 5-6
- Economic Analysis of Public Policy: Chapters 6-8
- Idea Presentation: Thursday July 11th and Friday July 12th
- Write-Up Due: Friday July 12th

Week 4, 07/15 - 07/19:

- Dictator's Handbook: Chapter 7
- Economic Analysis of Public Policy: Chapters 9-11
- Problem Set 2 Due, Friday July 19th

Week 5, 07/22 - 07/26:

- Economic Analysis of Public Policy: Chapters 12-15

Week 6, 07/29 - 08/02:

- Dictator's Handbook: Chapters 8-10
- Presentations: Thursday, August 1st and Friday, August 2nd
- Final Papers Due: Friday, August 2st