

Course Number: PAD 5311                      Semester: Fall 2020  
CRN: 19917/11918                      Wednesdays: (ONLINE)

Course Title: Economic Analysis for Public Administrators

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Office Hours: Office Hours will be held virtually on blackboard. To join the office hours, log onto blackboard on the time of the office hours and click “virtual office hours.” You can also “dial” into it at that time by calling the following: 1-571-392-7650 PIN: 118 953 9994.

Once you log into blackboard during office hours, you can chat in the chat room, talk by audio, or talk by video in real time.

Wednesdays, 6-8PM (virtual), or please email me for a time to meet.

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:**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent 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. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

### **Course Format**

Recognizing that students have different learning and working styles, this course will utilize a variety of learning and teaching formats. The class will be instructed through an online format, utilizing video-recorded presentations, weekly assignments, virtual office hours, and selected written assignments. The professor will utilize the UTEP *Blackboard* system to distribute class materials.

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 advance with the instructor. Late work will normally be penalized at least one-third grade (e.g., from an A- to a B+). If you submit a paper assignment with text copied from another source without appropriate attribution, you will be penalized up to 50% of the final grade on the assignment and you may be required to re-do the assignment. Late work may be penalized at a higher rate if handed in after graded assignments have been handed back to the class.

Exceptions for late work penalties should be made BEFORE the assignment is due, by emailing the instructor. I will do my best to work with you if you have a personal or professional work emergency that you notify me of before an assignment deadline.

## **Technology Requirements**

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP email account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (weekly assignments, papers, etc.) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your back-up document as a last resort.

## **Netiquette**

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind.

- Always consider your audience. This is a graduate-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended

for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

### **COVID-19 Precautions**

Please contact me if you have a personal emergency related to COVID-19, so that we can work together on a solution, while allowing you time to deal with the emergency. The following paragraphs are from UTEP administration.

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at [screening.utep.edu](https://screening.utep.edu). If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to [COVIDaction@utep.edu](mailto:COVIDaction@utep.edu).

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website ([screening.utep.edu](https://screening.utep.edu)) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

### **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. For any graph that you provide, please generate the graphs with computer software and include it in the weekly assignment (Word document) that you submit.

To complete this assignment each week, you should 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).

The weekly assignments will include optional exam practice questions – you do NOT need to include them in your weekly assignment. They are study guides for the midterm.

Some weekly assignments will be assigned as video presentations.

2. Midterm Exam (25%): This online exam will involve multiple-choice and short-answer questions from all of the material covered in sessions I-IV and will be completed via Blackboard.
3. Final Exam (25%): The final take-home exam will involve some short-answer questions, as well as essay questions to challenge you to think through the material on a deeper level.

### **Required Reading**

1. Mankiw, N. G. (2018). *Principles of Microeconomics* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage. ISBN-13: 978-1305971493 [if you use an earlier edition, it's up to you to ensure it does not miss what we go over in class]
2. Wheelan, C. (2010). *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co. ISBN-13: 978-0393337648

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.