ECON 320 SYLLABUS, SPRING 2015

INSTRUCTOR
Dr. Karen Gebhardt
Email: karen.gebhardt@colostate.edu
Mobile: (970) 231-1287
On campus office and office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11-12:30pm (and by appointment) in Clark C319A, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523
Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment (we can talk on the phone, chat, Skype, FaceTime, etc!)

Term Start: January 20, 2014
Term End: May 15, 2014

Class website: http://ramct.colostate.edu
- Login using your Colorado State University eID and password
- Under Course List, click “2015SP-ECON-320-801: Economics of Public Finance”.
- Note: all email correspondence will be through your CSU rams email address.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Impact of taxes, government expenditures on allocation of resources, distribution of income, evaluation of government expenditure program; tax policies.

This course is offered through the Department of Economics at Colorado State University. Public Finance is an optional applied course in one of the key field areas of economics. The objective of the course is to equip you with the analytical framework and tools required to discern the efficiency and equity consequences of government spending programs and tax policies. In addition, you should acquire a familiarity with normative analysis of tax and spending policies, based on specified value judgments. Applications to current public issues and policy debates are an integral part of the course.

COURSE PREREQUISITES
MATH 117 (College Algebra in Context I) or MATH 118 (College Algebra in Context II) or MATH 141 (Calculus in Management Sciences) or MATH 155 (Calculus for Biological Scientists I) or MATH 160 (Calculus for Physical Scientists I); AND ECON 202 (Principles of Microeconomics); AND ECON 204 (Principles of Macroeconomics)

COURSE GOALS
By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. explain and apply the theoretical and empirical tools of Public Finance;
2. analyze and describe the consequences and impacts on fairness of non-rivalry and non-excludability in the form of public goods and of positive and negative externalities;
3. identify the various approaches of defining equity in the context of income distribution and describe the various programs in place in the US to address inequity in income distribution; and
4. discuss the efficiency and equity impactions for optimal taxation and apply these concepts to common US taxes.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

1. Your text is Public Finance and Public Policy by Jonathan Gruber 4th ed., ISBN 13: 9781429278454. You can purchase this book new or used from the CSU Bookstore at [www.bookstore.colostate.edu](http://www.bookstore.colostate.edu). You can also purchase a new or used text, an eText, rent the text, etc. from a variety of sources. See additional purchase options on RamCT.

**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS**

Supplemental readings and other materials will be provided in RamCT system, via the CSU Library electronic reserve, or by links to websites.

**TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS**

The technology requirements for this online course are listed below:

**Hardware**

- A Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).
- Recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size be 13-inches or larger for optimum visibility of course material.
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
- Enough space on your computer for 1) install the required and recommended software and, 2) save your course assignments.

**Software (see recommendations from CSU)**

- Web browser (Firefox generally works well with CSU websites - [free download](#))
- [RamCT Blackboard Course](#) (RamCT technical support)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](#))
- Flash Player ([free download](#))
- Microsoft Office ([purchase](#))

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERY**

This course is delivered via distance education format using the CSU RamCT system. This format will use a combination of readings, online discussion, and other web-based resources. You will interact with the instructor and other students using the communication functions provided by RamCT. You will submit assignments in accordance with the course outline using RamCT.

**COURSE PRESENTATION AND PROCEDURES**

There will be 16 modules corresponding to the 16 weeks of the course (1 module per week). You should proceed through one module per week, which will be comprised of readings from the course texts, supplemental class notes, graded discussion questions, problem sets, instructions related to policy analyses to help you prepare for the exams, and various outside sources of information such as additional readings and video content.
EVALUATION AND GRADING

Course grades will be determined by the completion of assignments, exams, and discussions, as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment*</th>
<th>Points per Assignment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>GRADE POINTS</th>
<th>GRADE PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>* (2)</td>
<td>= 100</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threaded Discussions</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>* (12)</td>
<td>= 120</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>* (12)</td>
<td>= 180</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>* (1)</td>
<td>= 100</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>* (1)</td>
<td>= 100</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>= 600</td>
<td>= 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Keep a copy of all work created for the course, including work submitted through RamCT Blackboard.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Grade</th>
<th>Equivalent Points</th>
<th>Indicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>588-600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-97.99</td>
<td>552-587</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91.99</td>
<td>540-551</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89.99</td>
<td>528-539</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87.99</td>
<td>492-527</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-81.99</td>
<td>480-491</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79.99</td>
<td>468-479</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-77.99</td>
<td>420-467</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>360-419</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Less than 360</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is +/- grading in this class.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is designed to engage you through class discussions on the topics covered in the course materials. It is important that you participate in class discussions to facilitate learning by other students and gain exposure to different viewpoints of other students in the class. It is therefore necessary to participate throughout the week in the discussion questions, not wait until the last minute to post on discussion topics.

ASSIGNMENTS

**Policy Analysis** (100 POINTS) – There will be two (2) policy analysis writing assignments focusing on written application of public finance topics (2-3 pages in length, single spaced, TNR 12 point font, 1” margins). These writing assignments will be submitted through RamCT.
The evaluation of the policy analysis will be based on the following criteria:

a) The ability to convey a theme or argument clearly and coherently.
b) The ability to analyze critically and to synthesize the work of others.
c) The ability to acquire and apply information from appropriate sources.
d) Competence in standard written English (including proper use of syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as use of appropriate vocabulary, formatting, and references).

- Keep in mind that plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. As per university policy Academic honesty is imperative. Any student or student organization found to have committed or to have attempted to commit misconduct is subject to disciplinary sanction. For example, academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification, or facilitation of acts of dishonesty. Specific procedures for cases of academic dishonesty are also described in the Academic Integrity Policy in the General Catalog, the Graduate Student Bulletin, the Faculty Manual, or the Honor Code of the Professional Veterinary School as applicable. For more information, please use the link provided on RamCT.

Discussions (120 POINTS) – There will be online discussions associated with most modules. The discussion will occur asynchronously; I will post a discussion question and you will respond to the questions at your convenience prior to the due date. Your initial post is due by Thursday and your comment is due by Sunday. Each week you participate, you earn up to 10 points. Discussions are open book and open note and will be submitted through RamCT.

Quizzes (180 POINTS) – There will be quizzes associated with most modules each worth 15 points. The format of the quizzes will be multiple choice, calculations, and short answers and will be open book and open notes. Your lowest two (2) quizzes are dropped from your final grade calculation. Quizzes will be submitted through RamCT. Quizzes are always due on Sunday.

Exams (200 POINTS) – There will be two (2) exams each worth 100 points. The final exam is not cumulative. The format of the exam will be multiple choice, calculations, and short answers and will be closed book and open notes. The exam is completed on RamCT in a proctored setting.

This course requires proctored examinations. Proctors are individuals who agree to administer examinations following the guidelines provided by Colorado State University. Exams or passwords are mailed or emailed directly to your proctor, so contact your proctor prior to your exam day and time.

If you are in Fort Collins, you can take your exam:

1. On campus in the Economics Department (email me) or at the offices of CSU OnlinePlus (OnlinePlus Contact Information). There is no cost for using these proctors.
2. With ProctorU (http://www.proctoru.com/colostate/) - an online proctoring service that uses a webcam and microphone. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There is no cost for using the basic ProctorU services.
3. With a person as a proctor (such as military educators, pastors or ministers, certified school teachers, school principals, supervisors or employers). There is may be a cost for using these proctors.
If you are not in Fort Collins, you can take your exam:

1. With ProctorU ([http://www.proctoru.com/colostate/](http://www.proctoru.com/colostate/)) - an online proctoring service that uses a webcam and microphone. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There is no cost for using ProctorU.
2. With a person as a proctor (such as military educators, pastors or ministers, certified school teachers, school principals, supervisors or employers can be your proctor). There may be a cost for using these proctors.

Proctors can be:
- college or university testing center representatives,
- military educators,
- pastors or ministers,
- continuing education officers,
- librarians,
- certified school teachers,
- school principals, or
- supervisors.

Proctors cannot be:
- fellow students,
- subordinates of the student,
- coworkers, peers, friends, or
- related to the student in any way.

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- subordinates of the student,
- coworkers, peers, friends, or
- related to the student in any way.

Additional information about proctoring is available on RamCT.

**EXPECTATIONS OF INSTRUCTOR**

As a student enrolled in this course, one of your responsibilities is to submit course work by the due dates listed in the Schedule. With that said, I take my role as your instructor very seriously, and, in fact, I care about how well you do in this course and that you have a satisfying, rewarding experience.

To that end, it is my commitment to you to respond individually to the work you submit in this class and to return your work in a timely manner. If, however, due to unforeseeable circumstances, the grading of your work takes longer than the times I have listed here, I will keep you informed of my progress and make every effort to return your work with feedback as soon as I can.

**Communication** – I am nice and I want you to succeed. Do not hesitate to contact me about anything. Yes, anything.

- **E-mail:** [karen.gebhardt@colostate.edu](mailto:karen.gebhardt@colostate.edu) All e-mail sent to me should contain the following: Course Name and Number, Your Name, Short Description of your question. I will respond to email within 12-18 hours, but usually within 2-4 hours. I always respond to email. If you have not had a response within 18 hours I did not receive the email. Be sure to use your CSU rams email address because sometimes gmail and yahoo email accounts are filtered into my spam folder.
- **Phone or Texting:** (970) 231-1287 This is my cell phone number. Call or text anytime between 8am – 9pm MTN. I sometimes have my phone turned off during the middle of the day, but leave a message when it is a good time to get a hold of you and I will call you back.
- **Facetime:** Anytime between 8am – 9pm MTN. (970) 231-1287
- **Skype:** Anytime between 8am – 9pm MTN. My Skype contact is [karengebhardtcolorado](mailto:karengebhardtcolorado). I generally do not have Skype open on my computer but just send me a text or email and we can connect.
• **Announcements:** Please check the “announcements” section on the course dashboard on RamCT often.

**TOTAL COURSE TIME ESTIMATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis (4)</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threaded discussions (15)</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View class presentations (15)</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Sets (4)</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2)</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reading/study</td>
<td>45 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours:</strong></td>
<td><strong>150 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Withdrawal Policy:** Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must submit a request directly to Division of Continuing Education (OnlinePlus). For complete information, please visit their website at [http://www.learn.colostate.edu/help/creditstudents/registration/drop-policy.dot](http://www.learn.colostate.edu/help/creditstudents/registration/drop-policy.dot)

**POLICY ON DUE DATES**

Each week you will complete a series of critical thinking questions that reflect material from the various delivery formats and required readings. It is your responsibility to turn in each assignment on the required date. All assignments turned in after the scheduled due date will be lowered to the next letter grade for each day late. The exceptions that MAY BE CONSIDERED is due to sickness, university excused function, or circumstances beyond the students’ control. The instructor reserves the sole right to determine what grounds constitutes a reasonable excuse for missing or submitting a late work assignment, the right to require the student to submit proper verification of such excuse.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policies and Guiding Principles as found in the General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code.

At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.

If you have any questions about what is permissible, please ask.

**CSU HONOR PLEDGE**

Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, I will ask that you affirm the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing your work in this course. **While you will not be required to affirm the honor pledge**, you are expected to affirm the following statement for each assignment:

"*I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance.*"

Further information about Academic Integrity is available at CSU’s Practicing Academic Integrity.
RESOURCES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS
Students with disabilities may be eligible for accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is the student’s responsibility to disclose any learning disabilities. Please contact the instructor if a special accommodation is required. To request accommodations, students should contact Resources for Disabled Students at (970) 491-6385 or go to http://rds.colostate.edu. Documentation of disability is required and the RDS office will assist in this process.

TECHNICAL HELP
RamCT technical support
• http://help.ramct.colostate.edu/student-resources.aspx

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES
A variety of instructional support services, such as writing center, guidance on personal or educational issues, tutoring questions and library resources are available to the students. For more information about their services, visit their websites linked under “additional resources” on RamCT.