

Syllabus

Finance and Fiscal Policy

Dave O'Leary

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6:00 to 10:00 PM

Wednesdays, September 30, 2015 through December 16, 2015

Room SEM 2 - 2109

Course Description, Methods and Objectives:

Demands on government are daunting in good times, let alone during a recession. This course will review finance and fiscal policy challenges facing federal, state, and local governments. Students will seek practical solutions to thorny problems, and consider the challenges of converting campaign rhetoric into effective (and legal) public policy.

Public administrators are faced with many challenges and opportunities. This course begins with a look at many of them. Subsequent classes and readings will return to these themes either for more in depth study.

Student Assignments / Basis of Evaluation:

1. Participation – Students must attend class having completed the readings and prepared to fully participate in class discussions and other exercises. Students are expected to fully engage in our discussions and presentations, and learn from them. Attendance is very important. If you are unable to attend a class, please discuss this with the instructor to find a way to make up the work.
2. Journals/Readings - Journals are weekly reflections on readings, class discussions and other work. Journal entries are a chance for you to reflect on what you're learning and to comment on your professional development throughout the course. Students must turn in their latest journal entries weekly beginning with the second class.
3. Case Study - a ten page report that describes a financial / policy problem faced by a public administrator working in the Olympia area. Students should work in teams of two or three. The case should be based on a real-world problem (such as cleaning up a brownfield) and explore ways that practitioners are using government resources to solve the problem. Reports are to include a listing key of lessons that the case demonstrates. During the last class students will give presentations of their cases.

Written Submittals:

- Must be written with a clear and simple writing style, suitable for elected officials and the general public
- Must be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors
- Must be submitted on time
- Must address the assigned topic
- Must use the APA citation style

Textbook: There is no textbook for this course. Class readings come from other sources such as articles, reports, and policies.

Credit: Students will receive 4 graduate credits at the completion of the quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

Evaluation: Written self-evaluations and a faculty evaluation are required for credit at the end of each quarter, along with faculty evaluations of students. *Evaluations are due at the end of Week 10.*

Late Assignments: Assignments must be turned in on time. If you are unable to complete an assignment, please contact me. Depending on the reason and the nature of the work, I may allow the assignment to be late, assign additional work and/or not accept the assignment.

Electronic Devices:

Phones and other noise making electronic devices must be disabled during class.

Multiculturalism & Diversity: Faculty and students work toward weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning in readings, lectures, seminar and group projects.

Learning Styles: Faculty endeavor to provide information in multiple formats: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss learning style options or personal challenges.

Accommodations: are provided for any student who desires them through a working relationship with Access Services, the Writing Center and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition are regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#). See the college's [Student Conduct webpage](#) for more.

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

Guest Policy: Guests are welcome to our class at any time.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel program meeting even if

campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-program email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#).

Communications: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

Class Activities: Each class will include one or more themes. Typically, classes will include a discussion and/or other activity that addresses the central theme. Near the end of the class, students will be introduced to the theme from the upcoming class.

First Class: There is reading assignment for the first class. Students must read this assignment to prepare for the first class.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topics	Study Materials
9/30/2015	Introduction and Study Themes	Assigned Reading: Berk & Associates (2008). <i>Birch Bay Incorporation Feasibility Study</i> . Whatcom County. Pages ES-1 through ES-9. Found at: http://mrsc.org/getmedia/8021C222-DD92-4648-B017-84AF315874C1/W47-BirchBay.aspx
10/7/2015	Public Budgeting	Assigned Readings: Reddick, CG. (2003, Nov). <i>Testing Rival Theories of Budgeting Decision-making in the United States</i> , Financial Accountability and Management. O'Leary, D. (2015) <i>Draft Budget Approval and Management Policy</i> . City of Shelton Administrative Policies. (Lacey City Budget. (2014). City of Lacey, WA. Found at: http://www.ci.lacey.wa.us/Portals/0/docs/finance/budget/2014_budget.pdf (Review overview. Do not study in depth.)
10/14/2015	Tax Policy	Reading Assignment: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. (Jan 2015). <i>Who Pays: A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All 50 States</i> , 5th Edition, Found at: http://www.itep.org/pdf/whopaysreport.pdf Reid Wilson, (2013, Oct 8). <i>Oregon likely to try again on sales tax</i> Washington Post. Found at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2013/10/08/oregon-likely-to-try-again-on-sales-tax/ O'Donnell, J & Malcom, H. (2013, May 6). <i>Who would win or lose on online sales tax</i> . USA Today. Found at: http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/05/06/winne

		rs-losers-online-sales-tax/2139681/
10/21/2015	Tax Policy (Public Budgeting)	<p>First Class Segment - Guest: Anne Pflug - Lecturer at Easter Washington University and the University of Washington. Anne will conduct a case study on public budgeting. Preparation assignment and journal expectations will be announced ahead of time.</p> <p>Reading Assignment:</p> <p>Washington Department of Revenue (2002) <i>Personal and Corporate Income Taxes</i>. Found at: http://dor.wa.gov/content/aboutus/statisticsandreports/WAtaxstudy/Personal%20 Corp Income Tax 8-9-02.pdf</p> <p>Comeaux, C. (2007, May). <i>Louisiana Property Tax Basics</i>. Lafayette County Assessor. (pages 1-17). Found at: http://www.lafayetteassessor.com/TopicsPDFs/Louisiana%20Property %20Tax%20Basics%20booklet%203.pdf</p>
10/28/2015	Accounting	<p>Reading Assignment:</p> <p>Kirkwood, MO. <i>Governmental Accounting</i>. Power Point Presentation. Found At: http://www.kirkwoodmo.org/mm/files/governmental-accounting.pdf</p> <p><i>Generally Accepted Accounting Principles</i>. State Administrative & Accounting Manual. Washington Office of Financial Management, Section 80.20. Found at: http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/80.20.htm</p> <p><i>2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report</i>. Office of Financial Management. Found at: http://www.ofm.wa.gov/cafr/2014/default.asp (Review these sections: 1) Management’s Discussion and Analysis, 2) and Basic Financial Statements)</p>
11/4/2015	Financial Analysis	<p>Study Assignment:</p> <p>There will be no reading assignment for this week. Rather the assignment is to examine an Excel spreadsheet, which is currently in use as a financial analysis tool. Journals entries for this theme must include two sections. The first should answer four questions, which will be handed out at the October 28th class. Answers will be due at the beginning of the November 4th class. The second entry will be due on November 18th, and will include the usual reflections on the study subject. The October 28 class will also include a section that introduces the tool to students.</p>

11/11/2015	Veterans' Day - No Class	
11/18/2015	Recession's Impact on Public Finance	<p>Reading Assignment:</p> <p>Solomon, P. & Mandell, L. (2013, December 13). <i>How Detroit Leaders Ignored Causes of Bankruptcy for 65 Years</i>. PBS Newshour. Found at: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/how-detroit-leaders-ignored-signs-of-bankruptcy-for-65-years/</p> <p>Glaeser, E (2011, March 8). <i>How Seattle transformed itself</i>. Economix: Explaining the Science of Everyday Life. Found at: http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/how-seattle-transformed-itself/?_r=0</p> <p>Moffat, M. (Retrieved 2015, May 25). <i>Why do government budget deficits grow during recessions?</i> About Education. Found at: http://economics.about.com/od/recessions/a/budget_deficits.htm</p> <p>Irons, J. (2009, Sept 30). Economic scarring: <i>The long-term impacts of the recession</i>. Economic Policy Institute. Found at: http://www.epi.org/publication/bp243/</p>
11/25/2015	Thanksgiving Holiday – No class	
12/2/2015	Presentations	
12/9/2015	Evaluation Week	