

Course Number: PAD 5311/PADX 5311 Semester: Fall 2022

CRN: 12122/18874

Course Title: Economic Analysis for Public Administrators

Instructor: Eric Boyer
315 Benedict Hall
ejboyer@utep.edu
915-747-6145

Office Hours: 5-6PM, via Zoom, or email me a time to meet.

Course Introduction:

This course provides an introduction to microeconomics, with an emphasis on its applications to public management and policy analysis. The aim of this course is to equip you with a conceptual and analytical understanding of economic analysis.

Decision-making in the public and nonprofit sector directly influences the delivery of goods and services to the public. The aim of this course is to empower you with an economic framework for evaluating and analyzing strategic decisions. Throughout the course, you will examine how people respond to incentives, how markets perform efficiently, and how government intervention affects market outcomes. You will also evaluate the government's role in the economy, including the potential for government intervention to influence economic welfare, market growth, and the distribution of costs and benefits.

This course is intended as a fundamental component of the Master of Public Administration program. No prior study of economics or mathematics is required or assumed. You will be expected, however, to achieve basic familiarity with graphing, computation and algebra as demonstrated in the course materials in the first two weeks of the class.

Central questions guiding this course include: What is the economic justification for government? How should concerns about efficiency and equity be balanced? What policies should we undertake to improve well-being? How can public and nonprofit managers improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations? What can the tools of economic analysis tell us about the ways policy changes are likely to influence behavior?

The learning objectives of this class include the abilities to:

- Demonstrate an ability to apply tools and theories from microeconomics to improve managerial and policy making decision-making;
- Understand the public sector through an economist's lens, and integrate economic reasoning and approaches into your research and reasoning;

- Understand basic microeconomic principles such as efficiency, opportunity costs, comparative advantage, preferences, elasticity, public goods, adverse selection, moral hazard, among others;
- Evaluate noneconomic policies through the lens of economic analysis to predict how policy changes may affect the behavior of individuals and those who produce goods and services for them in areas such as illegal immigration, illegal drug enforcement, etc.;
- Comprehend and critically evaluate arguments made by elected officials and political commentators;
- Incorporate economic concepts and tools into your own writing, thinking, and work.

Diversity Statement:

A central aim of this class is that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class inform our collective learning. This course also aims to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, culture and political ideology. Class discussion will be facilitated with the aim of recognizing and learning from different points of view.

Course Format:

Recognizing that students have different learning and working styles, this course will utilize a variety of learning and teaching formats. We will use lectures, discussions, case studies, examples from current events, examples from students' own personal professional experiences, and written assignments. The professor will utilize the UTEP *Blackboard* system to distribute class materials. If any student engages in behavior that is seen to be disruptive, condescending or inappropriate, the professor may remove significant credit for participation.

Students are responsible for maintaining access to the blackboard site for this course and their UTEP email accounts. Students are responsible for keeping up to date on email communication from the professor and fellow members of the class through their UTEP email accounts.

Students are expected to deliver their work on time. If, due to illness or personal emergency, you believe your work will be late, you are advised to discuss the matter in with the instructor before the assignment is due. Late work will normally be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B). Unless an agreement has been made with the professor before the assignment is due, a late assignment that has still not been handed in by the time the professor hands back the graded assignment to the rest of the class (normally about a week) will be deducted by 20 points.

The best way to handle a late assignment is to email the instructor BEFORE it is due, if you need extra time. If you commit to reasonable revised deadline that you meet, the instructor will be lenient on grade penalties.

Course Requirements (Also please see grading criteria attached to this syllabus):

1. Weekly Assignments (50%): Each person will complete weekly written assignments, through the assignments tab in Blackboard. In an effort to foster greater student-to-student interaction, there is the option to complete this assignment with a partner. If you work with a partner on the assignment, be sure to include both your name and your partner's name on the copy that you hand-in. Any graphs that you include in your assignments should be created by you (not cut and pasted from another source) and should be generated with a computer software program (such as Microsoft Word). Some weekly assignments will be assigned as video presentations.

To complete this assignment each week: 1) click on the assignments tab and select the weekly assignment that you will complete, 2) download the Word document with the weekly assignment questions, 3) complete your answers in the downloaded Word document and resubmit the document through Blackboard Assignments for the week in question. Each weekly assignment is due end of day (11:59pm).

2. Midterm Exam (25%): This online exam will involve multiple-choice and short-answer questions from all of the material covered in sessions I-V and will be completed via Blackboard.
3. Final Paper (25%): Choose a public policy issue from the list provided, and explain the unintended consequences, market incentives, and individual incentives that explain the costs and benefits of different approaches to addressing the issue. Conduct some web research too on a real-world example of this type of policy and explain how it did or did not meet the expectations of the model.

Your paper should be 4-5 pages double-spaced maximum, and include at least one graph to illustrate core concepts from the class. The aim of this assignment is to:

- 1) review material from the class to demonstrate your expertise in the course material and
- 2) conduct web research on an economic issue of your choosing.

Required Reading:

1. Mankiw, N. G. (2018). *Principles of Microeconomics* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage. ISBN-13: 978-1305971493
2. Wheelan, C. (2019). *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co. ISBN-13: 978-0393356496

Journal articles, book chapters, case studies and other required and recommended material not in the assigned books will be available on *Blackboard* or handed out in class.

Course Policies

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of “I” (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the Program Director. Please consult the Student Handbook for the complete policy on incompletes.
2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment, even those submitted online through SafeAssign.
3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.
4. Academic Honesty: Please consult the “policies” section of the student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.”
4. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.
5. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.
6. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services at UTEP.
7. Instructor’s Policy on Grade Contestation: Students wishing to contest a grade are required to draft a brief memo explaining the reasoning behind their dispute, and to then schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss it.

Grading Criteria

A

Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

B

Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

C

Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

F

Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.