

# Public Finance Policy

Fall 2016 Quarter

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Lab I, room 3005



## **Class Meetings:**

Mondays 6:00pm-10:00pm, September 26-December 5 .....

## **Class Location:**

Seminar 2 D 2909

**Course Description:** This course will review finance and fiscal policy challenges facing federal, state, and local governments. We will examine issues central to public expenditure programs, and taxation policies. Students will seek practical solutions to planning, implementation, and reporting problems in public finance. The course will discuss budgetary formation, deliberation, adoption, implementation and execution. Further, each aspect of finance policy will be examined in order to understand the process, functions, and history of public budgeting reform. The course will discuss revenue policy, the spending of public resources, dynamics of changing budget processes, and issues associated with balancing budgets. Students – in the role of citizens, administrators, and public officials – shall engage public finance policy issues of concern to them in pursuit of fairness.

Learning objectives and student competencies:

1. Recognize and apply normative concepts of managing public financial resources in government and nonprofit organizations.
2. Demonstrate skills in the collection, management, and allocation of public financial resources.
3. Demonstrate skills in the analysis and communication of complex financial information.
4. Be able to evaluate whether public, private, nonprofit, or multisector approaches can achieve stated policy goals.
5. Demonstrate skills in using Excel spreadsheet software to perform financial calculations and financial condition analysis.

## **Technical Skills and Workload Expectations:**

Financial calculation is critical part of budgeting and financial management. Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software is used to assist students in financial calculations. Excel is a popular and powerful software program for financial calculation. We will use step-by-step examples of Excel programming for many tools. Sharpening your Excel skills could enhance your value in the workplace. Depending on your background in financial management and on the topics covered during the week, students can expect to engage in five to ten hours of out-of-class study each week. Students should read the assigned materials closely, prepare for and attend class, and complete the assigned work to be successful in this class.

### Required Readings

**Books:**

Finkler, Smith, Calabrese & Purtell (2016). *Financial management for public, health, and not-for-profit organizations*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press (cited below as Finkler).

### Suggested Readings

Menifield, Charles E. (2013). *The basics of public budgeting and financial management: a handbook for academics and practitioners*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Wang, XiaoHu (2014). *Financial management in the public sector: tools, applications, and cases*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: NY: Routhledge.

*\*\*Readings will be posted on the course Canvas site.*

### **Fall 2016 Schedule (Faculty may alter schedule and reading assignments)**

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
<b>Week 1</b> 9/26	Planning and the budget: tools for financial planning and budgeting techniques	Finkler – Chapter 1,2,3 ** Menifield – Chapter 6 ** Wang – Chapter 1,2
<b>Week 2</b> 10/3	Budget decisions and the cost of public services	Finkler – Chapter 4 ** Wang – Chapter 3,4,5,6
<b>Week 3</b> 10/10	Capital budgeting and long-term financing	Finkler – Chapter 5,6 ** Menifield – Chapter 4
<b>Week 4</b> 10/17	Budget implementation and controlling results	Finkler – Chapter 7,8 ** Wang – Chapter 7,8 ** Menifield – Chapter 7
<b>Week 5</b> 10/24	The balane sheet	Finkler – Chapter 9 ** Wang – Chapter 9
<b>Week 6</b> 10/31	Reporting the results	Finkler – Chapter 10
<b>Week 7</b> 11/7	Nonprofit accounting	Finkler – Chapter 11
<b>Week 8</b> 11/14	State and local government accounting	Finkler – Chapter 12,13 ** Menifield – Chapter 5 ** Wang – Chapter 9
<b>11/21-27</b>	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>HOLIDAY</b>
<b>Week 9</b> 11/28	Financial statements and conditions	Finkler – Chapter 14,15 ** Wang – Chapter 12 ** Menifield – Chapter 8
<b>Week 10</b> 12/5	<b>Final Presentations of financial condition analysis</b> • Conference Format	

## Student Assignments / Basis of Evaluation

1. Participation and journals – Students must attend class having completed the readings and prepared to fully participate in class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to fully engage in discussions, presentations, exercises, and learn from them. If you are unable to attend class, please discuss this with the instructor to find a way to make up the work. Students will be required to use and submit weekly journals that reflect readings, class discussions, and other course related work. These journal entries are a chance for you to reflect on what we are learning and to comment on professional development throughout the course. Students must turn in their latest journal entries weekly starting at the beginning of our second meeting (second class).
2. Assignments – Each week students will be assigned exercises and work problems. The assignments will be distributed at the end of class and will reflect the contents and materials covered on that particular day. These weekly assignments will be submitted no later than the beginning of class the following week.
3. Cases – In class, and at home, we will use cases to illustrate the application of financial management and budgeting concepts and tools. The cases will allow students to understand the conditions under which various financial tools can be properly used in pursuit of public finance goals. The purpose of the cases is to reinforce student understanding of the tools used in public finance policy and decision making.
4. Financial Condition Analysis – This assignment requires students to take on the role of a management analyst in a public organization. Students will demonstrate their ability to perform the skills and abilities acquired in the class throughout the semester. Instructions for the Financial Condition Analysis will be available on the Canvas course website. Due December 5<sup>th</sup>. Students will be asked to present their completed Financial Condition Analysis during our last class meeting.

## Course Policies

**Format:** Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [APA Style <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant.

**Participation and attendance:** Students are required to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty should be notified prior to a class. After one absence per quarter (4 hours), make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case. Makeup work must be completed by the deadline assigned to ensure full receipt of course credit. After three absences (12 hours) students may be denied full credit. After reoccurring weekly absences (missing an hour of class week to week) students may be denied full credit. Finally, if students do miss a class, they are expected to do the reading for that class meeting and turn in any assignments that were due that class date.

**Late assignments:** Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their seminar faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Parameters are left to the discretion of the faculty on a situation-by-situation basis. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

**Credit:** Students will receive four graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. No incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the [MPA Handbook](#) and [College statement on academic honesty](#) for more information. Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

**Evaluation:** A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required each quarter for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. Evaluation conferences may occur in-person or over the phone.

**Multiculturalism and diversity:** Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

**Technology use and learning styles:** We all have different ways of acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. (Activities such as surfing the internet, posting on/checking social media, reading unrelated materials such as e-mail, playing with an IPOD, laptop, or cell phone are not appropriate.) Consult your faculty to discuss learning style options.

**Reasonable accommodations** will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's [Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

**Conduct and conflict resolution:** Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing

respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards.

**We will abide by the [social contract](#):** WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy.

**We will abide by the [student conduct code \(including academic integrity and plagiarism\)](#):** Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process.

**We will abide by the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#).**

**Guest policy:** Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

**Inclement weather:** In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to 3:00 pm the day of class. Students are responsible for checking email and ensuring viable transportation options are available to them.

**Communicating:** Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.