ECO 736
Public Economics
UNC Greensboro
Spring 2010

Contact Information

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Course Overview

ECO 772 is the first public economics field course in the PhD program. Its purpose is to acquaint you with the issues and tools used in public economics. Our focus will be on the expenditure side of public economics.

Office Hours

Open door policy – i.e., if I am in the office and not in the middle of something I will meet with you – and by appointment. Email is the best way to contact me to make an appointment.

Learning Objectives

1) Understand the rationale for government intervention in the economy.
2) Understand the specific rationale for transfer programs.
3) Understand the rules, incentives, and empirical evidence regarding a number of means-tested transfer programs in the U.S.
4) Understand methodological issues that commonly arise in the study of social programs.

Texts

We will use articles and book chapters that will available either through the library or as handouts. If you have not taken a Public Economics class as an undergraduate, it may be helpful to purchase an undergraduate book. Additionally,

Grading

Your grade will be based on class participation (30%), in-class presentations of papers (30%), and a written review of an area of the literature (40%).

Class participation should not require much by way of explanation. The syllabus lists a number of papers. Those with a * are required for MA students. You should have read the paper before class and be able to discuss it. Those with a + are required for PhD students; however, MA students are encouraged to read these as well.

A number of the readings will be assigned for student presentation. In these cases, you will prepare a discussion of the paper and be prepared to lead the class discussion. You may want to prepare a handout.

The main component of your grade will be a review of an area of the literature that is of interest to you. Topics do not have to come from Public Economics strictly defined. Ideas from labor, health, and related fields will be fine. The review should define the problem of interest, motivate why it is of interest, discuss the existing literature and attempt to identify gaps in the existing literature. A proposal is due on February 10th; a rough draft is due April 7th; and the final draft is due on the last day of class.
**PART I: BACKGROUND AND THEORY**

1. Efficiency in the Absence of Government


2. Market Failure

A. Externalities


B. Public Goods


### 3. Social Welfare


### 4. Welfare Measurement


### 5. Theory of the Second Best


### 6. Rationale for Income Redistribution


7. Labor Supply and non-linear budget constraints


PART II: APPLICATIONS

1. Measuring Poverty


2. Means-Tested Transfer Programs

A. AFDC/TANF


B. Nutrition Programs


C. Housing Programs


D. Medicaid


3. Topics in Program Analysis

A. Non-Participation


B. Spells


C. Analysis of Changes in Caseloads


D. Welfare Reform


E. Participation in Multiple Programs


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