

**Public Finance and Fiscal Policy**  
**Greg Weeks, Ph.D.**  
**Tuesday 6:00 – 9:00 PM**  
**LAB II 2205**

**TESC MPA MISSION STATEMENT**

**“Be the Change”**

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We *think* critically and creatively; *communicate* effectively; *work* collaboratively; *embrace* diversity; we *value* fairness and equity; *advocate* powerfully on behalf of the public; and *imagine* new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Public Finance and Fiscal Policy – Course Description:** This course covers the theory and practice of public finance and fiscal policy. Knowledge of the practice of public finance and budgeting is necessary to be an effective decision maker in federal, state, local, tribal or nonprofit organizations. A solid theoretical base will help to understand some of the consequences of spending and revenue policies at all levels, It is also important to be able to articulate the care for or against a particular policy or decision. Advocates, perhaps not in the room when decisions are made, need a base to assess fiscal proposals, and theory is the foundation of assessment. Theory too is at the base of regulatory frameworks. This course will include lectures, speakers, cases and readings. Students will complete a research project where they will examine a program or revenue source, implemented or proposed. The learning objectives include:

- list

## **EXPECTATIONS**

**Format of Assignment Submissions:** Weekly policy/economics papers will be submitted by 5:00 PM on Sunday the week they are due. All papers must address the assigned topic and cite works using the APA citation style. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. If you require it, please request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Check assignment details for each submission. Greg may ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant.

**Late assignments:** All assignments will be submitted on time. This is a key expectation for this class. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, please contact me. I may permit a late submission, require additional work, or not accept the assignment, depending on the assignment and the rationale for being late.

**Participation & Attendance:** Students are required to attend each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty must be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one absence per quarter, make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case. Makeup work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question for course credit.

**Use of Electronic Devices:** this course is Canvas-based and mostly paperless. We understand, and expect, that you will need to use electronic devices in class. However, the class is also participatory and the learning community is dependent upon people being present to what is happening in class. This means that electronic devices should not be used for anything other than for class-related activities. Resist the siren call of all the ways in which your devices can distract you from what is going on in the classroom.

**Credit:** Students will receive 4 graduate credits at the completion of each quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed to meet course objectives. No partial credit will be awarded. Incompletes may be offered on case-by-case basis. Refer to the MPA student handbook.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own, see [MPA Handbook](#) for more), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of total credit. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning goals, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the term.

**Evaluation:** Written self-evaluations and a faculty evaluation are required for credit at the end of each quarter, along with faculty evaluations of students. **Evaluations are due at the end of Week 10.**

**Multiculturalism & Diversity:** Faculty and students work toward weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning in readings, lectures, seminar and group projects.

**Learning Styles:** Faculty endeavor to provide information in multiple formats: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss learning style options or personal challenges.

**Accommodations:** are provided for any student who desires them through a working relationship with Access Services, the Writing Center and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition are regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

**Other Expectations of Students and Faculty:** We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

**We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#). See the college's [Student Conduct webpage](#) for more.**

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

**Guest Policy:** Guests are welcome to our class at any time.

**Inclement Weather:** In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel program meeting even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-program email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#).

**Communicating with Each Other:** Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly. We will have a class discussion group forum on Canvas to facilitate discussion and communication.

**CLASS ACTIVITIES:** Each class will feature one or more organizing topics, which will form the framework for the class. We will have assigned readings consisting of selections from the on line (and free) economics textbook by McAfee (<http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/PrestonMcAfeeEconAnalysis1.pdf#page=201>), as well as papers and articles associated with the topics. Each student will be expected to produce a short reflective paper applying the reading to the topics and accordingly, do additional research on the topics.

All this will form the basis for the classroom meeting. This will be a graduate seminar class based on student and faculty research. I will present several short lecture/discussions throughout the quarter on foundational economic concepts, but most of the substantive discussion will involve the entire class.

Typically class will be divided into three segments: a discussion on the topics for the night, often featuring a powerpoint/ film/ speaker or other diversion; a research time where we will explore on of the topics together as a class research team; and we will usually end with some seminar time, based on the assigned reading and the results of the research time.

### **Topics and Assignments**

**The questions we will be addressing throughout the quarter include:**

1. **When should the government intervene in the economy?**
2. **How should the government intervene?**
3. **What are the effects (positive and negative) of that intervention?**

### Reading Assignments:

Date	Topics	Reading
2. 10/07/2014	Basic economic principles, how markets operate, economic goals of efficiency and fairness.	McAfee, pp 1-40. How economists get it wrong ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/15/opinion/paul-krugman-how-to-get-economic-policy-wrong.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&amp;smid=nytcore-ipad-share">http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/15/opinion/paul-krugman-how-to-get-economic-policy-wrong.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&amp;smid=nytcore-ipad-share</a> ) Keynes/Kayak rap song: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOnERTFo-Sk">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOnERTFo-Sk</a> Student research on market efficiency, market failure and the proper role of government.
3. 10/14/2014	Facts about the American economy, deficit, growth, income distribution, etc.	McAfee, pp 41 – 78. More on market processes Economic Report of the President (Ch 1) PDF <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/erp_2014_chapter_1.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/erp_2014_chapter_1.pdf</a> Income inequality data tables: <a href="http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/in_equality/table_IE-1A2.pdf">http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/in_equality/table_IE-1A2.pdf</a> Greg Workshop on WA state economy.
4. 10/21/2014	Externalities (theory and class provided examples)	McAfee: pp 213-225. Video on economics of externalities: <a href="http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/economic-lowdown-video-companion-series/episode-5-externalities">http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/economic-lowdown-video-companion-series/episode-5-externalities</a> WA carbon tax/cap and trade proposal.
5. 10/28/2014	More on externalities (start research project) Market Failure – Monopoly and Anti-Trust	Readings on class generated externalities examples. Casinos and crime: <a href="http://stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Measuring-Industry-Externalities-The-Curious-Case-of-Casinos-and-Crime.pdf">http://stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Measuring-Industry-Externalities-The-Curious-Case-of-Casinos-and-Crime.pdf</a>  Whales, salmon and corporate power: (audio) <a href="http://www.economics-antitextbook.com/2011/04/case-study-in-externalities-corporate.html">http://www.economics-antitextbook.com/2011/04/case-study-in-externalities-corporate.html</a>  Collective action and agri-business: <a href="http://books.google.com/books?id=tJQ9AWH4W-UC&amp;pg=PA63&amp;lpg=PA63&amp;dq=negative+externalities+case+studies&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=dN6vslB2ns&amp;sig=ZHLFujWxSOekZL9tUr4">http://books.google.com/books?id=tJQ9AWH4W-UC&amp;pg=PA63&amp;lpg=PA63&amp;dq=negative+externalities+case+studies&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=dN6vslB2ns&amp;sig=ZHLFujWxSOekZL9tUr4</a>



<b>6. 11/4/2014</b>	Public Goods (theory and class provided examples)	McAfee: 226-231 A nice analysis of real world public goods: <a href="http://socsci.colorado.edu/~mciverj/Ostrom-PG%26PC.PDF">http://socsci.colorado.edu/~mciverj/Ostrom-PG%26PC.PDF</a>  Science as a public good: <a href="http://timreview.ca/article/810">http://timreview.ca/article/810</a>  Sports stadia as public goods: Go hawks? <a href="http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/1997/06/summer-taxes-noll">http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/1997/06/summer-taxes-noll</a>
<b>7. 11/18/2014</b>	Tax and spending – Federal facts, process and reform	McAfee: pp 195-291  Research project workshop
<b>8. 12/2/2014</b>	Tax and spending —State and local facts and reform.	Reading on US spending/budget history State budget process, history/ challenges.
<b>9. 12/09/2014</b>	Wrap up, summary and poster session	
<b>10. 12/16</b>	Evaluation Week	

### Writing

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Research and paper</b>
<b>2. 10/07/2014</b>	Basic economic principles, how markets operate, economic goals of efficiency and fairness.	Research on the advantages and disadvantages of the US economic structure. I.e. What works and what doesn't  Two page essay/Paper: Your thoughts on the proper role of government and how to pay for it.

<b>3. 10/14/2014</b>	Facts about the American economy, deficit, growth, income distribution, etc.	Research on the performance of the American economy. Look to areas of economic productivity, employment, income distribution, etc. Two page essay/paper describing the area you think the US economy works best and the area it is least effective, be as evidence based as possible.
<b>4. 10/21/2014</b>	Externalities (theory and class provided example s)	Research on two or three externalities you find interesting. Two page essay/paper describing one positive (not education) and one negative externality
<b>5. 10/28/2014</b>	More on externalities (start research project) Market Failure – Monopoly and Anti-Trust	Research on topics generate in last week's class. Writing assignment to be announced.



<b>6. 11/4/2014</b>	Public Goods (theory and class provided examples)	Research on issues around outdoor recreation or other public good.  Two page essay/paper on how to ration a public good – ie how do you prevent congestion at Mt Rainier?
<b>7. 11/18/2014</b>	Tax and spending – Federal facts, process and reform	TBA
<b>8. 12/2/2014</b>	Tax and spending— State and local facts and reform.	TBA
<b>9. 12/09/2014</b>	Wrap up, summary and poster session	
<b>10. 12/16</b>	Evaluation Week	

Friday: October 3, 2014: Fall Quarter MPA Orientation, 5:30-6:30 PM