Econ 4150/5150  Course Syllabus  Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Susan Dadres (sdadres@unt.edu)

Class Meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 1:00 – 2:20, Wooten Hall 112

Office: 283-F Hickory Hall (cell phone: 469-682-0767)

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:00, or by appointment


Course Objective: Forming intelligent opinions about public policy requires not only a political philosophy but also an understanding of what government does and why. What does government spend money on, and how does it raise revenue? This class focuses on many government programs that are funded with your tax dollars (education, welfare, social security, etc.) as well as how those tax dollars are collected.

Course Information: The workbook contains information and examples that will be used in class. Bring your book with you to each class meeting. Access grades, online quizzes, and other materials at http://ecampus.unt.edu.

Your class average is based on your quiz average (20%), two regular exams (30% each), and a comprehensive final exam (20%). After calculating your class average, letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

\[
90 - 100\% = A, \quad 80 - 89\% = B, \quad 70 - 79\% = C, \\
60 - 69\% = D, \quad \text{and}\quad 59\% \text{ or below} = F
\]

If you miss an exam with a university-approved excuse, provide documentation within one week to request that I replace the zero with the grade you earn on the final exam, making the comprehensive final exam worth 50% of your course grade. If you miss an exam with no university-approved excuse, a grade of 0 is recorded and the option of dropping the class should be carefully considered.

Quizzes are given both online and in the classroom. If you miss a quiz with a university-approved excuse, let me know within one week to avoid a grade of 0.

Important Dates:

- Wednesday, October 24    Exam 1
- Wednesday, November 7    Last day to drop class with WP
- Wednesday, November 28    Exam 2
- Wednesday, December 12, 10:30 – 12:30    Final Exam
Course Policies: See http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/fall/withdraw.html for detailed information about dropping or withdrawing. Go to the department office (Hickory Hall, room 254) before Wednesday, November 7th to obtain a drop slip which I have already signed, giving a grade of “W”, or see me to discuss your options. If you stop attending and do not drop the class, you may receive an “F” in the course.

You may request a grade of Incomplete only if at least one-half of the work has been completed with a passing grade and an emergency (illness, family emergency, etc.) prevents you from completing the rest. If you meet these requirements, request a grade of Incomplete by December 5th (you can make the request by email if you aren’t able to see me).

If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation under the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, please discuss your needs with me before or after class.

The Economics Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have not registered with ODA, we encourage you to do so. Please present your written accommodation request on or before September 26th.

The UNT Department of Economics adheres to the University’s Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism. To view the complete policy go to http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/.

Cheating: The use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:

1. use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes or other assessments;
2. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments;
3. acquisition, without permission, of tests, notes or other academic materials belonging to a faculty or staff member of the University;
4. dual submission of a paper or project, or re-submission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor;
5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.

Plagiarism: Use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student’s intent, including but not limited to:

1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation.
2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials.
Wednesday August 29
Go over syllabus and Blackboard tools. Discuss functions of government.

Monday September 3 – Monday September 10
Topics: the size of government, positive/normative analysis, public goods, and the free-rider problem. Work through problems pages 6 and 12.

Complete online Quiz 1 over chapters 1 and 2 by Wednesday September 12

Wednesday September 12 – Wednesday September 19

Complete online Quiz 2 over chapter 3 by Monday, September 24

Monday September 24 – Wednesday October 3
Topics: positive externalities, education, negative externalities, environmental policy, and the Coase Theorem. Work through problems pages 30 and 38.

Complete online Quiz 3 over chapters 4 and 5 by Monday, October 8

Monday October 8 – Wednesday October 17
Topics: The Lorenz Curve, the gini index, the poverty rate, welfare programs, and welfare reform. Work through problems pages 45-46.

Complete online Quiz 4 over chapter 6 by Monday, October 22

Monday October 22
Review for Exam 1

Wednesday October 24
Exam 1 (chapters 1 – 6)

Monday October 29 – Wednesday November 7
Topics: reasons for social insurance, retirement insurance, and health insurance. Work through problems pages 65-66.

Complete online Quiz 5 over chapter 7 by Monday November 12

Monday November 12 – Wednesday November 21
Topics: statutory vs. economic tax incidence, tax shifting, excess burden, Ramsey Rule, taxes and incentives, the income tax. Work through problems pages 84-88.

Complete online Quiz 6 over chapter 8 by Monday November 26

Monday November 26
Review for Exam 2

Wednesday November 28
Exam 2 (chapters 7 – 8)

Monday December 3 – Wednesday December 5
Go over Exam 2 and review for comprehensive Final Exam

Wednesday December 12, 10:30 – 12:30
Final Exam (chapters 1 – 8)