Winthrop University
College of Business Administration
Economics 331 – Section 001
Public Finance
Spring 2013

9:30 – 10:45 am Monday/Wednesday
Thurmond 100
3.0 Credit Hours

Instructor: Dr. Laura Dawson Ullrich
Office: 104 Thurmond Building
Office Hours: Monday 3:15 – 4:45 pm
Tuesday 9:00 – 11:30 am; 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Wednesday 8:45 – 9:30 am; 3:15 – 4:30 pm
(and by appointment)
E-mail: ullrichl@winthrop.edu

Catalog Description
Microeconomic analysis of governmental activity, taxation and welfare implications.

Introduction
Welcome to Economics 331, Public Finance. This course expands on some of the topics covered in Economics 215 (Principles of Microeconomics). The goal of this course is for you to develop an understanding of public policy and public economics topics both on the expenditure and taxation side. Topics such as externalities, public goods, education, healthcare, social security, personal taxation, and corporate taxation will be covered.

There is A LOT of information for us to cover in this short period of time. Make sure that you stay on top of the information that we cover each day, and come to see me if you need additional help. It will be imperative for you to keep up with the assigned readings. I will expect you to read the chapters as well as some supplemental readings that I will provide throughout the semester.

Many of the topics we will cover in this class are current hot topics. This makes Spring 2013 a fabulous semester to take Public Finance. We will talk about the “fiscal cliff”, the debt ceiling, government debt, healthcare policy, and tax policy throughout the semester. I hope the timeliness of the topics will lead to an exciting semester!

On a personal note, this is my most favorite economics class. Taking this class as an undergraduate inspired me to eventually get my PhD and to become a professor. While I am passionate about public policy economics (and have some strong opinions on some topics) I welcome any and all opposing viewpoints. That’s the wonderful thing about economics…there often is no one right answer. I hope that all of you will feel comfortable discussing the topics covered in class and will enjoy it as much as I did (and still do)!
Prerequisite
ECON 215 – Principles of Microeconomics

Student Conduct
As noted in the Student Conduct Code: “Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals.” The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy in the Student Handbook, which can be found online at http://www3.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship and the learning experience for everyone on campus. An act of academic dishonesty may lead to such penalties as reduction of grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. I reserve the right to assign a grade of zero for actions involving violations of Winthrop’s Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

To be 100 percent clear…if you plagiarize a paper or assignment in my course you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment and you WILL be reported to university officials.

Technology Policy
Cell phones or related devices are not allowed at any time during class. Students are permitted to use a calculator during tests when needed, but it must be a basic calculator without storage functions (e.g. a dollar store calculator). Students are not allowed to share calculators during exams. Any student who is caught using an electronic device such as a cell phone, tablet, Blackberry, iPod, etc. during an exam will be subject to academic dishonesty prosecution.

***TEXTING IS NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS…EVER. If a student is caught texting (or using a cell phone in any other way) during class, they will be asked to put the phone away AND WILL LOSE 2 POINTS OFF OF THEIR FINAL GRADE. Texting during class is extremely disruptive and rude and will not be tolerated.***

Students are discouraged from using laptops, iPads, etc. during class because of the graphical nature of the course. Laptops and/or tablets are allowed in class as long as the student is seated IN THE FRONT ROW of the classroom. Failing to do so will result in the same 2 point deduction from the final grade mentioned in the paragraph above.

Disability Services
Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from the Office of Disability Services, please inform me as early as possible in the semester. Once you have your Professor Notification Form, please tell me so that I am aware of your accommodations well before the first assignment, test, or paper.

Required Texts
Tests
There will be three tests given in this class. There will be no comprehensive final exam. The third test will be administered during the final exam period. The tests will consist of true/false and short answer questions, and will be given during the class period. NO MAKEUP TESTS WILL BE GIVEN. If a legitimate issue and arises and you must miss an exam, you will be allowed to shift that portion of your grade to the final exam only if I am notified of the issue at least one day prior to the test. In other words, if we have a test on Monday, I must receive an e-mail from you by 5:00 pm on Sunday stating the reason for your absence. Otherwise you will receive a zero for that test. You may only be excused from a test under special circumstances (i.e., death in the family or severe illness). Not being able to get a ride to class or going to the beach for a long weekend are not acceptable excuses.
Tentative Exam Dates: February 11th, March 25th, April 22nd

The following things are not allowed during examinations in this course:
- Use of technological devices (see previous policy)
- Sharing calculators
- Using the restroom. The class is only 75 minutes long, so you shouldn’t have any problems. Make sure you go right before class!
- Leaving the classroom for any unapproved reason
- Talking to your classmates

Research Paper
You will be required to write a 3,000 word paper (approximately 10 pages) on a current public finance topic. You must notify me of your paper topic via email by March 6th. Failing to do so will result in a deduction of 10 points off of your paper grade. All papers are due to Turnitin.com by 5:00 pm on Monday, April 29th. No late papers will be accepted. Paper presentations will be made during the final exam period on Tuesday April 30th at 3:00pm. Additional details on the paper assignment will be discussed in class.

Turnitin Class ID: 5904830
Password: economics

Reading Quizzes
I will provide some supplemental readings on the topics throughout the semester. You will be assigned the reading assignments at least three days in advance of class. A short quiz will be given on the date the reading is due to ensure that you have read the material. I think we will all benefit from the readings and they will lead to much better in-class discussion. We will have a minimum of five quizzes this semester, and you will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade. No makeup quizzes will be given.

Attendance
I expect you to attend class. Period. Attending class is the only way that you will do well in this class as I do not teach directly from the book(s). I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Attending class will also be important because of the occasional quizzes. If you are absent you will need to obtain notes from a fellow classmate. Please do not ask me for notes that you missed due to an absence.
The Winthrop University attendance policy states that any student missing more than 25% of the class meetings will receive an F in that class. Therefore, if you miss more than 8 class periods during the semester you will receive an automatic F in the class regardless of performance on tests and quizzes.

**Grading**

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<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Exam 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80-89.9</td>
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<td>70-79.9</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9</td>
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<td>F</td>
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**Anticipated Course Outline**

Chapter 1: Why Study Public Finance?
Chapter 2: Theoretical Tools of Public Finance
Chapter 5: Externalities: Problems and Solutions
Chapter 6: Externalities in Action: Environmental and Health Externalities
Chapter 7: Public Goods
Chapter 10: State and Local Government Expenditures
Chapter 15: Health Insurance I: Health Economics and Private Health Insurance
EXAM ONE

Chapter 11: Education
Chapter 13: Social Security
Chapter 17: Income Distribution and Welfare Programs
Chapter 18: Taxation in the U.S. and Around the World
Chapter 19: The Equity Implications of Taxation: Tax Incidence
EXAM TWO

Chapter 20: Tax Inefficiencies and Their Implications for Optimal Taxation
Chapter 21: Taxes on Labor Supply
Chapter 22: Taxes on Savings
Chapter 23: Taxes on Risk Taking and Wealth
Chapter 24: Corporate Tax Reform
Chapter 25: Fundamental Tax Reform
EXAM THREE

Important Dates of Note:
Course drop/add deadline: January 11
Last day for S/U registration: January 22
Course withdrawal deadline: March 6

Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a contractual policy between the instructor and student. It is presumed that every student has read the syllabus completely, understands his/her individual responsibilities, and accepts full responsibility for meeting all course requirements as set forth therein. Should there be a need to make a change in the posted syllabus, an announcement will be made in class and also via email, well in advance of any change. The final exam date and time and the grading policies will not change.