



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

PADM-GP 2140: Public Economics Fall 2024

Instructor Information

- Laurence Wilse-Samson
- Email: lw3387@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Fridays 9:00-10:30 by appointment
- Class Meeting: Wednesday, 6:45-8:25 pm
- Location: 238 Thompson St (GCASL) Room 279 Loc: Washington Square

Teaching Colleagues

- Section 002 Bergen Bodensteiner
 - Email: bergenb@nyu.edu
 - Office Hours: Tuesdays 7:30 - 8:30 pm by appointment [here](#)
 - Recitation: Tuesdays 8:30 - 9:30 pm
 - Location: Brightspace [zoom](#)
- Section 003 Alejandro Galindo
 - Email: bergenb@nyu.edu
 - Office Hours:
 - Recitation: Thursdays at 8:30
 - Location: Join URL: <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/92947603890>

Course Prerequisites

- CORE-GP 1011 Statistics
- CORE-GP 1018 Microeconomics

Course Description

Public economics uses the tools of microeconomics and empirical analysis to study the impact of government policies on economic behavior and the distribution of resources in the economy. The course begins with a review of market failures and preferences for income redistribution to answer questions such as: when should the government intervene in the economy and what are the effects of those interventions on economic outcomes? Topics include issues related to revenue spending (e.g., education, safety net programs, insurance) and revenue raising (e.g., tax incidence, tax efficiency, income taxes).

Course and Learning Objectives

1. Understand the objectives and core concepts of government interventions in markets.
2. Learn microeconomic foundations of households' and firms' decision making.
3. Learn how economists apply insights from economic theory, lab and field experiments and empirical studies to design policies.
4. Develop basic analytical competency to evaluate public policies.

Learning Assessment Table

Course Learning Objective Covered	Corresponding Assignment Title
#2, #4	Homework assignments
#3, #4	Policy memos
#1, #2, #3, #4	Class participation
#2, #4	Exam

Readings

Required texts:

- Jonathan Gruber, **Public Finance and Public Policy**, 7th edition.
- Pamela Herd and Don Moynihan, **Administrative Burden**.
- All other readings will be posted on the course website.

Note: The required book for this course, **Public Finance & Public Policy** by Gruber, will be delivered to you digitally. You will receive an email from "BryteWave" with the instructions for accessing the material. The **cost of the book is \$74.50**, which will be added as a "book charge" to your bursar bill. If you choose to find your course materials elsewhere, you must login [here to the student portal](#) and opt out of the program by **September 18. If you do not opt out by this date, you will be charged.** Once you opt out or drop the course, the book charge will be reversed in 24-48 hours.

Recitations

Each lecture is followed by a recitation section (held via zoom) led by your TA that focuses on applying course concepts to specific problems. A set of recitation problems will be posted on the website for each week. Solutions to these problems will be released after both recitations have met. Homework problems may also be reviewed in recitation if time permits.

Office Hours

TA and Professor's office hours will be held each week by appointment. To sign up for individual appointments, please see the "Course Welcome" page on Brightspace.

Requirements and Grading

Weekly Problem Sets (20%)

Weekly homework assignments are due at the beginning of each lecture class with scanned copies submitted via the course website. Homework will be graded as check ++, check+, check, check minus, no credit which corresponds to A+/A/B/C/zero. Late assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances. However, students will be allowed to skip one assignment without penalty – for students who complete all assignments, we will drop their lowest grade.

Exams (50%)

There is a midterm and a final, each worth 25% of your grade. The final focuses on material from the second half of the course. These exams will be held in-person. Make-up exams will only be offered in the case of illness.

Policy Writing Assignments (20%)

There will be two writing assignments, each worth 10% of your grade. Assignments may be completed individually or in a two-person team. Grades for late assignments drop 10% per day.

Administrative Burden Presentations (5%)

In addition to the textbook, we will be reading journal articles and excerpts from the book "Administrative Burden". At the start of the semester, you will be assigned to a group to present on that week's reading. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes and cover:

- What are the administrative challenges specific to this policy context?
- What barriers exist that increase administrative burdens?
- What solutions are there to reduce burdens and increase program access?

Class Participation (5%)

I expect that all students will come to lecture regularly and *contribute to the discussion*. If you need to miss the occasional class or recitation, you do not need to inform me; however, if you need to miss several lectures, we will need to have a discussion.

* Chapters listed refer to the Gruber textbook. AB refers to “Administrative Burden”.

Lecture	Recitation	Topics	Chapters	HW Due
1 - Sep 4	1 - Sep 5, 10	Intro to Public Finance	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, Rosen Ch 3	
2 - Sep 11	2 - Sep 12, 17	Redistribution & Public Goods	Rosen Ch.3, 2.3, 7	HW 1
3 - Sep 18	3 - Sep 19, 24	Externalities	<i>5; AB Introduction</i>	HW 2
4 - Sep 25	4 - Sep 26, Oct 1	Education	11.1 - 11.4; <i>Closing the Gap</i>	HW 3
5 - Oct 2	5 - Oct 3, 8	Cash Transfers	2.2, 17	HW 4
6 - Oct 9	6 -Oct 10, 15 (pre-recorded)	In-Kind Transfers	Rosen Ch, 12; <i>AB ch.6</i>	HW 5
7 - Oct 16	7 - Oct 17, 22	Personal Income Taxes	18	Memo 1
Oct 23		Midterm		
8 - Oct 30	8 - Oct 31, Nov 5	Taxes and Labor Supply	21.1 - 21.3; <i>AB ch.8</i>	HW 6
9 - Nov 6	9 - Nov 7, 12	Tax Incidence and Efficiency	20.1 - 20.3; 19.1, 19.2	HW 7
10 - Nov 13	10 - Nov 14, 19	Intro to Insurance	12	HW 8
11 - Nov 20	11 - Nov 21, 26	Unemployment Insurance & Social Security	13, 14 (UI sections); <i>AB ch.9</i>	HW 9
12 - Nov 27	12 - Nov 28, Dec 3	Health Insurance	15.1 - 15.2, 16.1, 16.3, 16.6; <i>AB ch. 4</i>	
13 - Dec 4	13 - Dec 5, 10	Review		Memo 2
Dec 18		Final Exam		

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Discussion leader readings in italics.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

- Homework Assignments: We encourage students to work on homework in groups; however, the final write-up of assignments must be completed individually.
- Writing assignments: If you choose to work as a two-person team, both members of the team must contribute to the joint effort.
- Exams: The exams must be the sole work of the individual student.

Website and Email

The course website is available via BrightSpace. We will post announcements and all documents there. We will periodically send you email using the BrightSpace system so it is important that you regularly check your NYU email account or set up appropriate email forwarding.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to us as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Technology Support

You have 24/7 support via NYU's IT services. Explore the NYU servicelink knowledgebase for troubleshooting and student guides for all NYU-supported tools (Brightspace, Zoom, etc). Contact askIT@nyu.edu or 1-212-998-3333 (24/7) for technology assistance, or contact Zoom's 24/7 technical support (includes a chat function), or review Zoom's support resources. If you do not have the appropriate hardware technology nor financial resources to purchase the technology, consider applying for the NYU Emergency Relief Grant.