COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course surveys public finance, public budgeting, and related fiscal decision-making activities in government. It places state and local government, and nonprofit organizations contracting with them, within the context of fiscal federalism. As a class member, you should accomplish the following graduate-level objectives:

- Describe the rules, institutions, timetable, process, and roles involved in governmental taxing and spending;
- Identify the political, intergovernmental, social, and economic forces acting on those decisions;
- Compare the politics of budgeting with rational methods of resource allocation (budget reform);
- Identify the key features of major tax and revenue structures;
- Apply basic budget analysis skills and methods;
- Evaluate the basics of governmental financial health and sustainability; and,
- Understand financial management and debt issuance.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Textbooks


Note: The “self-paced training” listed below is part of the required work if you do not have those skills at the beginning of this course.


Course Policies and Procedures

Syllabus. The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. I anticipate changes in the course as we proceed through the semester. Check iCollege and your university-assigned email address frequently (and one hour before class) for official notices about the class. The required readings are contained in the required textbook and several other assignments specified in this syllabus.

Class Preparation.

1. Before each class session you are responsible for reading the assigned textbook chapter to be able to complete in-class exercises.
2. All course-related materials will be posted on iCollege.
3. You must bring your required textbook to every class.
4. Assignments are due at the start of the class session unless otherwise specified. You should not skip class time to finish an assignment.
5. All written and oral contributions throughout this course are to be original work. You should submit your typed assignments using the iCollege assignment Dropbox and monitor it for any returned or graded files. The grading rubric for each assignment will be posted on iCollege. You should strive to be professional in all your communications. You will be rewarded for your writing as well so you may want to visit the GSU Writing studio before submitting written essay type assignments.

Make-up Exams. There are no make-up exams in this course. Late submissions of any exam will not be accepted. Please let me know as soon as you know that a problem is developing with your ability to complete the course. Familiarize yourself with the University’s course withdrawal procedures and particularly, the GSU Involuntary and Emergency Withdrawal Policies.
**Doctoral students** should make an immediate appointment with me to discuss their additional assignments. Doctoral students must submit a proposed research project for approval, complete a draft and revise it to reflect my suggestions/comments (with 2 weeks for my review), and complete the final paper by the last class day in order to receive a course grade.

**Self-Paced Training.** There are certain basic skills that most graduate students have by now. For example, you are presumed to know how to use spreadsheet (such as Microsoft Excel) and word processing (preferably Microsoft Word) software. If you do not have that proficiency, you are encouraged to take advantage of free self-paced training programs available to GSU students. On our course webpage, go to the bottom right side to the section entitled Student Resources to find the Lynda Online Training link. Once in the Lynda site, you can search for “basic Excel” to find several options.

If you are unfamiliar with the basics of financial accounting, you should also use the Lynda Online Training link to search for “Finance for Non-Financial Managers” and listen to all but the income tax segment. You need to submit proof of completion by email to me.

**Instructor Evaluation.** Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

**Disability Accommodation.** Students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the University’s Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan. Students are responsible for providing a copy of that Plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought. With an Accommodation Plan, the student and instructor agree to a revised course syllabus that recognizes all course requirements to be fulfilled by the student. Accommodation must be completed within the first two weeks of the course.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

You are responsible for doing your own work and correctly acknowledging all sources used in completing any of the course requirements. You are not allowed to submit work done in other classes or sections for a grade in this course. You must adhere to the GSU Policy on Academic Honesty (Section 409), which is available online: [http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/sec409.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/sec409.html).

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's
own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

B. Cheating on Examinations: Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

C. Unauthorized Collaboration: Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

D. Falsification: It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

E. Multiple Submissions: It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for
indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

**GRADING**

*The Scale*

The following scale will be used for grading in this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97 – 100+</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 – 96.99</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 92.99</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 – 89.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 – 86.99</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 82.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 – 76.99</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 72.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69.99</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 59.99</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Final Course Grade Components*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Proportion of Final Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>30% (10% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Assignment #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Assignment #2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Assignment #3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schedule of Classes and Topics

Schedule and readings subject to change. All changes will be noted on iCollege.

I. INTRODUCTION (August 21, 2017)

Read the codes of ethics/codes of professional responsibility from each of the following professional organizations:

Government Finance Officers Association: http://www.gfoa.org
National Association of State Budget Officers: http://www.nasbo.org
International City/County Management Association: http://www.icma.org
American Society for Public Administration: http://www.aspanet.org

“Financial Policies” for the City of Decatur, Georgia: http://decaturga.com/home/showdocument?id=4029

II. PUBLIC FINANCE (August 28, 2017)

Read Mikesell, Chapter 1 and prepare Exercise 1 and Case 1.

III. LABOR DAY. NO CLASS! (September 4, 2017)

IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND THE BUDGET (September 11, 2017)

Read Mikesell, Chapter 2. Prepare exercises 2 and 3, and Case 1.
Read Mikesell, Chapter 3 (Federal budgeting) and prepare Case 1 and Appendix 1.

Assignment #1 Distributed!

V. BUDGET INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESS (September 18, 2017)

Read Chapter 4 (state and local budgeting) and prepare Appendix 1.

Assignment #1 Due!

VI. BUDGET METHODS AND PRACTICE (September 25, 2017)

Read Mikesell, Chapter 5. Prepare exercises 1, 3, and 5, Case 1, and Appendix 1.

Complete the Online Training program on the “Finance for Non-Financial Professionals” and send confirmation to me of your completion.
VII. BUDGET REFORM (October 2, 2017)
Read Mikesell, Chapter 6. Prepare exercise 1, and Case 1, and Appendix 1.

Midterm Distributed!

VIII. CAPITAL BUDGETING AND THE TIME VALUE OF MONEY (October 9, 2017)
Read Mikesell, Chapter 7. Prepare exercises 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6, and Case 1.

Midterm Due!

IX. TAX POLICY AND INCOME TAXATION (October 16, 2017)
A. Tax Policy
Read Mikesell, Chapter 8. Prepare exercise 2, and Case 1.

B. Income Taxation (Basic Concepts)
Read Mikesell, Chapter 9 (exercises and case can wait a week)

X. INCOME AND CONSUMPTION TAXATION (October 23, 2017)
A. Income Taxation (remaining details)
Read Mikesell, Chapter 9. Prepare exercises 2, 3, 4, and 5, and Case 1.

B. Consumption Taxation
Read Mikesell, Chapter 10. Prepare exercises 3, 4, and 5, and Cases 1 and 2.

Assignment #2 Distributed!

XI. PROPERTY TAXATION (October 30, 2017)
Read Mikesell, Chapter 11. Prepare exercises 2, 3, 4, and 11, and Cases 1 and 2.

Assignment #2 Due!

XII. OTHER REVENUE ISSUES & INTERGOVERNMENTAL FISCAL RELATIONS
(November 6, 2017)
A. Public Pricing of Services and Programs
Read Mikesell, Chapter 12. Prepare exercises 1 and 5, and Cases 1 and 2.
Read Mikesell, Sidebar 5-1, pages 190-191. Prepare exercises 9 and 11 on pages 222-223.

B. Revenue Administration and Forecasting
Read Mikesell, Chapter 13. Prepare exercise 1 and Appendix 1.

XIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL FISCAL RELATIONS

Read Mikesell, Chapter 14. Prepare Cases 1 and 2.

XIV. BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (November 20, 2017)

Read Governmental Accounting Standards Board (May/November 2007 issues of The User's Perspective), Touring the Financial Report (Parts 1, 2 and 3), that are posted on D2L.

- Part 1, the Statement of Net Activities
- Part 2: the Statement of Activities
- Part 3: the Governmental Funds

Find and review the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

Assignment #3 Distributed!

XV. DEBT MANAGEMENT (November 27, 2017)

Read Mikesell, Chapter 15. Prepare exercises 3 and 4, and Appendix 1.

Assignment #3 Due!

XVI. FINANCIAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY (December 4, 2017)


Exam Review!

XVII. December 4, 2017 – Final Exam Distributed.

XVIII. December 11, 2017 – Final Exam Due.