Econ 4150-001 and 5150-001     Course Syllabus     Fall 2010

Instructor:    Dr. Susan Dadres (sdadres@unt.edu)
Class Meetings:    MW 12:30 – 1:50, Wooten 315
Office:    283-F Hickory Hall (office 940-369-7984, cell 469-682-0767)
Office Hours:    MW 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 actually 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. Does government involvement in the economy enhance efficiency? What about equity? There may be differences of opinion, but let’s keep an open mind.

Access grades and other course materials by logging on to http://ecampus.unt.edu.

Course Outline:
Monday August 30 – Monday October 11
    Ch 1  The Role of Government
    Ch 2  Externalities and the Environment
    Ch 3  Public Goods and Political Economy
    Ch 10-11  State and Local Public Finance, Education

Wednesday, October 13
    Online Quiz 1 Due by midnight (multiple choice and true/false questions)
    In-class Exam 1 at 12:30 (problems, graphs, and short answer questions)

Wednesday, November 24
    Turn in PowerPoint slides and exam questions before or during class

Monday October 18 – Monday November 29
    Ch 12  Income Inequality and Assisting Families in Poverty
    Ch 7-8  Commodity and Income Taxation
    Ch 6  Health Insurance
    Ch 5  Social Security

Wednesday, December 1
    Online Quiz 2 Due by midnight (multiple choice and true/false questions)
    In-class Exam 2 at 12:30 (problems, graphs, and short answer questions)

Wednesday, December 8 – view final project slideshow in class

Wednesday, December 15
    Final Exam 10:30 – 12:30 (questions drawn from final project)
Throughout the course, you will be learning about a number of topics, including:

1. The functions of government
2. Pigouvian taxes
3. Environmental protection
4. The Coase Theorem
5. Public Goods
6. Lindahl pricing
7. The median voter theorem
8. Arrow's Impossibility Theorem
9. Representative Democracy
10. The Tiebout model
11. Education Vouchers
12. No Child Left Behind
13. The Lorenz Curve and the Gini
14. The Poverty Rate
15. Welfare Reform
16. The Earned Income Tax Credit
17. Tax Incidence
18. The Ramsey Rule
19. Taxation and work incentives
20. The Alternative Minimum Tax
21. Health Savings Accounts
22. Managed Care
23. Health Insurance Reform
24. The history of Social Security
25. The financial solvency of Social Security

It is important to be in class during the first week when I will be gathering information about your preferences regarding topics and working alone versus in a group. Students who do not attend during the first week will probably not have their top choice for topics.

**Project Grading:**
- 60% - project is submitted on time and is complete (4 to 6 slides and 4 to 6 exam questions)
- 20% - slides are informative, easy-to-read, accurate, and cover the topic well
- 20% - exam questions are well-written and relevant to the topic, with a mix of multiple choice and true/false, and correct answers are provided

For your Final Project, you will work alone or with one or two other students on one of the above topics. Each individual or group must submit 4 to 6 PowerPoint slides that effectively present information about the topic and explain why it is significant. Each individual or group must also submit 4 to 6 multiple choice and true/false questions that effectively assess knowledge of the information presented about the topic.

Both components of the final project (slides and exam questions) must be submitted no later than the end of class on Wednesday, November 24th. Since this is the day before Thanksgiving, the class meeting will be short, so arrive promptly at 12:30 if you are going to submit work in person. Everyone is encouraged to either bring a flash drive containing the files (PowerPoint plus Word document with exam questions) or email them to sdadres@unt.edu. Make arrangements to submit work early if you have travel plans. Projects submitted late will be penalized between 10 and 30 points.

Once all slides and questions have been submitted on or before the final due date of **Wednesday, November 24th**, I will compile them into a presentation which everyone in the class will have the opportunity to view during our last meeting, which is **Wednesday, December 8th**. Attendance on December 8th is very important!

The Final Exam, which is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 15th at 10:30**, will include 50 multiple choice and true/false questions, with questions drawn from those submitted by everyone as part of the Final Project (approximately 2 questions per topic).
Worksheets are completed during class meetings once every week or two. Students are encouraged to work in small groups, using notes and asking questions when anything is unclear. The problems and graphs used for the worksheets are very similar to those used on in-class exams. Poor attendance will result in a low worksheet average. Online quizzes must be correctly submitted, with answers saved, and students are expected to work on these alone, with the aid of notes and the textbook. The Unit 1 quiz includes 20 multiple choice and true/false questions and must be submitted before midnight on Wednesday, October 13th. The Unit 2 quiz also includes 20 multiple choice and true/false questions and must be submitted before midnight on Wednesday, December 1st. There is also a practice quiz to demonstrate how to submit online quizzes, but the grade on this quiz does not count in your average.

In-class exams include problems, graphs, and short answer questions. The first exam will be given during class on Wednesday, October 13th and the second exam will be given during class on Wednesday, December 1st. Students work alone, without the use of notes or the book. Everyone is encouraged to bring a nonprogrammable calculator.

Everyone is expected to attend class on the last day (Wednesday, December 8) in order to view the compiled PowerPoint slides and obtain the information needed to prepare for the final exam.

- The average on the worksheets counts for 20% of the course grade.
- The score on the unit 1 online quiz counts for 10% of the course grade.
- The grade on in-class Exam 1 counts for 20% of the course grade.
- The score on the unit 2 online quiz counts for 10% of the course grade.
- The grade on in-class Exam 2 counts for 20% of the course grade.
- The grade on the Final Project counts for 10% of the course grade.
- The final exam grade counts for 10% of the course grade.

After calculating an overall weighted average, course grades are assigned according to the following scale:

- 90 – 100% = A, 80 – 89% = B, 70 – 79% = C, 60 – 69% = D, and 59% or below = F

**Make-Up Policies:** If you must miss a class when we have a graded worksheet or exam and you have a university-approved excuse, contact me by phone or email, or meet with me during office hours to discuss your options. Excessive unexcused absences make it difficult to succeed and will likely result in a course grade of D or F.

The last day to drop the class with my consent is Friday, October 29th. Go to the department office (Hickory Hall, room 254) between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to obtain a drop slip which I have already signed, or see me to discuss your options. If you stop attending and do not drop, 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 before December 15th (you can make the request by email if you aren’t able to see me).

**Department Policies:** 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 as soon as possible. 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.

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/](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.