

**Syllabus**  
**Public Finance**  
**Econ 310 Section 001**  
**Fall 2010**

**Professor:** Dr. Geoffrey Black

**Office:** B-311

**Phone:** 426-1359

**Email:** gblack@boisestate.edu

**Office Hours:** M, W, F from 2:30 – 3:30 pm and by appointment

**Class Time:** M, W, F 11:40 am – 12:30 pm in B 102A

**Text:** *Public Finance* by Harvey Rosen and Ted Gayer, Ninth edition, 2010 (McGraw Hill).

**Objectives and Goals:** The primary objective of this course is to enable you to appreciate an economic approach to public policy. The goal of the course is for you to be able answer such questions as: What is the market system and what are its advantages? What are some problem areas for the market? How can the public sector attempt to deal with those problem areas? How successful are its attempts to do so? What kinds of activities does the public sector engage in? What kinds of expenditures does it make in pursuit of public policies? What are the goals of some of these policies? What are some problems with these policies? What are some suggested reforms? How are the revenues raised in order to carry out public sector activities? What are some of the consequences of raising revenue in these ways?

**Assessment:** Your progress toward achieving the above goals will be assessed primarily by a series of two exams (including the final exam), a research project (oral or written – your choice), an annotated bibliography project to help you conduct your research project, a series of periodic assignments relating to current class concepts, and a series of your written assessments of the presentations by your classmates.

For the research project, you will be conducting research on one of the topics for the course and you will choose between doing a written or oral research presentation). All of the research projects will focus on policy issues at the national or state level regarding environmental policy, income re-distribution, social security reform, health care reform, tax policy and reform, etc. You'll choose one issue and research the policy background of the issue, the main topics of debate and contention about the issue, and the current policy landscape regarding the issue. Most likely, a few of your classmates will be interested in the same topic, so you will be joined in your presentation by one or (at most) two fellow students. More details will be given on the research projects as the semester progresses.

The exams will each be worth 150 points, the research project will be worth 200 points, the annotated bibliography project will be worth 50 points, the periodic assignments will total 50 points, and the

evaluations will total 50 points. Thus, there will be total of 650 possible points for the semester. The attached course calendar gives dates for reading assignments and exams

The following grading scale used for the class: A = 90% and above; B = 89% - 76%; C = 75% - 60%; F = below 60% of the total possible points. I reserve the right to adjust each student's grade up or down somewhat according to individual performance on in-class discussions.

**Responsibilities:** Readings will consist of the textbook chapters as given in the calendar on page two. In addition, some short readings may be assigned. Your responsibilities, like mine, include being well prepared for class. Your job is to read the assigned readings before coming to class and to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Your attendance is expected and you are responsible for any information presented. If you can't make it to class, make sure you arrange to obtain the information you missed.

**Class Policy:** Exams must be taken on the scheduled dates. Writing assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date and must be printed out using a word processing program or typed. Late assignments will not be accepted! Exceptions to this policy will be granted only with prior permission from me.

**The Deal:** This syllabus and the attached course schedule are essentially a contract between you and me. By choosing to remain in the course after reading the syllabus and schedule, you are implicitly agreeing to the requirements of the course and to submit the graded materials at the times specified.