

**San José State University Economics Department
ECON 232, Seminar in Public Finance, Spring 2020**

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Triya Seshadri
Office Location:	DMH 219
Email:	triyakshana.seshadri@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	W 12pm-1pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	W 6:30pm-9:15pm
Classroom:	DMH 165

Course Web Page and Canvas Messaging

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

Course Description

This course will explore the objectives of the public sector; identify pricing and output in the public sector; examine taxes, their distribution and allocative effects; and analyze public expenditure theory.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

1. Read and analyze professional literature in Public Economics.
2. Undertake policy analysis in Public Economics.

Required Materials

Articles and handouts posted on Canvas

The following text is a useful guide to writing well in economics and is recommended.

Economical Writing by Deirdre McCloskey

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.

Important Dates for the course:

Category	Date
Last Day to Drop without W	February 4 th 2020
Research Proposal	March 4 th 2020
Literature Review	March 25 th 2020
Research Paper Draft for Review	April 22 nd 2020
Student Paper Presentations	April 29 th , May 6 th 2020
Research Paper Due Date	May 13 th 2020
Thought Essays and Peer Reviews Due Date	Every Wednesday Class Meets

Course Structure: This course will be conducted like a seminar. It will be a process of understanding the field of Public Economics through continuous interactions in the classroom. A significant part of the interaction will be writing both for you and for me. My aim as an instructor is to enable you to think about issues in Public Economics and be able to articulate them in a scholarly way through “Thought essays” and an academic article. The course will be in two segments. The first segment is the exploration phase, where we will proceed through the assigned readings for each week through discussions and lecture. This segment will last the first ten weeks of class. During this segment, each of you will write four “thought essays”. These essays will be three pages long, and will explore, critique, or develop the ideas from the readings in that session. You will use these essays as a means to discover if there are some ideas that you would like to potentially develop into a research paper.

The second segment of the course will be the exploitation phase, during the last five weeks of the semester. During this phase, you will each develop an idea for your final research paper for the class and present it for peer review to your class. The final product of this phase will be your research paper for the class, about 20 pages long, which is due no later than **May 13th 2020 10:00pm.**

Peer Review: You will each be assigned a “buddy” in class, during the first week. Beginning the third week of class, each week during exploration phase, each of you will have “thought essays” due. You will also complete a one-page peer-review of the essay of your *buddy*, based on a structured rubric handed out in class. During the exploitation phase, everyone who is not presenting will submit a peer-review report.

Class-Participation: Merely asking questions in class does not contribute to class participation grade. Your grade will be based on how much value your participation adds to the topics being discussed or knowledge and understanding of the rest of the class.

Quiz: There will be a quiz during the first ten minutes of every session beginning the second session on February 5th. These will be based on the readings for the week. We will have approximately 10 quizzes corresponding to the weekly topics.

Grading: Each of your thought essays will be evaluated as I would a research proposal. Your Research Paper will be evaluated as a research paper submitted for a journal. Your essays will be evaluated based on two criteria a) your mastery of the subject and b) your ability to think and articulate new lines of academic inquiry on the topic. Truly outstanding work requires that your papers have both the above-mentioned qualities. “A” grades imply that you have demonstrated both the above qualities in your papers. “B” grades indicate that even though you have demonstrated a mastery of the subject, there is not much indication that you have pushed the topics towards further development. “C” grades imply that you have failed to demonstrate neither a mastery of the subject nor a manner of developing topics in the field further.

Final Paper:

Each student will complete a research paper on an Economic Topic related to Public Economics. The paper can either be a theoretical exploration or an empirical analysis of the topic. The Final Paper is due on the day the Final Exam is scheduled for this course, Wednesday, May 13th by 10:00pm. All Final papers should be at least 5000 words, approximately 15-20 pages (not longer than 25 pages including tables/charts etc) double-spaced, Times New Roman Font size 12 with 1-inch margins. The paper should be submitted on Canvas and on Turnitin by the due date and time. The grading rubric for the Final Paper will be distributed in class.

Final Paper Proposal/Literature Review:

To help prepare for your Final paper, you need to submit a Paper Proposal, which includes your research question, hypothesis, data sources, and an initial literature review (at least 10 citations in a research appropriate format). This is due on March 4th 2020. You also need to submit an annotated bibliography with at least three peer-reviewed articles that you will use in your Final paper. This is due on March 25th 2020. You can add to this literature review as you continue writing your Final Paper.

Please plan for these due dates early. I do not accept any late work.

Final Paper Draft/Paper Presentation/Research Review:

All students need to submit a Final Paper Draft by April 22nd 2020. You will continue to improve on this draft. However, this will be the draft that you will receive comments on both from your peers and me. We will spend the last two class sessions on student presentations. Every student not presenting has to submit an in-class research review for each presentation. I will handout rubrics for you to use.

Grading: Each of your thought essays will be evaluated as I would a research proposal. Your final paper will be evaluated as a research paper submitted for a journal. Your essays will be evaluated based on two criteria a) your mastery of the subject and b) your ability to think and articulate new lines of academic inquiry on the topic. Truly outstanding work requires that your papers have both the above-mentioned qualities. “A” grades imply that you have demonstrated both the above qualities in your papers. “B” grades indicate that even though you have demonstrated a mastery of the subject, there is not much indication that you have pushed the topics towards further development. “C” grades imply that you have failed to demonstrate neither a mastery of the subject nor a manner of developing topics in the field further.

Category	Percentage of Course Grade
Class Participation (Discussion Lead)	10%
Weekly Quiz	10%
Peer Review	15%
Thought Essay	15%
Final Paper Proposal	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Research Presentation	10%
Peer Review of Final Draft	10%
Final Paper	20%

Classroom Protocol

I take academic honesty very seriously and will follow the policies as published by SJSU. These policies are online and available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>. It is the responsibility of the student to read and understand what constitutes a violation of the honor code. Claims of ignorance cannot be used to justify dishonest behaviors. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported through the appropriate channels. In this course, any student caught engaging in activities which violate the honor code as written by the University will receive a semester grade of “F” for this course.

Disability Notice

Please see me as soon as possible if you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Other Class Policies

1. Students will show respect for others at all times.
2. Class will begin on time and end on time.
3. Cell phones need to be set on silent, and laptops speakers need to be muted.
4. Students using electronic devices for non-class purposes will be asked to leave the classroom.
5. Please email me using your SJSU email through Canvas. All attachments need to be through Canvas.
6. I will usually reply within 48 hours except during weekends.
7. I will use Canvas Announcements frequently.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Make sure to review these policies and resources.

ECON 232 Seminar in Public Finance, Spring 2020 Course Schedule

This is the planned schedule for the course. Weekly topics correspond to the writing exercises we will complete that week. Reading lists for the topics will be handed out in the classroom and posted on Canvas. We may be a little ahead or behind on any given week based on how intense the classroom discussion are. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated in the class and through emails.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments Due
1	1/29	Syllabus, Introduction	
2	2/5	Efficiency	
3	2/12	Public Goods	Thought Essay 1
4	2/19	Taxation: Incidence	Peer Review 1
5	2/26	Spatial Public Finance	Thought Essay 2
6	3/4	Place based Policies and Agglomeration	Peer Review 2 Final Paper Proposal
7	3/11	Fiscal Federalism	Thought Essay 3
8	3/18	Corporate Taxation	Peer Review 3
9	3/25	Corporate Taxation	Thought Essay 4 Annotated Bibliography
10	4/1	Spring Break No Class	
11	4/8	Individual Tax	Peer Review 4
12	4/15	Taxes and Innovation	Thought Essay 5
13	4/22	Voting and Redistribution	Peer Review 5 Final Paper Draft
13	4/29	Student Presentations and Research Reviews	Thought Essay 6
14	5/6	Student Presentations and Research Reviews	Peer Review 6
17	5/13	Final Paper Due on Canvas and Turnitin by 10:00pm	