

University of Colorado at Boulder
Department of Economics

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Economics 4231
Syllabus and Schedule
4 January 2016

Welcome. I am Prof. Jeffrey S. Zax. This is Economics 4231, Applied Economic Analysis and

regular office hours between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Thursdays in Economics 111, my office. Appointments may be made for meetings at other times, if these are inconvenient. Course information will be posted regularly on Desire2Learn. Notifications will be posted there as well, and sent via campus email. It is your responsibility to monitor both.

Course prerequisites

These papers must be type-written, double-spaced, and have 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 arrange to convert your papers to .pdf format before the deadline for submission. Speak with me in advance if you anticipate difficulty with this requirement. Only .pdf files will be accepted.

In order to ensure that first drafts contain at least a minimal analytical foundation for subsequent development, a one-point deduction from the final grade will be applied for any first draft that fails to achieve a grade of at least 3 points out of 8. In order to ensure that drafts subsequent to the first improve appropriately, a one-half point deduction from the final grade will be applied to any draft that follows a draft receiving a grade of 3 points or less and fails to improve by 1.5 points, to any draft that follows a draft receiving a grade of 4 points or less and fails to improve by one point, and to any draft that follows a draft receiving a grade of 5 points or less and fails to improve by one-half point.

The second and third components of the assignment for each bill can be undertaken only if the final draft of the paper attains a grade of at least 6 points out of 8. If the final draft does not attain this standard, the grades for the second and third components will both be zero.

The second component of each bill assignment will consist of a testimony presentation. This presentation will condense the associated briefing paper into a three-minute oral presentation. This presentation will take place in class. Each of these presentations will be worth 5 points, or 5% of the final grade. Presentations should ordinarily follow the submission of final paper drafts. If the General Assembly schedules for the bills in question demands otherwise, you must receive permission from me in advance.

The third component of each bill assignment will consist of confirmed distribution of the briefing paper to appropriate members of the General Assembly. I must approve each paper for distribution. Distribution should occur via email, with myself as one of the recipients. Papers must be distributed after the receipt of approval, and within five days of that receipt in order to receive credit. Each distribution will be worth 2 points, or 2% of the final grade.

In addition, students will be required to present verbal testimony in person to the General Assembly. Students may testify only on bills for which their presentation attained a grade of at least 3.5 out of 5 points. As a consequence of the difficulty of coordinating Assembly and student schedules, this requirement will apply to any two of the four bills analyzed by each student. The accomplishment of each instance of verbal testimony will be worth 10 points, or 10% of the final grade. Ordinarily, credit is granted for verbal testimony only if the associated briefing paper has already been accepted and the associated oral presentation has occurred in class. Any exceptions to this policy must be granted by me in advance of testimony.

- 28 January Normative public finance I: Public goods and externalities
Readings
 - Rosen and Oyer, chapters 4 and 5
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
- 4 February Two central issues: Job creation and taxation
Readings
 - To be announced
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
- 11 February Normative public finance II:
Readings
 - Rosen and Oyer, chapter 8
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
Assignment:
 - First paper due today
- 18 February Taxation and positive local public finance
Readings
 - Rosen and Oyer, chapters 14-16
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
- 25 February Taxation and positive local public finance
Readings
 - Rosen and Oyer, chapters 7, 9, 10, 13
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
- 3 March Government structure and legislatures
Readings
 - Rosen and Oyer, chapters 6 & 22
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
Assignment:
 - Second paper due today
- 10 March Mid-term examination on lecture and reading material
- 17 March Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
Readings
 - The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
<http://www.leg.state.co.us/>
Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills

- 31 March Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
 Readings
 • The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
 <http://www.leg.state.co.us>
 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
 Assignment
 • Third paper due today
- 7 April Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
 Readings
 • The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
 <http://www.leg.state.co.us>
- 14 April Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
 Readings
 • The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
 <http://www.leg.state.co.us>
- 21 April Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
 Readings
 • The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
 <http://www.leg.state.co.us>
 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
 Assignment
 • Fourth paper due today
- 28 April Assembly scorecard and discussion of individual bills
 Readings
 Discussion of Assembly calendar and individual bills
 • The website of the Colorado General Assembly:
 <http://www.leg.state.co.us>
- 5 May Final examination: 1:30p.m.-4:00p.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 1974². Campus policy regarding

² A description is available at <http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/resources/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>.

disabilities requires that faculty adhere to the recommendations of Disability Services. In addition, campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments or req

