

**San José State University**  
**Department of Economics**  
**ECON 132 – Public Finance - Section 01, Fall 2020**

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Dr. Patralekha (Pat) Ukil
Office Location:	Zoom Meeting Room ( <i>link provided in Canvas</i> )
Email:	patralekha.ukil@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mon: 1.30-3.30 pm PST ( <i>please email me if you can't meet at this time slot</i> )
Class Days/Time:	Mon and Wed 1:30 -2:45 pm
Classroom:	N/A
Prerequisites:	ECON 1B

**Course Web Page and Canvas Messaging**

All relevant course materials such as syllabus, lectures, readings, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any course updates.

**Course Description**

*From the SJSU course catalog:* Microeconomics of the public sector, role of government in market systems, cost-benefit analysis, public choice theory, taxation, fiscal federalism, state and local government sector.

The focus of this course is on understanding the microeconomic foundations of public sector involvement in an economy. Essentially, we will start with the question: “why does a market economy need a government?” We will use economic principles to understand the *reasons for* government involvement and intervention in a market economy, and also study the *impacts of* government expenditure programs and tax systems on the citizens’ behavior and welfare. We will be covering a wide range of theoretical issues relating to public finance with a specific focus on practical issues relating to education, social insurance, healthcare, social security and taxation.

## Course Format

This course will take place entirely online using Canvas Learning Management System at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. **All students will require reliable internet connection and an electronic device for access to Canvas LMS.** You can borrow laptops and other equipment from the MLK library. Please visit the library or this website: <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services>.

The course will follow a *hybrid format* in which lecture materials will be posted on Canvas each week (asynchronous) and we will use the synchronous classes for office hours/problem solving sessions/discussion sections using Zoom. **You will be notified of all live Zoom sessions much ahead of time.** You can expect to have at least two to three live Zoom sessions each month. All Zoom sessions will be recorded.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read and understand relevant economic concepts relating to government intervention in market economies and the issues relating to government expenditure and revenue systems.
2. Understand and analyze public finance topics with a focus on social issues such as insurance, healthcare, taxation and education, etc. which are relevant to the United States.

## Required Readings

Articles, lecture videos, and all reading materials posted on Canvas are required learning material for this course. **There is no requirement to purchase a textbook for this course.**

Optional reading: *Public Finance and Public Policy, 5th edition, Jonathan Gruber, Macmillan.*

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practical. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

### The course assessment will be based on the following:

1. Homework assignments including quizzes posted on Canvas every week
2. Two take-home midterm examinations (will be assigned early October and early November)
3. A final take-home examination (during SJSU Final Exams week; submission date TBA)
4. Participation and discussions online in Canvas and in Zoom

### You will receive one week to complete each weekly homework on Canvas.

All examinations are take-home examinations and may contain a combination of multiple-choice questions and questions that require short/medium-length answers. You will receive one week to work on them and submit them. The syllabus for each take-home exam will be announced in due course on Canvas.

There is no mandatory attendance but a small section of your assessment will depend on your class participation and your involvements in all discussions in Canvas/Zoom sessions.

## Final Examination or Evaluation

The final evaluation for this course will be a final take-home examination taking place during the Final Examinations week as per the SJSU Fall 2020 schedule, which will be the culminating activity based on the course material covered in the semester.

## Grading Information

Course grades will be as follows:

Weekly homework:	15%
Midterm Exam 1:	25%
Midterm Exam 2:	25%
Final Exam:	30%
Class discussion:	<u>5%</u>
	100%

Grade	Percentage
A plus	98 to 100%
A	94 to 97%
A minus	90 to 93%
B plus	86 to 89 %
B	83 to 85%
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	76 to 79%
C	73 to 75%
C minus	70 to 72%
D plus	66 to 69%
D	63 to 65%
D minus	60 to 62%

## Office hours/emails information

I will hold office hours on Mondays during class time (1:30 pm to 3:30 pm) in Zoom. You are welcome to meet me in either groups or by yourself. If you wish to set up a meeting outside of this time slot, please send me an email.

I also welcome you to submit any questions or doubts via email if you prefer. I generally respond to emails within 24 hours.

## Classroom Protocol and Course Expectations

1. I expect your camera to be on during Zoom sessions, but I also understand that some of you may not be able to do so at all times. Please let me know in advance if you are unable to keep your camera on during live Zoom classes. I will also understand that you may need to take short breaks during the sessions.
2. Please remember that live Zoom sessions will be recorded.
3. If you cannot attend a live Zoom session, please email me the reason for me to mark your absence.
4. I expect you to complete the weekly readings and lessons, and submit the weekly assignments on time. If any issues arise that prevent you from doing so, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

## Strategies for Success in this course:

1. I will set up the weekly lessons to be as comprehensible as possible, but if you can't understand something, please email me at the earliest. If you like studying in groups please reach out to your peers as well.
2. Showing up for any live Zoom sessions that are scheduled for problem solving and discussion sections will also help to clear any doubts or questions that you might have.
3. Completing the weekly assignments will benefit you a lot to prepare for each midterm exam and also the final exam.

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

I will follow the [SJSU policy regarding academic integrity](#) and honesty.

More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following university policies:

- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>)
- [University Attendance and Participation Policy F15-12](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>)
- [University Grading System Policy F18-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf>)

You may also find the following information useful:

- SJSU Cares: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/>
- The SJSU Food Pantry Program: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/spartan-food-pantry/index.html>
- SJSU Counseling: <https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/>
- SJSU Learn Anywhere: <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/>

## ECON 132 – Fall 2020 Course Schedule

This is the tentative schedule for the course. The syllabus may change as the semester progresses, and any changes will be communicated to all students in Canvas and by email. A timely notice and consideration will be provided to all students if any changes need to be made.

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Notes
1	8/19	Introduction to the course and syllabus	First day of instruction
2	8/24	The Four Questions of Public Finance	
		Equilibrium and Social Welfare	
3	8/31	Externality Theory	
4	9/7	Externalities in Action:	
		Health Externalities & Addictive Behavior	
5	9/14	Introduction to Public Goods	
6	9/21	Political Economy	
7	9/28	Theory of Education	
		Education in the United States	
8	10/5	Social Insurance	Midterm 1 due this week
9	10/12	Social Insurance and Moral Hazard	
10	10/19	Health Insurance Theory and Concepts	
11	10/26	Healthcare in the United States	
12	11/2	Social Security	
13	11/9	Extra topics	Midterm 2 due this week

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Notes</b>
14	11/16	Taxation in Theory	
15	11/23	Tax Incidence: Equity Implications	
16	11/30	Tax Inefficiency	
17	12/7	Final examination review	Last day of instruction

### **SJSU Land Acknowledgement:**

San José State University and Surrounding Region Thámien Ancestral Muwekma Ohlone Territory

The San José State University community recognizes that the present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 550, is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Santa Clara, San José, and Dolores, during the advent of the Hispano- European empire into Alta California; and who are the successors and living members of the sovereign, historic, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County.

Furthermore, the San José State University community recognizes that the university is established within the Thámien Ohlone-speaking tribal ethnohistoric territory, which based upon the unratified federal treaties of 1851-1852, includes the unceded ancestral lands of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. Some of the enrolled Muwekma lineages are descended from direct ancestors from the Thámien Ohlone tribal territory whose ancestors had affiliation with Mission Santa Clara.

The San José State University community also recognizes the importance of this land to the indigenous Muwekma Ohlone people of this region, and consistent with our principles of community and diversity strives to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe whose land we occupy.