

San José State University
Department of Economics
ECON 132 – Public Finance - Section 01, Fall 2021

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Patralekha (Pat) Ukil
Office Location:	DMH 131 / Zoom Meeting Room (<i>link provided in Canvas</i>)
Email:	patralekha.ukil@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 2 - 4 pm (Zoom); please email for other timings
Class Days/Time:	Mondays 2:15PM - 3:30PM (<i>please see class schedule on pg. 5</i>)
Classroom:	Clark Building 204
Prerequisites:	ECON 1B

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 follow a **hybrid** format where there will be regular in-person classes and also an asynchronous online component using the [Canvas Learning Management System](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. All students will require a 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>.

Classes will be held on selected Mondays (**class schedule has been provided**) at 2:15PM - 3:30PM in Clark 204. All remaining lecture materials (lecture videos, lecture slides, additional readings, etc.) will be posted on Canvas each week. Modules on Canvas will be organized by topic/week, and you will receive weekly notifications from me. ***Please make sure that you check your Canvas notifications regularly.***

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 Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

1. Review and understand relevant economic concepts relating to government intervention in market economies and issues relating to government expenditure and revenue systems.
2. Identify and apply relevant microeconomic principles related to government involvement in a market economy to real-life case studies.
3. Understand and analyze public finance topics with a focus on U.S.-based social issues such as insurance, healthcare, taxation and education, etc.

Required Readings

There is no requirement to purchase a textbook for this course. Lecture slides, lecture videos, articles and all other reading materials will be posted on Canvas and constitute the required learning material for this course. Recommended 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 grading/assessment will be based on the following:

1. **Assignments** (homework assignments, quizzes, short answer questions, etc. assigned on Canvas)
2. **Two midterm examinations** (both take-home)
3. **One final examination** (as per the SJSU Final Exams schedule; submission date TBA)
4. **Participation** in class discussions, any questions, surveys, or discussions posted online in Canvas

Assignments on Canvas will be provided on a regular basis, and the questions could be of two types: multiple-choice questions (i.e., quizzes), and questions which require short/medium-length answers.

The expectation from me is that you will review the lecture materials and the readings for each week, attend classes as per our class schedule, come and talk to me if you have any issues/doubts and then complete the homework assignments and any quizzes that I might assign for that week.

The assignments are built so as to help you prepare for the midterm exams and the final exam. There will also be ungraded practice questions posted on Canvas to help you prepare for the graded assignments.

All examinations are take-home exams and will be conducted on Canvas. They may contain a combination of multiple-choice questions and questions that require short/medium-length answers. You will receive several days

to work on them and submit them online. Some components of the examinations will be timed. **All exams will be posted on Canvas and will also be submitted via Canvas.**

Participation grades will be based on your engagement in class discussions, online surveys, or any discussions/questions posted on Canvas.

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 2021 schedule, which will be the culminating activity based on the course material covered in the semester.

Grading Information

Course grades will be as follows:

Assignments:	20%
Midterm Exam 1:	22.5%
Midterm Exam 2:	22.5%
Final Exam:	30%
Participation:	5%

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 am available to hold office hours on Wednesdays 2-4pm via Zoom. Details will be provided on Canvas. If you wish to set up a meeting with me outside of office hours, 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/messages within 24-36 hours.

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. Completing the assignments on Canvas will benefit you a lot to prepare for each midterm exam and also the final exam.
3. I will also assign some **practice questions (ungraded)** on Canvas throughout the semester and completing those will also be very helpful to prepare for any assignments coming up.

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, and will take it very seriously. Please read and understand what constitutes a violation in this respect and all instances of academic dishonesty will be reported by me.

Please come and talk to me as soon as you can if you are in need of any course changes, adaptations or any accommodations due to a disability. According to the [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\)](#) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

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](#)
- [The SJSU Food Pantry Program](#)
- [SJSU Counseling](#)
 - [SJSU Learn Anywhere](#)

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/>

In-person Class Schedule:

We will have in-person classes in **Clark 204** on the following Mondays only:

August 23rd

August 30th

September 13th

September 20th

October 4th

October 11th

October 25th

November 8th

November 15th

December 6th (last day of Fall 2021)

ECON 132 – Fall 2021 Course Schedule

This is the **tentative schedule** for the course. We will try to stay on track with this syllabus as the semester progresses. Lecture materials (lecture slides and videos) will be provided on Canvas each week, irrespective of whether there is an in-person class or not.

If any changes have to be made to the syllabus, those changes will be communicated to all students in Canvas. 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 The Four Questions of Public Finance	First day of instruction
2	8/23	Equilibrium and Social Welfare	
3	8/30	Externality Theory	
4	9/6	Externality Theory (contd.)	No class on Monday 9/6 – Labor Day
		Health Externalities & Addictive Behavior	
5	9/13	Introduction to Public Goods	
6	9/20	Public Goods (contd.)	
		Midterm 1 will be assigned this week (take-home)	

Week	Date	Topics	Notes
7	9/27	Theory of Education & Education in the United States	No class on Monday 9/27
8	10/4	Social Insurance	
9	10/11	Social Insurance and Moral Hazard	
10	10/18	Health Insurance Theory and Concepts	No class on Monday 10/18
11	10/25	Healthcare in the United States	
		Midterm 2 will be assigned this week (take-home)	
12	11/1	Topics in Political Economy	No class on Monday 11/1
13	11/8	Social Security	
14	11/15	Social Security (contd.)	
15	11/22	Introduction to Taxation Tax Incidence: Equity Implications	No class on Monday 11/22
16	11/29	Tax Inefficiency	No class on Monday 11/29
17	12/6	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.