

University of Colorado - Boulder
Fall 2023 Syllabus
ECON4211 – Public Economics: Economics of the Government Sector

Instructor: Dr. Shawn Swanson Email: shawn.swanson@colorado.edu
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Office Hours: MWF 9:00 – 10 AM in ECON 14b ; T 8:30-10:00 AM via Zoom

Section	Class Time	Room	Final
4211-001	MWF 1:25 - 2:15 PM	MUEN E431	Tuesday, Dec. 19, 4:30 - 7:00 PM

Description

This course focuses on taxation and public expenditures. Topics include economic rationale for government action, economic theory of government behavior, and effects of government policies on allocation of resources and distribution of income.

Prerequisites

Requires prerequisite courses of ECON 3070 and ECON 3818 or one of the following approved statistics substitutes: APPM 4570, CHEN 3010, CSCI 3022, CVEN 3227, MATH 3510, MATH 4520, STAT 3100, STAT 4000, STAT 4520 (all minimum grade C-).

Required Textbook

Public Finance 10th edition by Rosen and Gayer & Connect.

CU is launching a new program this fall called CU Book Access. Degree-seeking undergrads will be billed a flat rate (\$279) per semester for all their required course materials.

If a student chooses to opt out of that charge, they'll be able to purchase day 1 digital on a material by material basis. The cost in this instance will be \$86.25. The opt out deadline in either instance will be 09/13/2023.

Student questions should be directed to, assist@cubookstore.com or students may stop by the help stations in the CU Book Store during store hours, or live chat at cubookstore.com.

Attendance

Class attendance is necessary for success in this course and therefore mandatory. To give students an external commitment device, attendance will be taken indirectly through the use of clicker questions. *If you anticipate an EXTENDED absence, please notify me prior to missing any classes, assignments, or exams. There is no need to advise me of short day-to-day absences.*

Canvas

I use Canvas extensively to keep this course organized and make announcements. Additionally, the problems sets and solutions will be available on Canvas as well. Grades will be posted on Canvas as soon as they are available.

Office Hours

Office hours are the best way to get extra help if needed. I would be happy to schedule a time outside of office hours if a scheduling conflict prevents you from coming during the assigned hours. Note that my MWF office hours are held in-person in my office, while I hold the Tuesday hours remotely off-campus.

Cheating

Don't do it. You will get caught, fail the course, and be reported to the Honor Code Council. This includes faking attendance on Clicker questions.

Electronic Device Policy

Please silence electronic devices during lectures. You are welcome to use electronic devices for note taking and accessing learning materials online. However, do not use electronic devices during class time for non-class activities (i.e. social media, etc), or you will be asked to turn it off and put it away.

Communication Policy

Email will be my primary form of communication with the class:

- I will use your CU email address for class communications, so check your CU mailbox frequently.
- I will answer you as soon as possible. Please allow 24 hours for a response.
- Please refer to the syllabus to answer questions, before contacting me.
- Questions on course material are often more easily and thoroughly answered in person. Please use my office hours as your primary means of obtaining help with course material.
- Under no circumstances can I provide grades through email due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, since emails are not considered secure. Grades will be available on Canvas.

Grading

It is important to note, there will be no makeup work or makeup exams in this class. In fairness to everyone, there are no exceptions. Note that late assignments will not be accepted, instead I will drop your lowest two homework assignments, lowest two SmartBook scores, and lowest two clicker scores. This is to provide you with flexibility throughout the semester for things such as illness, bereavement, etc.

Your total grade in this course will be determined as follows:

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|----------------|----------------|
| • Problem sets | 20% |
| • Clickers | 20% |
| • SmartBook | 10% |
| • Midterms | 30% (15% Each) |
| • Final | 20% |

Problem Sets:

There will be 11 problem sets. It is strongly suggested you attempt additional problems from the text. Problem sets will be completed in groups of 3-4 students. Each group will submit a single copy of each of their problem sets with all the group members' names. Students will be given a group grade for each problem set and a combined contribution grade at the end of the semester determined anonymously by your group members. Problem sets must be submitted before class on the day they are due. There is no late work.

Exams:

There are 2 midterm exams, and while they are not explicitly cumulative, material does naturally build upon itself. The final exam will be *cumulative* and must be held per university policy. The University's final exam policy can be found [here](#). Unsubstantiated or illegible answers will receive partial credit at most. Exams will be closed book, closed notes. Only basic scientific calculators will be permitted, no computers, cell phone, or graphing calculators. All exams will take place in the regular classroom unless otherwise noted. There will be no makeup exams. If you provide appropriate documentation (e.g., illness, bereavement, university sanctioned event) PRIOR to missing the exam your other coursework will be appropriately reweighted, otherwise you will receive a zero for the exam.

iClickers:

We will be using iClicker to enhance active learning and participation in this course. You can check a clicker remote out from the Norlin circulation desk for the semester, on a first-come, first-served basis. You will also need to have an iClicker student app account, and register your clicker there. Student resources for iClicker can be found [here](#). You will receive 1 point for answering a question and an additional point for answering correctly. Faking attendance will get you a 0 for Clicker scores for the semester.

Letter Grades:

Grades may be curved at the instructor's discretion. Your (curved) final course grade will automatically be increased up to 0.5% to meet any grade cutoff. No further grade adjustments are available under any circumstances. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

Percentage Grade		Percentage	Grade
94-100	A	73-76	C
90-93	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F

Course Resources and Recipe for Success

Economics is like lifting weights. I am your personal trainer. You can only repeat the benefits if you do enough reps. I can't do that for you.

Let me be clear, I want you to be successful in this course. I will do whatever I can to help you learn. Therefore, there are numerous resources for you to succeed.

Office Hours: This is an excellent opportunity to get additional clarification and get one-on-one instruction. I love working with students during office hours. It is among the most rewarding things I get to do as an instructor, so please take advantage. If a scheduling conflict prevents you from attending my office hours, I will be happy to schedule a time with you.

Private Tutors: Private tutors are available for a fee. Information can be found on the department's website: <https://www.colorado.edu/economics/undergraduate-program>

There is a strong correlation between attendance and homework with a student's overall grade. The correlation coefficients are greater than 0.60. I would be remiss if I did not note that correlation does not imply causation. Nonetheless, imitating the approach of successful students is not a bad strategy. Take this course seriously. Use the available resources. Keep up with the course and do not fall behind.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Requirements for Infectious Disease

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the. For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

[Disability Services](#) determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so

your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. *You must provide me with your disability letter and contact me to make suitable arrangements at least TWO WEEKS prior to any exam.*

If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible prior to missing any classes, assignments, or exams. There is no need to advise me of short day-to-day absences. Also see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

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.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), 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 Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

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 notify me two weeks prior to missing any lectures, coursework, or exams.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Topics	Due
Week 1 (8/28-9/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Introduction (Ch 1) 	
Week 2 (9/4-9/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor Day (No Class 9/4) Tools of Normative Analysis (Ch 3) 	
Week 3 (9/11-9/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools of Normative Analysis (Ch 3) Public Goods (Ch 4) 	PS1
Week 4 (9/18-9/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Goods (Ch 4) Externalities (Ch 5) 	PS2
Week 5 (9/25-9/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externalities (Ch 5) 	PS3
Week 6 (10/2-10/6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externalities (Ch 5) Political Economy (Ch 6) 	PS4
Week 7 (10/9-10/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT1 Review MT1 (10/11) Political Economy (Ch 6) 	
Week 8 (10/16-10/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Economy (Ch 6) 	PS5
Week 9 (10/23-10/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Economy (Ch 6) 	PS6
Week 10 (10/30-11/3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Redistribution (Ch 12) 	PS7
Week 11 (11/6-11/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Redistribution (Ch 12) 	PS8
Week 12 (11/13-11/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health Care Market (Ch 9) Government and the Market for Health Care (Ch 10) 	PS9
Week 13 (11/20-11/24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall Break (No classes 11/20-11/24) Woot! Woot! 	
Week 14 (11/27-12/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT2 Review MT2 (11/29) Government and the Market for Health Care (Ch 10) 	
Week 15 (12/4-12/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation and Efficiency (Ch 15) 	PS10
Week 16 (12/11-12/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation and Efficiency (Ch 15) Final review Reading Day (No class 12/15) 	PS11*

All assignments are due Friday before class unless otherwise announced.

**Note, week 16 assignments are due Wednesday before class due to reading day.*