

PUAD 6578: Public Finance and Budgeting

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Spring 2020

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Class Hours: See Calendar Below

Class Room: WebEx

Course Description¹

Budgeting at all levels of government is a complex process that requires a tremendous amount of time, energy, and political capital. This course will help you understand the difference between public and private budgeting. The class examines the budget process at all levels. To enhance student learning, this course utilizes case studies that will allow students to (a) learn about the budget process first hand by studying their local government and (b) apply course concepts to areas around the country.

This course is also designed to help students with an interest in public budgeting to work through a research design that may be used later in the program as the foundation to their capstone project or thesis. This project will allow the student to develop a research question by completing a thorough review of the literature.

Readings

Required Mikesell, John. 2018. *Fiscal Administration* 10th Edition. (Note: the hardback copy of this book is quite expensive. However, the publisher offers an [ebook rental](#) - ~\$31 for a 4 month period).

Required Course readings outlined in the syllabus will be linked in the syllabus and posted to GaView.

¹I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Students will be notified when changes are made.

Course Objectives

Students enrolled in Georgia College’s MPA program are expected to show competency in several areas by the time they graduate. Therefore, a set of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that relate to (and in some cases enhance) NASPAA Universal Competencies were established for students in the program. The SLOs and NASPAA Universal Competencies are listed below. Those highlighted represent the outcomes and competencies students will be assessed on and are required to meet in order to succeed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of challenges and constraints relevant to governance and external factors.
2. Demonstrate an ability to participate in the policy process, communicate policy alternatives, and work effectively with government, nonprofit institutions, corporations, and community stakeholders.
3. *Demonstrate an ability to define, frame, think critically about and analyze important problems.*
4. *Demonstrates an ability to utilize analytical tools to analyze, present, and interpret data, including appropriate design, statistical, and evaluative techniques for both organization decision making and policy decisions.*
5. Demonstrates an ability to identify public service values and to then systematically apply these values to identify appropriate course of action.
6. Demonstrates an ability to communicate effectively and professionally to diverse audience.

NASPAA Universal Competencies

1. To lead and manage in public governance (demonstrate an understanding of challenges and constraints relevant to governance and external factors).
2. To participate in and contribute to the policy process (demonstrate an ability to participate in the policy process, communicate policy alternatives, and work effectively with government, non-profit institutions, corporations, and community stakeholders).
3. *To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions (a. demonstrate an ability to define, frame, think critically about, and analyze important problems; b. demonstrate an ability to utilize analytical tools to analyze, present, and interpret data, including appropriate design, statistical, and evaluative techniques for both organization decision making and policy decision).*
4. To articulate and apply public values perspective (demonstrates an ability to identify public service values and to then systematically apply these values to identify appropriate course of action).
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry (demonstrates an ability to communicate effectively and professionally to diverse audiences).

Course Assignments

Homework Assignments (Due Weekly): Each week, with the exception of Week 8 and Week 16, a set of questions will be due. You do not need to complete all 14 chapters. See the grading system below for the required number. A satisfactory grade on question sets is anything above 80%.

Case Study (Due Feb 23): You will select a local municipality and write a report on how they manage their budget. The goal of this project is to have you meet with a local budget executive and learn first hand about the budgetary process. You should also identify, preferably during your interview, one budgetary problem (or puzzle) the municipality is attempting to solve. Be sure to identify at least one problem the municipality is facing as you will use it in the policy memo assignment.

Midterm Exam: You will have a midterm exam during the eighth week of class. The exam will consist of multiple choice questions with the possibility of short answer and/or essay questions. A satisfactory grade is anything above 70%.

Policy Memo (Due April 12): You will write a brief memo to the person you interviewed outlining potential solutions to the budget issue you outlined in the case study. Instructions for the memo will be posted in GaView. Please note the memo will **not** be sent to the interviewee.

Final Exam: You will have a final exam during the last week of class. The exam will consist of multiple choice questions with the possibility of short answer and/or essay questions. A satisfactory grade is anything above 70%.

Specification Grading

All of your assignments will be graded as Sat/Unsat and you will know exactly what is required for a passing grade. The purpose for this is to (hopefully) avoid the subjectivity of grading and to save you the urge to email asking why your paper was a 93 instead of a 97 or an 84 instead of a 90. Numerical grading, even with a strong rubric, is challenging and often inconsistent. Therefore, we will use specification grading and you get to determine your final grade in the class by completing one of the following bundles. The bundles must be completed as prescribed, i.e., you do not get to swap assignments. You **MUST** complete the bundle as specified. Note, I will give students the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments that are borderline (which I realize is subjective, but I am doing my best). Students that receive an “R & R” will be given detailed feedback on how to make their assignment satisfactory and will be given one week to resubmit after the feedback is delivered.

Bundle	Satisfactory Grade on:
A	12 Homework Sets, Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Case Study, Policy Memo
B	10 Modules, Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Case Study
C	8 Modules, Midterm Exam, Final Exam
D	Midterm Exam, Final Exam
F	None of the above

Course Policies:

- **Office Hours and Contact:** This is an online class and many of you are not in the area so I am also able to meet by appointment via phone or WebEx. Students can contact me via email (keith.lee@gcsu.edu). I will not respond to messages sent through GaView.
- **Late Policy:** No assignments will be accepted after the due date. Every assignment will be posted with ample time to complete them, thus a medical/family emergency on the due date is not an acceptable excuse. Get your work done early and you should not have any issues.
- **Attendance and Absences:** There is not an attendance policy for this course, however it is the student's responsibility to watch all WebEx recordings they miss. Viewing all WebEx sessions within a week of them being posted is a requirement.
- **Academic dishonesty:** Cheating, either on the exam or in the form of plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will result in an "F" in the course and a recommendation to the MPA coordinator that you be dismissed from the program. This class will use plagiarism detection via GeorgiaView.
- Please read these additional [common syllabus statements](#) provided by Georgia College.

Class Schedule

Week 01, 01/09 - 01/15: Fundamental Principles of Public Finance

- Read Mikesell Chapter 1
- WebEx meeting 01/09 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 1.1, 1.3, and 1.5 due 01/15 at 9:00pm

Week 02, 01/16 - 01/22: The Logic of the Budget Process

- Read Mikesell Chapter 2
- WebEx meeting 01/16 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 2.2, 2.3, and 2.8 due 01/22 at 9:00pm

Week 03, 01/23 - 01/29: Budget Methods & Practices

- Read Mikesell Chapter 3
- WebEx meeting 01/23 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.9, and 3.13 due 01/29 at 9:00pm

Week 04, 01/30 - 02/05: Federal Budget Structures & Institutions

- Read Mikesell Chapter 4
- WebEx meeting 01/30 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 due 02/05 at 9:00pm

Week 05, 02/06 - 02/12: State & Local Budgets

- Read Mikesell Chapter 5
- WebEx meeting 02/06 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 5.2 and 5.3 due 02/12 at 9:00pm

Week 06, 02/13 - 02/19: Budget System Reforms

- Read Mikesell Chapter 6
- WebEx meeting 02/13 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6 due 02/19 at 9:00pm

Week 07, 02/20 - 02/26: Capital Budgeting, Time Value of Money, and Cost-Benefit Analysis: Process, Structure, and Basic Tools

- Mikesell Chapter 7
- WebEx meeting 02/20 at 7:30pm
- Case Study due 02/23 at 9:00pm
- Answers to questions 7.1, 7.2, 7.5, 7.7, and 7.8 due 02/26 at 9:00pm

Week 08, 02/27 - 03/04: Exam Week

- WebEx meeting 02/27 at 7:30pm
- Midterm Exam due 03/04 at 9:00pm

Week 09, 03/05 - 03/11: Taxation: Criteria for Evaluating Revenue Options

- Read Mikesell Chapter 8
- WebEx meeting 03/05 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 8.2, C8.1, C8.2, and C8.3 due 03/11 at 9:00pm

Week 10, 03/12 - 03/18: Major Tax Structures: Income Taxes

- Read Mikesell Chapter 9
- WebEx meeting 03/12 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.8, and 9.9 due 03/18 at 9:00pm

Week 11, 03/19 - 03/25: Major Tax Structures: Taxes on Goods & Services

- Read Mikesell Chapter 10
- WebEx meeting 03/19 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 10.2, 10.4, 10.5, and 10.6 due 03/25 at 9:00pm

Week 12, 03/26 - 04/01: Major Tax Structures: Property Taxes

- Read Mikesell Chapter 11
- WebEx meeting 03/25 at 7:30pm *This is a Wednesday meeting*
- Answers to questions 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, and 11.7 due 04/01 at 9:00pm

Week 13, 04/02 - 04/08: Revenue from User Fees, User Charges, and Sales by Public Monopolies

- Read Mikesell Chapter 12
- WebEx meeting 04/02 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, and 12.5 due 04/08 at 9:00pm

Week 14, 04/09 - 04/15: Revenue Forecasts, Revenue Estimates, and Tax Expenditure Budgets

- Read Mikesell Chapter 13
- WebEx meeting 04/09 at 7:30pm
- Policy Memo due 04/12 at 9:00pm
- Answers to questions 13.1, 13.4, and 13.6 due 04/15 at 9:00pm

Week 15, 04/16 - 04/22: Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations: Diversity & Coordination & Debt Administration

- Read Mikesell Chapter 14 and Chapter 15
- WebEx meeting 04/16 at 7:30pm
- Answers to questions 15.3, 15.4, and 15.5 due 04/22 at 9:00pm

Week 16, 04/23 - 04/29: Exam Week

- WebEx meeting 04/23 at 7:30pm
- Final Exam due 04/29 at 9:00pm