Syllabus for Public Economics

ECON 4211, Summer Term.

Instructor and contact information

Instructor: Dr. Daria Bottan

Email: daria.bottan@colorado.edu
I will usually answer emails within 24 hours (I don't respond to you in 2 days, please resend your email). However I will not answer emails on Sundays.

Office hours:
Feel free to stop by, ask questions, and just chat. *If you would like to talk to me but your schedule does not allow you to come during office hours, email me and we can arrange a personal appointment*. I am really happy to arrange a personal appointment.

I will hold office hours on:
Monday and Tuesday: 8am to 9am + Thursday and Friday 11am to 12pm.
Here is the zoom link: https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/91581778537

Don't hessite to reach out, I am here to help.

Course Prerequisites

Requires prerequisite courses of ECON 3070 (Intermediate Microeconomic Theory) and Introduction to Statistics withComputer Applications (ECON 3818) or STAT 4520 or APPM 4570 or CHEN 3010 or CSCI 3022 or CVEN 3227 or MATH 4520 (all minimum grade C-).

Class Format

Assignments on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: The online class goes at a pace double of the regular semester. That is why there will be 4 video lectures posted each week (each lecture will be 30-90 minutes depending on the topic) on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. There will be a Post-Class question after each lecture. The goal of these questions is to incentivise you to watch the video lectures + to help you prepare for the exam. Post class questions will be similar to the exam questions but will be graded very leniently (the goal of these questions is to learn in a low stress environment). I will provide feedback on those questions and expect you to incorporate it into your answers on the exam questions. Please make sure to read the feedback.

Assignments on Saturday: usually for Saturday assignments I will assign you an academic paper to read. You will write a one page summary of the paper (details on how to write a summary will

be provided below). The goal of this assignment is to dive deeper into the science of economics and to familiarize yourself with academic writing and how economists explore various research questions. Another goal is to learn to sintetise the material (summarizing a 30 page paper into one page), that is a very useful skill for the work environment. It will also prepare you for answering questions on the exams and will help you to write a research proposal which is another assignment in this class.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to introduce you to what public economics does and to introduce you to how economists do empirical research and the methods they use for it.

In this class you will learn to apply economic tools to understand and predict the effect of various public policies. The tools used in this class can be grouped into two categories: theoretical (graphs and mathematical tools) and empirical (set of tools to analyze and interpret data).

The usefulness of these tools is not limited to the analysis of public policy; they can also be helpful in the understanding of other social phenomena.

Grading

Your grade will consist of:

20% Post-class questions
25% Average Readings Grade
5% Little Research Proposal
20% Midterm Exam
30% Cumulative Final Exam

Grading Scale

93% and above corresponds to A, 90-92% corresponds to A-; 87-89% corresponds to B+, 83-86% is B, 80-82% is B-; 77-79% corresponds to C+, 73-76% is C, 70-72 is C-; 60-69% corresponds to D; below 60 corresponds to F.

There is NO rounding. This rule holds regardless of how close you are to a grade cutoff. For example, 89.99 is a B+ and will not be rounded to an A-.

Exams

Exams will mainly include open ended questions but some questions might require you to draw graphs or do simple calculations. The post class questions will be similar in format to the exam questions.

(Eiter online with a proctoring system or in person. You can choose what works better for you.).

Final Exam will take place on July 21-July 24th (eiter online with a proctoring system or in person. You can choose what works better for you.). The exact date will be specified later.

Post-Class questions

Post-class questions are questions which are designed to help you absorb the information from the lecture better but also to prepare you to what to expect in the exams (the questions in the exams will be similar).

The due date for any post-class question cannot be extended for any reason. However you are allowed to miss two post class questions in a semester without any penalty to your grade (a "free" post class questions).

Readings (Summaries)

General Information: The summary should be printed in Times New Roman font size 12, single space, left and write margins equal to 1 inch. The summary should NOT be longer than 1 page. Summary should include:

1. Basic information: your name, your section number, the title of the paper and the authors of the paper;
2. Research question: What is the paper about? What question are the authors trying to answer in this paper? Note: Do not copy it directly from the paper, summarize it with your own words. This is the most important part of the summary, the more concise and the better you formulate the research question, the easier it will be to write everything else.
3. Methodology: How do the authors answer the research question? Do they use a theoretical model or analyze real data (what data do they use)? What is the method they use?
4. Conclusion. What are the main results of this paper? Make sure that it directly corresponds to the research question.
5. Opinion: Was there something you liked/found interesting in this paper? Was there something you didn't like about the paper?

Opinion part should not be more than 1⁄4 of the summary. Methodology and conclusions should be the largest part of the summary.

The due date for any reading cannot be extended for any reason. However you are allowed to miss one reading in a semester without any penalty to your grade (a "free" reading).

Little Research Proposal

You will write a short (1-2 pages) proposal of a research idea you could study in Public Economics. The main goal will be proposing a realistic idea (meaning that it would be possible to actually implement it) of how to study a question in public economics that is of interest to you. The proposal will include: the research question, motivation: why is this research question interesting, potential source of data used, description of the method used. More information on how to do the research proposal will be provided closer to the due date.

I understand that this is a difficult exercise and hence I encourage you to email me or to schedule appointments with me to discuss your ideas on this.

<mark>The research proposal is due July 16th</mark>. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Extra Credit

There will be several extra credit opportunities throughout the semester.

The first extra credit opportunity is as follows: you'll get +1% to your grade on the final exam if you come to office hours for at least 5 min during the first 2 weeks of class. I think the remote environment hinders communication between the professor and the students and I think it is important for us to get to know each other for the success of the semester. So I am willing to incentives it. Stop by to say hi and tell me a little about yourself or ask any questions about the class.

Pre class survey: I am really interested in getting to know you and understanding how I can be of help. Fill in this pre-class survey to help me do that: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKIZIYjbSuix8IbQ7YCNeKMI8E4Bk6F5TGFA9 KWCD0jCpW9A/viewform?usp=sf_link Only answer the questions which feel relevant to you, no pressure to answer everything. If 80% of the class fills in the group survey, everyone will get +1% to their final exam grade.

Class Materials

There is no text book for this class. All the articles used in the class will be available with the university internet (you do NOT need to purchase access to nay articles).

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

If you have disabilities that require accommodations please fill in this form to help me keep track of everything and making sure your needs are met:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd2oSByZU69i2dOwdx3TmBsHeNRGJH9ZkH2nVYTfTbgFCsUfw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns
CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name. Most importantly feel free to email me any information you find important regarding this matter.

Honor Code
All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code academic integrity policy. Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the Honor Code website.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation
The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about OIEC,

university policies, [reporting options](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options.

Religious Holidays
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please email me if you have any conflicts for religious reasons.

The class policies are subject to change due to unexpected external conditions and to ensure better student learning.