

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

# **PADM-GP 2140: Public Economics**

## **Spring 2022**

### **Instructor Information**

- Tatiana Homonoff
- Email: [tah297@nyu.edu](mailto:tah297@nyu.edu)
- Office Hours: Fridays 9:00-11:00am by appointment via zoom (sign up [here](#)); link in calendar appointment invite
- Class Meeting: Tuesdays, 12:00-1:40pm (Section 1) and 6:45-8:25pm (Section 2)
- Location: 238 Thompson Street, GCASL Room 361 (Section 1); GCASL Room 269 (Section 2)

### **Teaching Colleagues**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Brittany Mazzurco Muscato                                 | • Aaron Pope  |
| • Email: <a href="mailto:bam396@nyu.edu">bam396@nyu.edu</a> | • Email: <a href="mailto:ap5107@nyu.edu">ap5107@nyu.edu</a> |
| • Office Hours: Friday 4-5pm via zoom                       | • Office Hours: Monday 7:30-8:30pm via zoom                 |
| • Office hours appt sign up <a href="#">here</a>            | • Office hours appt sign up <a href="#">here</a>            |
| • Recitation: Wednesday 8:35-9:35pm                         | • Recitation: Monday 8:35-9:35pm                            |
| • Location: Brightspace zoom                                | • Location: Brightspace zoom                                |

### **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? 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
#1, #2, #4	Homework assignments
#1, #3, #4	Policy memos, Discussion Readings
#1, #2, #4	Exam

## Required Readings

- Jonathan Gruber, **Public Finance and Public Policy**, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.
- Pamela Herd and Don Moynihan, **Administrative Burden**. □ All other readings will be posted on the course website.

Note: This course is participating in the Follett Access program. This is an NYU Bookstore initiative that delivers required course materials at the lowest possible price. The book, Public Finance and Public Policy by Gruber, will be delivered to you digitally. The cost of the book is \$69.00, which will be added as a “book charge” to your bursar bill, this is a savings of \$232.15 over the publisher’s hardcopy list price. If you decide not to use this digital edition you can opt out of the program. The deadline for opting out is **February 8th**. If you don’t opt out by this date you will be charged. The link to opt out of the program is [here](#).

## Recitation & Office Hours

Each lecture is followed by two recitation sections led by a TA via Brightspace Zoom that focus on applying course concepts to specific problems. A set of recitation problems will be posted in the Lesson tab each week. You should attempt these on your own before going to the recitation. Homework problems may also be reviewed in recitation if time permits. Each section covers the same material and students may attend either section, regardless of your assigned section. Recitation is not mandatory, but strongly advised. Solutions to the recitation problems a recording of the second recitation section will be released after both recitations have met.

Office hours with the Professor and TAs will be individual 15 minute block appointments – please reserve appointments in advance. All meeting will take place via Zoom.

## 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 100/95/85/75/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 and will be held during the final exam period set by the registrar. There are no make-up exams.

## **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.

## **Discussion Leaders (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 lead discussion for that week’s reading. Discussion should 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 you do not need to inform me; however, if you need to miss several lectures, please contact me to discuss ([tah297@nyu.edu](mailto:tah297@nyu.edu)).

	<b>Lecture &amp; Recitation</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Chapters*</b>	<b>HW Due</b>
1	Jan 25	Intro to Public Finance	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, Rosen Ch.3	
2	Feb 1	Public Goods	7; AB introduction	HW 1
3	Feb 8	Externalities	5, 6 (skim)	HW 2
4	Feb 15	Education	11.1-11.4; Dynarski et al	HW 3
5	Feb 22	Cash Transfers	2.2, 17	HW 4

6	Mar 1	In-Kind Transfers	Rosen Ch.12; AB ch.6	HW 5
	Mar 8	Midterm**		
7	Mar 22	Intro to Insurance	12	Memo 1
8	Mar 29	Health Insurance	15.1-15.2, 16.1, 16.3, 16.6; AB ch. 4	HW 6
9	Apr 5	Unemployment Insurance & Social Security	13, 14 (UI sections); AB ch.9	HW 7
10	Apr 12	Personal Income Taxes	18	Memo 2
11	Apr 19	Taxes & Labor Supply	21.1-21.3; AB ch. 8	HW 8
12	Apr 26	Tax Efficiency	20.1-20.3	HW 9
13	May 3	Tax Incidence	19.1, 19.2	HW 10
	May 17	Final Exam**		

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

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

\*\* Midterm review and final review sessions will take place the prior weekend. Time TBD.

## Remote Instruction Policy

Following NYU policy, lecture will be held in-person throughout the semester unless the university moves to remote instruction. All recitation sections and office hours will be held via Zoom throughout the semester.

In the event that the course needs to be offered entirely online for a particular class meeting (for example, if the instructor is sick), we will meet via Zoom at the standard class time. Announcements will be made via Brightspace.

In the event that a student needs to be out of class for an excused absence, students will be provided access to a lecture recording via Brightspace which will be available starting the day after class through the end of the day of the following lecture (i.e., one week).

Excused absences include:

- (i) Any illness (Covid or otherwise)
- (ii) Potential Covid exposure (self or household member)
- (iii) Covid-related childcare or dependent care issues
- (iv) Religious holidays
- (v) Family emergencies

Please email me ([tah297@nyu.edu](mailto:tah297@nyu.edu)) to receive access to the “Lecture Recording” Brightspace tab only if you are absent for one of the reasons above. Note: NYU-Wagner has instructed professors not to use hybrid instruction, so absent students will not be able to zoom into lecture synchronously.

## 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](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to 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](mailto: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.