

University of Colorado at Boulder  
Department of Economics

### Course prerequisites:

This course requires previous completion of Economics 3070, Intermediate Microeconomic Theory, Economics 3080, Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory, and Economics 3818, Introduction to Statistics With Computer Applications, or their equivalents. These prerequisites will be enforced. In addition, enrollment requires my permission. If you wish to enroll, contact me at the email address above.

### Course requirements:

Performance in this course will be judged on the basis of six instruments. A midterm examination will examine the material in the formal lectures and readings. It will take place on 14 March, and be worth 10% of the final grade. The final examination will review the formal presentations and the experience of interacting with the General Assembly. It will also be worth 10% of the final grade, and will take place on 8 May.

For the remaining 80% of the course, each student will be responsible for choosing four issues before the Colorado General Assembly during the course of the semester. The assignment for each of these issues will consist of three components.

The first component will be a briefing paper of no more than five pages. The student summarize the relevant literature in language and figures that would convey the essence of the material to a general audience. Each of these papers will be worth 10% of the final grade. Due dates will be determined according to the General Assembly schedule for each issue.

These papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, and with conventional margins. Papers that exceed the maximum lengths, either in physical length or because of compressed format, will be penalized. They must be submitted to me electronically at the email address above in the Adobe .pdf format. The computers in the computer lab in the basement of the Economics Building can create pdf files from Word files. Make sure that you a

to each, and a signed attestation to the fact of distribution by the student. Each confirmed distribution will be worth 2% of the final grade. Distribution dates will be determined according to the General Assembly schedule for each issue.

In addition, students will be required to present verbal testimony in person to the General Assembly. As a consequence of the difficulty of coordinating Assembly and student schedules, this requirement will apply to any two of the four issues analyzed by each student. If a student offers testimony on only one issue, that student will forfeit 10% of the potential final grade. If a student offers no testimony, that student will forfeit 20% of the potential final grade.

Excuses for course requirements will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. If granted, the excused points will be reallocated to subsequent requirements. The course as a whole is valued at 100 points. The score attained by each student, evaluated relative to those of other students and to the score which would be attained by an intelligent student of economics at this level, will determine final letter grades.

#### Course resources:

Most of the assigned readings are in the textbook by Harvey S. Rosen and Ted Gayer, Public Finance, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2010, ISBN 978-0-07-351135-1. The complete textbook is available for purchase at the book store.

The remaining pamphlets, assigned for 24 January, may be obtained from the webpage for this lecture on the course website:

<http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/Zax/Econ4231/spring13/webpages/econ4231.html>.

Additional readings may be assigned at my discretion. Students will be responsible for identifying readings that are relevant to their individual topics.

#### Tentative schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture title, readings and assignments</u>
17 January	Introduction to the Colorado General Assembly and normative local public finance Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li></ul> Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose first bill</li></ul>
24 January	Field trip to Colorado State Capital Readings:

- “An Overview of the Legislative Process”
- “The State Budget Process: A Staff Perspective”
- “Rules and Regulations: A primer on formal rulemaking processes and procedures in Colorado”
- “The Case for Representative Democracy: What Americans Should Know About Their Legislatures”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2001.
- “Learning the Game: How the Legislative Process Works”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005.
- “Making Your Case: How to Win in the Legislature”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005.

Assignment:

- Choose second issue

31 January	Two central issues: Job creation and taxation Readings: • To be announced Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
7 February	Normative public finance I Readings: • Rosen and Grayer, chapters 3, 4 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
14 February	Normative public finance II Readings: • Rosen and Grayer, chapters 5, 8 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
21 February	Taxation and positive local public finance Readings: • Rosen and Grayer, chapters 14-16 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
28 February	Taxation and positive local public finance Readings: • Rosen and Grayer, chapters 7, 9, 10, 13 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
7 March	Government structure and legislatures Readings: • Rosen and Grayer, chapters 6, 22 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills

14 March	Mid-term examination on lecture and reading material
21 March	Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li> </ul>
4 April	Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li> </ul>
11 April	Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li> </ul>
18 April	Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li> </ul>
25 April	Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website of the Colorado General Assembly: <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/">http://www.leg.state.co.us/</a></li> </ul>
2 May	Presentation of General Assembly legislative scorecard
8 May	Final examination 4:30p.m.-7:00p.m.

#### University policies:

The University adheres to the standards for student privacy rights and requirements as stipulated in the Federal Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.<sup>1</sup> Campus policy regarding disabilities requires that faculty adhere to the recommendations of Disability Services. In addition, campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every

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<sup>1</sup> A summary is available at [http://registrar.colorado.edu/regulations/purpose\\_of\\_ferpa.html](http://registrar.colorado.edu/regulations/purpose_of_ferpa.html). Details are available at [http://registrar.colorado.edu/regulations/ferpa\\_guide.html](http://registrar.colorado.edu/regulations/ferpa_guide.html).

effort to reasonably and fairly accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments or required attendance. Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of disability or religious practice should arrange to meet with me immediately. Those with disabilities should immediately submit a letter from Disability Services describing appropriate adjustments or accommodations.<sup>2</sup>

Students and faculty share responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All are subject to the University's policies on Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships.<sup>3</sup> Students who fail to adhere to appropriate behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions.<sup>4</sup> I am happy to discuss any issues of individual or group treatment in office hours or by appointment.

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to this institution's policy regarding academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bribery, threatening behavior and assistance to acts of academic dishonesty are examples of behaviors that violate this policy. Ordinarily, a student engaged in any act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade for the course. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council. Depending on its findings, students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to non-academic sanctions, including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> University policies regarding religious practice are available at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html). University policies regarding disabilities are available at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>. Disability Services can be contacted by telephone at 303-492-8671, or in person at Willard 322.

<sup>3</sup> University policies regarding Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships are available at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh/>. The Office of Discrimination and Harassment can be reached by telephone at 303-492-2127. The Office of Judicial Affairs can be reached at 303-492-5550.

<sup>4</sup> University policies regarding classroom behavior are available at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

<sup>5</sup> The Honor Code Council website is at [honor.colorado.edu](http://honor.colorado.edu). The Honor Code office can be contacted by email at [honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu) or by telephone at 303-735-2273. Additional information regarding the University Honor Code is available at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html>.