



Governments and the Economy (“Topics in Public Policy and Public Administration”)

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PS 479/579; 4 credits

Oregon State University

Spring Quarter 2015

Tu and Th 2:00-3:50 pm

BEXL 328

The course will examine four main elements of government-economy relationships:

- brief overview of capitalism, socialism, neoliberalism, and other orientations toward governments and the economy
- analysis of the recent “great recession” and of government reactions to those developments, as well as brief examination of recent developments within economics (see the Skidelsky book, on the next page)
- examination of the politics of taxing and spending (see the Jones and Williams book, next page), and
- examination of major categories of national government spending, and of taxes and other revenue sources that finance government activities, including current practices and possible changes (see the Kleinbard book, next page)

I will conduct the course somewhat as a seminar, with frequent writing and oral student presentations of the readings. That is, students rather than the instructor will conduct part of most class sessions. No exams are required. Instead, requirements are three “Response Papers” (RPs) and a research project, which will involve both oral and written presentation. Graduate students (PS 579) read and analyze an additional book on a political-economic topic **and** a selected journal article for each RP.

The course is open to students from **all** majors, both graduate students and undergraduates. The course suggests, but does not require, that students have taken PS 201 and an upper-division course in American politics or public policy. I do **not** assume any previous economics coursework, though an introductory macro course is useful.

Course Goals: The course seeks to help students develop

- Basic understanding of core concepts, issues, and alternatives about governments and the economy, especially in relation to taxing, spending, and related topic, mainly at the national level in the United States
- Awareness of the role of interests, ideas, information, uncertainties, and other factors in oneself and others in relation to proposing and evaluating public policy
- Increased ability to deal with political information, especially concerning large, politically-relevant numbers
- Enhanced ability to explore policy issues and to present the results clearly, concisely, and in compelling form in both written and oral communication

All students read common materials about governments and the economy. Then each student analyzes one element in some detail. **For example**, a student might analyze a specific reform of national or state government taxes. Another might examine trends and possible future directions regarding a relatively narrow area of national government spending. Another might analyze several changes in Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“welfare”). Another might examine a particular element of financial sector regulation. Another might examine arguments and data about effects of tax rate reductions on government revenues (the “Laffer Curve”). Choices and guidelines will be discussed in class.

Requirements and Grading: The course requirements are in two parts. The first involves three relatively short “Response Papers” (RPs) and one short presentation in class supplementing a particular day’s reading.

The second involves a policy analysis project, including a series of progress reports, an oral presentation, and a paper. Participation, including attendance and short in-class writing, is part of course requirements.

Graduate students (enrolled in PS 579) read and analyze an additional book (Hacker and Pierson, below) **and** also read and reflect for each RP a journal article relevant to the topic of that RP.

In terms of **point values**, the requirements are:

- three Response Papers (RPs), each worth 100 points, a total of 300 points
- participation, attendance, and in-class writing (100 points)
- class discussion leader (one time, 50 points); and
- analysis paper (progress reports [40], oral presentation [60], written presentation [250]), 350 points total
- Graduate student analyses of an additional book and a journal article for each RP (150 points)

A final course grade of A requires 90% (720 of 800 course points for PS 479; 855 of 950 for PS 579), B 80% (640 or 760), C 70% (560 or 665), and D 60% (480 or 570). **Within each grade range**, the bottom three percentages are - and the top three are +. I will use improvement and possibly extra reading to help determine borderline grades.

Questions and Difficulties: It is important to read regularly and to plan for course assignments. Remember that students are to learn concepts, not memorize details. In addition, there are no closed-book quizzes or exams.

Feel free to contact me about questions or problems, during office hours (see top of page 1), or by e-mail (address on page 1; indicate **PS 479** on the subject line, even if in PS 579). The best way to contact me usually is by e-mail; I am in my office often in addition to office hours, so maybe can be reached by telephone or in person.

⇒ **Course Blackboard Web Site: Use PS_479_X001_S2015 for those enrolled in both PS 479 and PS 579.**

Course Reading: I have ordered all except one course books for **3-hour reserve** in **Valley Library**, but I recommend purchase some or all of the core texts. All course books are available at the OSU Book Store (Beaver Store). Books will be read generally in the order listed:

Baker, *The Conservative Nanny State*, 2006 (this book is available from Amazon for about \$8 **or free online** [in HTML or pdf formats] from <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/press-releases/press-releases/economists-book-uncovers-qthe-conservative-nanny-stateq/>). I also will place a copy in **Blackboard**. As the title implies, this brief book challenges conventional wisdom about governments and the economy, especially “conservative opposition to government.”

Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master*, **paperback** (PublicAffairs, 2010); the paperback edition contains new material, so be careful to get that version

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas* (Pearson Longman, 2008); focuses on the politics of taxes and spending

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This* (Oxford, 2015); this excellent very recent book examines the content of government taxing and spending policies, their effects, and possible changes

Required for graduate students, PS 579 (also available on **3-hour reserve**) and extra credit for undergraduates: Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics* (paperback, Simon & Schuster, 2011).

Subscription: Students are **encouraged** to subscribe to the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) at sharply reduced student price (\$10.00 for ten weeks), using the signup form. Subscriptions should begin week 2. WSJ has a very conservative editorial page but its news coverage generally is quite good on topics related to this course.

Written Assignments

⇒ **NOTE:** On all **graded written materials**, indicate only your Student ID number, PS 479 (even if enrolled in PS 579), project name (e.g., RP 1), and the date you submit it. Do **NOT** indicate your **NAME**. Do **not** use a **cover** on any paper. Also, please **number** your **pages** and check that they are stapled together in the correct order.

- As indicated above, on any **graded** assignments, do **NOT** indicate your **name**. In the upper right corner of the first page indicate ID number, PS 479 (even if enrolled in PS 579), the assignment name, and the date submitted.
- On **un-graded progress reports**, however, please **do** write your **name**, the **project name**, and the **date**.
- Submit completed assignments in class or to the Economics office, Ballard Hall 303, by the deadlines indicated.
- Number your pages; this helps be sure that pages are assembled in the correct order and so prevents errors.
- Do **NOT** use a **cover** (plastic or similar) on any written assignment.
- I prefer that you type **single-spaced**, with a line between paragraphs, with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Guidelines for **paper length** are indicated for specific assignments. These are **approximate and are estimates** of what appears required to respond adequately to the elements of the assignment. I grade concise responses more highly than longer, less clearly written responses, though I do **not** specifically grade for length.
- Each paper should be carefully written and **proofread**. Use a spell checker **and** a grammar checker!
- **Citations** to **course reading** should use the author and page number(s), in parentheses after the material used (quotation, paraphrase, or any other use), e.g., (Kleinbard, pp. 45-52). You need **not** list these in citations at the end.
- **Citations** of **non-course material** should be complete: Author, *Title*, edition if 2nd or later (City: Publisher, year) or web address and date accessed, using footnotes or—preferred—parenthetical references and citations at end.
- Many students engage in **plagiarism**—presenting points that require citation without indicating source—sometimes without realizing it. To avoid plagiarism (see also Cuba, pp 194-197) you **must give credit** whenever you present:
 - another person's idea, opinion, or theory (whether or not you directly quote)

- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge; if in doubt about whether something is “common knowledge,” provide a cite (that is, err on the side of caution)
 - direct quotations of another person's spoken or written words, or
 - paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words (that is, re-wording what another person has said or written does not eliminate plagiarism)
- **NUMBER** the pages on all assignments, for ease in my commenting and to assure pages are in correct order.

Criteria for Evaluating Written Work

- Response to each of the specific questions to be addressed
- Drawing on appropriate course materials and, if appropriate, materials from other sources
- Clear and well-written responses, showing use of spell checker, grammar checker, and careful organization

OSU Writing Assistance

The Oregon State University Center for Writing and Learning has very useful materials for helping the writing process, including online access. The address is <http://cwl.oregonstate.edu/twc.html>. Note especially the “Online Writing Lab,” to which you can submit a draft of your papers for feedback, the “web resources,” which has excellent links to writing resources, and “Writing Tips and Handouts,” including suggestions about many writing issues. You can schedule appointments for in-person consultation about your writing.

Response Papers (RPs)

Three response papers (RPs) are required, each worth 100 points, a total of 300 points. Each response paper is to examine course materials since the previous RP and is to follow the directions discussed and possibly distributed in class. It is important that students **reflect** relevant items from **current media** coverage in RPs. Graduate students reflect extra reading in each RP, from Hacker and Pierson and a journal article.

Extra credit reading (for undergrads) from Hacker-Pierson can be reflected in response papers, clearly identified as “extra credit.” Summarize and state your reaction to each chapter(s) read for extra credit.

Each RP normally will be at least six single-spaced pages long, following general guidelines stated earlier and suggestions distributed or discussed in class about each response paper, but this length is only a general guideline.

Policy Analysis Paper

The largest course component is a policy analysis paper, in which students apply course materials to one policy topic. We will discuss length expectations in class, but probably the paper will be 10 or more single-spaced pages long, plus any appendices. The paper is worth a maximum of 350 points total, allocated as 40 for the four progress reports, 60 for the oral presentation, and 250 for the written paper. Note that students submit ideas and progress reports for this project, starting week 2, which count as part of the grade.

Note also that a **first draft of the opening part of the paper** is due no later than **Tuesday, May 19**. I will return this to students with comments and suggestions, for revision for the final paper.

Some ideas for projects are mentioned on page 1, above. Other ideas will be discussed in class.

We will discuss in class the length of oral presentations. Each student should select an element of the research paper to present, one that is sufficiently self-standing to be understandable without the entire paper as background. That is, oral presentations should **not** try to summarize or present the entire written report.

Among the components that might be included in the written (and possibly oral) analysis are the following:

1. Define and describe the problem and consider alternative definitions
2. Carefully describe factors of the political context that affect the possibility of policy adoption, including public views, important actors (in and out of government), and so on
3. Examine a range of alternative solutions, including both US and other-nation practices
4. Evaluate possible solutions in terms of various value and other considerations
5. Describe the policy proposal and systematically suggest some likely effects of that policy, if adopted
6. Examine the political feasibility of adoption
7. Consider administrative feasibility issues
8. Propose a solution or small set of solutions
9. Suggest a political strategy that you believe would enhance the feasibility of the policy's adoption

Students working on the closely related research projects can form a team, who can share information and insights,

though each student will write his or her own analysis.

I will enlarge on these points in class. (Cuba, *Short Guide*, ch 4 and 5, is useful for suggestions.)

Discussion Leader

One time during the quarter, **beginning week 3**, each student will lead course discussion about core elements of specific additional reading for that day.

Discussion leaders read and present to the class an additional item(s), which I will specify or help select. We will decide the dates and topics for each student early in the quarter. Discussion leader is worth **50 points**.

Each discussion leader or team writes a 1-2 page single-spaced “abstract” of the reading for that day, to be distributed in class. **Submit your abstract to me sufficiently early** that day to allow time to make photocopies to distribute. The **abstract** should do the following concerning that reading: summarize the main points, suggest how the reading relates to course themes and other course materials, and state strengths and weaknesses, political implications, or other elements that arise from the reading used as the basis for the class discussion. (About abstracts, see Cuba, *Short Guide*, pp 56-60.)

Participation

I expect students to attend and participate regularly in the course, showing they have come prepared to discuss the topics of the day by having read and thought about the assigned materials. This includes drawing on relevant parts of current media. Course participation, including in-class writing, counts **100 points**. Because participation is central and requires, at minimum, attendance, I will **record attendance**, though participation in discussion is a more important criterion than attendance per se.

Topic and Reading Schedule

⇒ Overview of Course Due Dates (subject to slight change, as announced in class)

Note that a response paper is due at the end of each part (or combined parts 1 and 2) of the course, responding to guidelines distributed in advance. Four project reports are due on alternate Thursdays, at two-week intervals, beginning week 2.

<u>By Tuesday, April 7</u>	No later than today complete and turn in the completed course grade form (the last page of this syllabus) and the course questionnaire
<u>Thursday, April 9</u>	Progress Report 1: Project initial statement of topic, with reasons for selection
<u>Wednesday, April 22</u>	Response Paper (RP) 1 due by 5 pm, delivered in class or to Economics office (Ballard 303)
<u>Thursday, April 23</u>	Progress Report 2: Revised project report, with initial bibliography of sources and data sources likely to be useful
<u>Thursday, May 7</u>	Progress Report 3: Detailed progress report about research topic, with initial bibliography of sources, including data sources, likely to be useful
<u>Friday, May 8</u>	RP 2 , no later than 5 pm, delivered in class or to Economics office (Ballard 303)
<u>Tuesday, May 19</u>	First draft of opening part of policy analysis paper is due to enable comments for revision
<u>Tuesday, May 26</u>	Progress Report 4: Detailed progress report about research topic, including final bibliography and outline of core points of oral presentation
<u>Friday, May 29</u>	RP 3 , no later than 5 pm, delivered in class or to the Economics office (Ballard 303)
<u>Tuesday, June 2</u>	First day of student presentations of policy analyses
<u>Tuesday, June 9, 5 pm</u>	Written policy analysis due in Economics office [tentative due date]

⇒ Students should focus on the following in relation to each course topic:

- What are the core **definitions, concepts, and trends** (data) relevant for this policy topic?
- What are the main **features of current policies and alternative policies**?
- What are the main elements of the **politics** of current and alternative policies? That is, what factors influence the adoption and implementation of current policies and affect the possible emergence of new policies?
- What are the main sources of **uncertainties and disagreements** about the policy?

I have ordered **nearly all required books** for reserve in **Valley Library**.

Read regularly to be able to participate in class discussion. Study carefully the graphs and similar in course books. Know core points and supporting details of chapters. In addition to required reading, also regularly look at one or

more daily media, especially the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, and possibly others, e.g., *The Economist*. I also recommend monitoring television news coverage occasionally.

Also, **beginning week 2** students should **regularly check blogs** by the following economists (Paul Krugman [NYT], Dean Baker [focus on media and economics], and Mark Thoma [U of O]) **and** at least one other.

Two reference books: Most students will read one or several chapters from one or both of the following books, which have been ordered for **three-hour reserve** in Valley Library.

Cuba, *A Short Guide to Writing about Social Science*, 4th edition (Longman, 2002). This brief book provides useful information about and guidelines for social sciences writing. I list suggested reading in the Reading Schedule.

Gruber, *Public Finance*, 4th edition (Worth, 2013). This presents careful examination of government actions in relation to what economists commonly label “public finance,” that is, government taxing, spending, and related. I expect that each student will read and reflect in research reports the relevant chapter(s) in this book concerning chosen research topics. The **table of contents** of this book is available on **page 8 in this syllabus**, below.

⇒ **Overview of Course Reading Schedule** (subject to change; I will announce any changes in class; major changes I will post on Blackboard documents in a revised syllabus). In addition to items shown, handouts and Blackboard items will be important for some classes. **The overall structure of the course includes four parts:**

I. Course Introduction and Socialism, Capitalism, Social Democracy, and Neoliberalism—2 weeks (4 classes)

Baker, *The Conservative Nanny State* (2006); 11 brief chapters

Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (2010), Introduction, ch 1, skim ch 2, read ch 3 (Library reserve and in Blackboard)

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This* (2015), Introduction and ch 1-2

II. The Great Recession and Economics—1-1/2 weeks (3 classes)

Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master*, **paperback** (2010), eight chapters, four to be read carefully

Response Paper 1 Due

III. Politics of Taxing and Spending—2-1/2 weeks (5 classes)

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas* (2008), 12 ch

Response Paper 2 Due

IV. Spending and Taxing Policies, Effects, and Choices—3 weeks (6 classes)

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This* (2015), ch 3-14

Response Paper 3 Due

Student Presentations—1 or 1/2 week (1 or 2 classes)

Detailed Topic and Reading Schedule

Part I. Introduction to the Course and Socialism, Capitalism, Social Democracy, and Neoliberalism

1. Tuesday, March 31. Course Introduction and Critiquing Conventional Wisdom

Begin Baker, *The Conservative Nanny State* (for how to obtain this book, see page 2 above; also Blackboard). Think about the views of government you believe conservatives generally hold and relate those to Baker’s arguments.

During the **first week** of the quarter, each student should talk with me outside of class to discuss the course, its requirements, and questions; **schedule a time to talk with me**.

Note: In many classes, I will provide short items to read and discuss in class from such sources as the WSJ, NYT, *Financial Times*, or government data. This will reduce out-of-class reading and, I hope, stimulate discussion.

Reminder for PS 579 students: Graduate students read a journal article for each RP and attach to the RP a summary of the journal article and a discussion of how it relates to that part of the course; attach the first page of the journal article (the “abstract”) as part of the summary and discussion. Select a journal article for each RP that is relevant for the topics covered in that RP. Students can select a journal article mentioned by Hacker and Pierson, in *Winner-Take-All Politics*, or select a relevant journal article in some other way.

PS 579: During this part of the course, read and reflect in RP 1 Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, Introduction and Part I (ch 1, 2, and 3), **and** one relevant journal article (possibly mentioned by Hacker and Pierson). Include the first journal article page (which contains the abstract) in the RP. Reminder: The book is available in the Bookstore and on 3-hour reserve in Valley Library. I encourage graduate students to spread the required reading from this book over the several weeks of this part of the course.

2. Thursday, April 2. Critiquing Conventional Wisdom: Conservative Views of Government

Complete reading Baker, *The Conservative Nanny State*

Reminder: Sign up no later than today for the 10-week subscription to the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ)

3. Tuesday, April 7. Socialism, Capitalism, Social Democracy, and Neoliberalism I

Begin Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This* (2015), Introduction and ch 1-2, and

Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (2010), Introduction, ch 1, skim ch 2, read ch 3. The required chapters are in Blackboard documents **and** a copy of the book is available on 3-hour reserve. I will provide guidance in class.

This week you should begin to **check regularly at least four** economics blogs, including Thoma, Krugman, Baker, and at least one other (links will be identified in a Blackboard item or in class; you might want to use such blog aggregators as Google Reader or Feedly or others to monitor these and possibly other blogs)

4. Thursday, April 9. Socialism, Capitalism, Social Democracy, and Neoliberalism II

Complete reading Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (2010), Introduction, ch 1, skim ch 2, read ch 3, and Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This* (2015), Introduction and ch 1-2

Due: Progress Report 1: project initial statement of topic, with reasons for selection

Part II. The “Great Recession” and Economics

5. Tuesday, April 14. The Great Recession and Economics

Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master*, **paperback** edition, Prefaces, Introduction, and ch 1-2

Also during this week, begin to locate data relevant for your project. Among the sources you might examine is *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, available online.

6. Thursday, April 16. The Great Recession and Economics

Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master*, **paperback** edition, 3-5 (especially ch 5)

7. Tuesday, April 21. The Great Recession and Economics

Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master*, **paperback** edition, 6-8 (especially ch 8)

Due WEDNESday, April 22: Response Paper 1 (RP 1), in class or to the Economics office, Ballard Hall 303, **no later than 5 p.m.** For Hacker and Pierson required PS 479 reading, see class 1, above.

Part III. Politics of Taxing and Spending

8. Thursday, April 23. “Politics of Bad Ideas” and of Taxing and Spending I

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas*, Preface and ch 1-3 and Appendix (pp 364-368)

This book focuses on developments during the George W. Bush presidency, but the ideas and conflicts remain current, so think how book topics relate to current budget views and developments, especially by Republicans.

During this section of the course, for some classes there might be additional reading placed in Blackboard or announced and/or distributed in class.

PS 579: During this part of the course, read and reflect in RP 2 Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, Part II (chapters 4, 5, and 6) (the book is on 3-hour reserve in Valley Library) and one relevant journal article (possibly one mentioned by Hacker and Pierson); include the first journal article page (that contains abstract) in the RP

Due: Progress Report 2: revised project statement, with initial bibliography of sources and of data sources likely to be useful for the chosen research topic, as well as any questions

9. Tuesday, April 28. “Politics of Bad Ideas” and of Taxing and Spending II

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas*, ch 4-6

Dolan, Frensdreis, and Tatalovich, *The Presidency and Economic Policy*, ch 4 (“Presidential Budgeting and Fiscal Policy”), ch 6 (“Presidential Economic Management, Approaches, and Policies”), **and** ch 8 (“Presidential Economic Scorecard” [**Blackboard** documents]); read for core points about fiscal policy approaches, tools, limits

10. Thursday, April 30. “Politics of Bad Ideas” and of Taxing and Spending III

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas*, ch 7-8

11. Tuesday, May 5. “Politics of Bad Ideas” and of Taxing and Spending IV

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas*, ch 9-10

Look at *Budget 2016 Historical Tables*, especially parts 1 and 2, about overall trends in taxing and spending (available at this online site: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals>)

12. Thursday, May 7. “Politics of Bad Ideas” and of Taxing and Spending V

Jones and Williams, *Politics of Bad Ideas*, ch 11-12

Due: Progress Report 3: detailed progress report about research topic, including revised bibliography of sources, including data sources, likely to be useful for the research project

Due Friday, May 8: Response Paper 2 (RP 2), no later than 5 p.m. in the Economics Office (Ballard 303). For Hacker and Pierson required PS 479 reading, see class 8, above.

Part IV. Taxing and Spending Politics and Policies

13. Tuesday, May 12. American Economy and Society “Report Card”

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, skim through ch 2 (which you read earlier) and read ch 3. As you read this book, think about your views of the author’s points and about changes that you favor in national government spending and taxation, including your rationale; note that this author argues that careful thinking about government spending must come before decisions about taxation, that is, how to fund that spending.

This book is the most dense reading in the course. I will provide guidance about parts that can be skimmed.

During this section of the course, for some classes there might be additional reading placed in Blackboard or announced and/or distributed in class.

Reminder: A **draft** of the opening section of your policy paper is due Tuesday, May 19

PS 579: During this part of the course, read and reflect in RP 3 Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, Part III (chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and Conclusion), **and** one relevant journal article (possibly one mentioned by Hacker and Pierson). Include the first journal article page (with the abstract) in the RP. The book is on 3-hour reserve.

14. Thursday, May 14. Inequality and the “Growth Fairy”

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, ch 4 and 5

Tentative: **In-class demonstration of Excel procedures** needed for class 15

Suggestion: Plan ahead to locate the data and produce the graphs for the next class.

15. Tuesday, May 19. False Fiscal Crises, an “Overweight” Government, and Are High Taxes Killing Us

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, ch 6, 7, and 8

Read **selectively** in *Budget 2016 Historical Tables* and note trends (available at this online site: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals>); then

Review parts of the *Budget of the United States 2016 Historical Tables* to examine trends in **one** national government spending category. **Bring to class** a 1 to 2-page statement in which you summarize carefully trends in national government spending on a **narrow element of national government spending**. **Attach** one or more **tables** from *Budget 2016 Historical Tables* (see class 14) to provide relevant data. Use Excel to produce one or more **graphs** of that spending over time, in **current** (non-inflation-adjusted) dollars, **real** (inflation-adjusted) dollars, **percent** of national government **outlays**, and **percent** of the economy (**GDP**). OMB 2016 budget site has Excel data files.

Recommended: Gruber, *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 4th edition, ch 4 (“budgets;” book on reserve)

Due: Draft of opening section of your policy paper

16. Thursday, May 21. Hidden Hand of Government Spending and Government as Investors

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, ch 9 and 10

17. Tuesday, May 26. Government as Insurer and Thinking about Taxes

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, ch 11 and 12

Read selectively on reserve: Gruber, *Public Finance and Public Policy*, ch 18 (“Taxation in the U.S. and Around the World”), and ch 25 (“Fundamental Tax Reform”); the book has been ordered for 3-hour Valley Library reserve.

Possibly additional reading might be placed in Blackboard and announced and/or distributed in class.

Due (note Tuesday, not Thursday, so I can return comments Thursday): Progress Report 4: detailed progress report about research topic, including final bibliography and outline of core points of oral presentation

18. Thursday, May 28. Conclusions: We Are Better Than This

Kleinbard, *We Are Better Than This*, ch 13 and 14

Recommended: Gruber, *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 3rd edition, ch 17 (“Income Distribution and Welfare”)

Due: Response Paper 3 is due no later than 5 p.m. **Friday, May 29**, in class or to the Economics office (Ballard 303). For Hacker and Pierson required PS 479 reading, see class 13, above.

Student Presentations

19. Tuesday, June 2. Student Presentations I

Student presentations of core elements of their analyses

20. Thursday, June 4. Student Presentations II

Student presentations of core elements of their analyses, Continued

Due Tuesday, June 9, end of day (5 pm), in Economics, Ballard Hall 303: Policy Paper (**tentative**; specific date to be decided in class)

⇒ The following book might be useful for reference, so the table of contents is included here. Note that this book might not arrive on reserve until later in the quarter.

Jonathan Gruber, *Public Finance and Public Policy*, Fourth Edition

© 2013, Worth Publishing Company

Companion Web Site: http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/gruber4e/#t_857054

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Part I. Background

1. Why Study Public Finance?
2. Theoretical Tools of Public Finance
3. Empirical Tools of Public Finance
4. Budget Analysis and Deficit Financing

Part II. Externalities and Public Goods

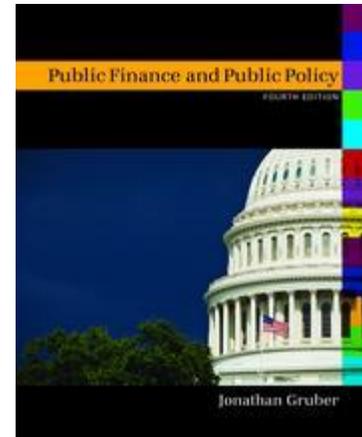
5. Externalities: Problems and Solutions
6. Externalities in Action: Environmental and Health Externalities
7. Public Goods: Problems and Solutions
8. Cost/Benefit Analysis
9. Implementing Public Goods: Political Economy and Public Choice
10. State and Local Government Expenditures
11. Public Goods in Action: Education

Part III. Social Insurance and Redistribution

12. Social Insurance
13. Social Security
14. Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance
15. Health Insurance I: Health Economics and Private Health Insurance
16. Health Insurance II: Medicare and Medicaid
17. Income Distribution and Welfare

Part IV. Taxation in Theory and Practice

18. Taxation in the U.S. and Around the World
19. The Equity Implications of Taxation—Tax Incidence
20. Tax Inefficiencies and Their Implications for Optimal Taxation
21. Taxes on Labor Supply
22. Taxation of Savings
23. Taxes on Risk Taking and Wealth
24. Issues of Corporate Taxation
25. Fundamental Tax Reform





PS 479_/579_ (Sahr) Governments and the Economy (Topics in Policy) Spring 2015

Name: Last _____, First _____ Middle _____

Nickname, if prefer _____

Student ID Number (clearly, with hyphens, as 930-123-456): _____ - _____ - _____

Local address: _____
_____ ZIP _____

E-mail address: _____ Local telephone: _____

Permanent address (if different): _____
_____ ZIP _____

Permanent telephone: (area code _____) number _____

Year: freshman____, sophomore____, junior____, senior____, Master of Public Policy____, MAIS____, other (specify) _____

Major (or likely major): _____ Minor (if any): _____

Career goals: _____

Previous college-level courses in **American politics, economics, public policy**, or **similar** related to this course, if any:

What other courses are you taking now (names and numbers)? _____

If you have ever lived in another country besides the US, which, when, and for what purpose: _____

If you can read or speak another language besides English, which and how fluently? _____

If you have athletics____, work____, or other required non-class activity (specify: _____) in addition to classes, check the appropriate space in the line above and indicate how many hours per week _____

If you have ever worked in government, a political campaign, media, or similar, check here ____ and indicate the kind of experience and when:

What are the main reasons you are taking this course?

Response Papers (3 @ 100 [150 for PS 579 students]):

1	_____	_____/100/150
2	_____	_____/100/150
3	_____	_____/100/150
	Response Papers	(300/450)

Participation _____ (100)

Discussion Leader Class number _____ Topic _____ (50)

Policy Analysis: Topic _____

Progress reports 1	_____	2	_____	3	_____	4	_____	_____/40
Oral Presentation	_____							_____/60
Written presentation	_____							_____/250
								_____ (350)

Graduate book analysis (points tabulated above) _____

Journal articles reviewed: RP 1 _____ RP 2 _____
RP 3 _____

Makeup work, if any: _____

Total _____ + adjustment ____ = Total points _____ **800/950** = _____ Percent = Grade ____