



NYU

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

PADM-GP 2140 (1): Public Economics

Spring 2021

Instructor Information

- Alexander Heil, PhD
- Email: ah5701@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: By appointment

Course Information

- Online: 01/28/2021 -- 05/10/2021, Thursdays, 6:45pm-8:25pm

Teaching Colleagues

- Brittany Mazzurco Muscato
- Email: bam396@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Sundays 6-7pm
- Recitation: Mondays 8:35-9:35pm
- Lisa McMonagle
- Email: lm3972@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Thursdays 5-6pm
- Recitation: Thursdays 8:35-9:35pm

Course Prerequisites

- CORE-GP 1011 Statistics
- CORE-GP 1018 Microeconomics
- CORE-GP 1021 Financial management (may be taken concurrently)

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? How might the government intervene? And, what are the effects of those interventions on economic outcomes? Topics include issues related to revenue spending (e.g., education, means-tested programs, social insurance) and revenue raising (e.g., tax incidence, tax efficiency, personal 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**, 6th edition. You may alternatively use another edition of the required text as the differences between recent editions are small. NYU Library Services will be scanning relevant sections, though they can only make 20% of the text available at once – if you would like access to all readings simultaneously, please purchase the textbook.
- Your course is participating in the Follett Access program. This is an NYU Bookstore initiative that delivers required course materials digitally at the lowest possible price. The book for this course, *Public Finance and Public Policy* by Gruber, will be delivered to you digitally. You will receive an email before classes begin, giving you the link to access the material. The cost of the book is \$61.25, which will be added as a “book charge” to your bursar bill the third or fourth week of class.
- If you decide not to use this digital edition you can opt-out of the program. The deadline for opting out is February 12th. The link to opt out of the program is:
- <https://includedcp.follett.com/2015>
- Pamela Herd and Don Moynihan, **Administrative Burden**.
- All other readings will be posted on NYU Classes.

Recitations

Each lecture class is followed by a recitation led by a TA that focuses on applying course concepts to specific problems. Recitations covers the same material and is intended to further deepen the understanding of the course material. In case there will be two recitation sections offered each week, students may attend either one – just make sure that you are attending the correct week’s section (e.g., since lectures are scheduled for Thursday evenings, recitations following each lecture prior to the next week’s lecture will cover the correct material). A set of recitation problems will be posted on the website for each week. You should attempt these on your own before going to the recitation – solutions will be released after both recitations have met. Homework assignments may also be reviewed in recitation if time permits. All recitations and office hours will be held via Zoom. Recitation is not mandatory, but strongly advised.

Office Hours

TA office hours will be open to all students to discuss class content or assignments as a group – if you plan on attending office hours, please email the TA in advance. Professor’s office hours will be individual appointments – please contact me to reserve appointments in advance.

Requirements and Grading

Weekly Problem Sets (20%)

Weekly homework assignments are due at the beginning of each lecture class with scanned copies submitted via NYU Classes. Homework will be graded as check ++, check+, check, check minus, no credit which corresponds to 100/90/85/75/zero. Late assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Exams (40%)

There is a midterm and a final, each worth 20% of your grade. The final focuses on material from the second half of the course and will be held during the final exam period. There are no make-up exams.

Policy Writing Assignments (20%)

There will be two writing assignment, 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.

Economic Highlight 2-minute Presentation (5%)

In addition to the textbook, we will be reading journal articles and excerpts from the book “Administrative Burden”. You are expected to follow the news and the public discourse to review and reflect on applicable real-world case studies. At the start of the semester, you will be assigned a specific week to give a 2-minute presentation on a relevant economic news item or case application. Presentations shall not exceed two minutes in length and cover more than two PowerPoint slides. Slides and an accompanying audio file with your discussion will be submitted online. These presentations will not be given in class.

Class Participation (15%)

I expect that all students will attend lecture regularly and *contribute to the discussion*. If you need to miss the occasional class you do not need to inform me; however, if you need to miss several lectures, please let me know. Attendance at recitation is *strongly* encouraged, but not mandatory.

Class Schedule

	Lectures	Topics	Chapters*	Assignments Due
		Course Administration		
1	28-Jan	Intro to Public Finance	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3	
2	4-Feb	Public Goods	7; <i>AB introduction</i>	HW 1
3	11-Feb	Externalities	5, 6	HW 2
4	25-Feb	Education	11.1-11.4; <i>HAIL Study</i>	HW 3
5	4-Mar	Cash Transfers	2.2, 17	HW 4
6	11-Mar	In-Kind Transfers	Rosen Ch.12; <i>AB ch.6</i>	HW 5
7	18-Mar	Intro to Insurance	12	Memo 1 [due 3/21]
	22 Mar	Review Session		Midterm 3/25 6:45-8:25pm
8	1-Apr	Health Insurance	15.1-15.2, 16.1, 16.3, 16.6, <i>AB ch. 4</i>	HW 6
10	8-Apr	Unemployment Insurance Social Security	13; 14; <i>AB ch.9</i>	HW 7
11	15-Apr	Personal Income Taxes	18	Memo 2
12	22-Apr	Taxes & Labor Supply	21.1-21.3; <i>AB ch. 8</i>	HW 8
13	29-Apr	Tax Efficiency	20.1-20.3	HW 9
14	6-May	Tax Incidence	19.1, 19.2	HW 10

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class.

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

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: While we encourage students to work on the content of the homework in groups, the final write-up of assignments must be done individually, with no sharing of written answers.
- 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 on NYU Classes (<http://newclasses.nyu.edu>). We will post announcements and all documents there. We will periodically send you email using the NYU Classes 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 CSD 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.

Remote Section: Zoom Net-iquette

You are expected to participate in each class with your Zoom audio and video on. Please review Wagner's [Zoom in the Classroom](#) series about classroom etiquette, participation, and more.

Each lecture will be recorded with access granted only to students who need to miss lecture – please email me and I will provide the password to the recording. Students may not share the Zoom classroom recordings. The recordings are kept within the NYU Classes site and are for students enrolled in this course only.

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 (NYU Classes, 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. Your peers are another source of support, so you could ask a friend or classmate for help or tips.

If you do not have the appropriate hardware technology nor financial resources to purchase the technology, consider applying for the NYU Emergency Relief Grant.