

# Economics 4315/7315: Public Economics - Fall 2021

**Course Description from the Course Catalogue:** Analyzes economic effects of government expenditures, taxes and debt. Expenditure and taxation principles, tax reform, cost-benefit analysis, fiscal policy. Prerequisite: Econ 3251 or Econ 4351.

**Time and Place:** Fully online, asynchronous. Uses mostly recorded lectures.

**Instructor:**

Saku Aura

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Office Hours: Virtually by appointment

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**This course uses Canvas**

**Corrections to the syllabus:** It is possible that the syllabus will be revised after the start of the class.

**Class communications:** Please use your university-issued email address to communicate with the instructor. Please use regular email and do not use Canvas' built-in messaging for this. For non-urgent non-private communications, you can also use the forum function on Canvas.

**Textbook:** Public Finance and Public Policy by Jonathan Gruber, 6th Edition (Worth Publishers). At the time of the publishing of this syllabus the delivery mode of the textbook is still being negotiated between the bookstore and the publisher.

The lectures will cover some material beyond the material covered in the textbook. Note that this additional material is required for the quizzes.

**Recorded Lectures:** There will be a weekly recorded lecture posted on Canvas (via Panopto). Please read the corresponding materials and posted lecture slides before watching the lecture. Please note that distributing any part of these lectures (or any other material from this class) is a copyright violation.

## Grading

The grading in this course is based on quizzes and a case study.

Assignment	Weight
Quizzes	60%
Case study	40%

**Graduate Credit (Econ 7315):** The expectation of performance in the written assignments is higher for graduate students: the grading scale for graduate credit will be separate from the undergraduates.

## Quizzes

There will be four quizzes, administered via Canvas using SmarterProctoring. Each quiz is worth 20% of the course grade, with the lowest score not counting. Details about quizzes will follow, you will have a 24-hour window to take a quiz. A quiz has to be taken in a single session during that window.

## Statement regarding extra credit

There will be no extra credit assignments in this class.

## Preliminary Lecture Plan and Other Deadlines:

Reading relevant chapters from the textbook before the lecture will make the discussion more interesting. The following is a rough guide on how the course will proceed.

All the dates are still subject to change.

Week		Topic	Chapters
1	08/23	Introduction	1
2	08/30	Theoretical Tools	2
3	09/06	Theoretical Tools	2
4	09/13	Externalities	5,6
	09/16	Quiz 1	
5	09/20	Public Goods	7
6	09/27	Cost-Benefit Analysis	8
7	10/04	Political Economy	9
8	10/11	Political Economy	9
	10/14	Quiz 2	
9	10/18	Income Distribution	17
10	10/25	Welfare Programs	17
11	11/01	Taxation: Overview	18
	11/04	Quiz 3	
12	11/08	Tax Incidence	19
13	11/15	Tax Efficiency	20
14	11/29	Social Insurance	12
15	12/06	Social Security	13
	12/08	Quiz 4 (note: Wednesday)	
	12/09	Case Study due	

## Case Study

This is both data exercise and a writing assignment. You will be asked to pick a jurisdiction (country or a State/Province), and write a case study on that. More details on this assignment will be given later.

All written assignments must be double-spaced 12-point font format, and with 1-inch margins and they must be submitted electronically via Canvas. More information about the submission will be provided later. The final versions of papers must use a consistent and formal style for acknowledging all sources. Missed or late work will receive the minimum score.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheat-

ing, consult the course instructor or the [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

Students are expected to adhere to this honor pledge on all graded work whether or not they are explicitly asked in advance to do so: “I strive to uphold the University values of respect, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work.”

## **Accommodation of Disabilities**

The goal of the University of Missouri is to ensure an inclusive learning environment for all students. [The University of Missouri Disability Center](#) provides services and accommodations for students to participate fully in the learning experience and to experience equitable evaluation of their performance. Students (including online students) with a documented disability can contact the Disability Center to establish an [Accommodation Plan](#). Documented disabilities include hearing, vision, mobility, learning and attention, psychological health, and physical health. Students’ accommodations are implemented with the input of students to maximize the learning experiences. The MU Disability Center keeps information about a student’s disability confidential.

Please notify me of your eligibility for accommodations as soon as possible. Additionally, if there are aspects of the course that present as barriers, such as inaccessible course content (e.g., learning assessments, PowerPoints, non-captioned videos, images, tables, PDFs) or if you need an immediate accommodation due to an injury, please contact me or the Disability Center as soon as possible.

## **Intellectual Pluralism**

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director, the [Office of Academic Integrity](#), or the [MU Equity Office](#).

## **Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion, and Privacy**

When students record something that happens in a course (a lecture, class discussions, meetings, etc.) it has an impact on the rights of the people captured in that recording. For example, the instructor and the University may have rights to the intellectual property contained in that recording. At the same time, another student who may have been recorded has the right to privacy. In order to protect these rights, MU employs a policy (called “[Executive Order No.](#)”

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- In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded.

Students who violate this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section [200.020](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

## **FERPA**

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records; to establish the rights of students to inspect and review their education records; and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. The law applies to any individual who is or has been in attendance at an institution and regarding whom the institution maintains educational records. Once students have matriculated to the University of Missouri, i.e. enrolled in course work, FERPA rights transfer to the student, regardless of the student’s age.

Students can enable certain individuals to have access to their education records by signing a [FERPA waiver](#). The consent must specify records to be disclosed, state the purpose of the disclosure and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure must be made.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The University of Missouri does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex (including gender), pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, protected veteran status, and any other status protected by applicable state or federal law. Discrimination includes any form of unequal treatment such as denial of opportunities, harassment, and violence.

Sex discrimination includes rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, unwanted touching, stalking, dating/domestic violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. Retaliation for making or supporting a report of discrimination or harassment is also prohibited.

If you experience discrimination or sexual violence, you are encouraged (but not required) to report the incident to the MU Office for Civil Rights & Title IX. Learn more about your rights

and options at [civilrights.missouri.edu](https://civilrights.missouri.edu) or call 573-882-3880. You also may make an anonymous report online.

Students may also contact the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center, a confidential resource, for advocacy and other support related to rape or power-based personal violence at [rsvp@missouri.edu](mailto:rsvp@missouri.edu) or 573-882-6638, or go to [rsvp.missouri.edu](https://rsvp.missouri.edu).

Both the [Office for Civil Rights & Title IX](#) and the [RSVP Center](#) can provide assistance to students who need help with academics, housing, or other issues.

## **Mental Health**

The University of Missouri is committed to supporting student well-being through an integrated network of care, with a wide range of services to help students succeed. The MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health care, and can help you find the best approach to treatment based on your needs. Call to make an appointment at 573-882-6601. Any student in crisis may call or go to the MU Counseling Center between 8:00 – 5:00 M-F. After hours phone support is available at 573-882-6601.

Visit our website at <https://wellbeing.missouri.edu> to take an online mental health screening, find out about workshops and resources that can help you thrive, or learn how to support a friend. Download Sanvello, a phone app that teaches skills and strategies to help you maintain good mental health. Log in with your Mizzou e-mail to unlock all the tools available through Sanvello at no cost to you.

## **Last date of attendance and impact on financial aid**

Federal regulations for financial aid require the student financial aid office to document the attendance of students who have received federal financial aid if they do not successfully complete any courses during the term. As a result, the last day of attendance (or activity) for any student receiving an F, U, or FN in this course will be recorded in the grade roster and reported to the financial aid office. Based on the last day of attendance, students may be required to repay a portion of their financial aid award for the semester.

A student's last day of attendance (or activity) is the last day on which a student participates in an academically-related activity at the University. These include:

- **Attendance in class, lab, or an instructor's office hours**
- **The completion of an assignment or examination**
- **An appointment with a professor or e-mail correspondence regarding course material**

- (Online courses only) For online courses, the last day a student submits an assignment or exam. Only logging into an online class without participating is *not* acceptable for last day of attendance

Please note that discussing a course withdrawal or notifying the instructor of an absence in class does not constitute participation for financial aid purposes. Moreover, any office hour visits or email correspondence must be related to the course material.

## **Netiquette**

Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Our differences, some of which are outlined in the University's nondiscrimination statement, will add richness to this learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can be misconstrued in online interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course ambiance.

## **Religious Holidays & Accommodations**

Many religious faiths are represented in the student body. The University of Missouri does not restrict student free exercise of religion, unless 1) the restriction is in the form of a rule of general applicability, and does not discriminate against religion or among religions; and 2) it can be demonstrated that the application of the restriction is essential to furthering a compelling university interest, and is not unduly restrictive considering the relevant circumstance. The policy of the University attempts to strike a reasonable balance between accommodating the religious practice of students and meeting academic needs and standards

Consult IDE's [Guide to Religions](#) for the form that can be used to notify an instructor of an absence associated with religious practice. Students are expected to notify their instructor(s) by completing and submitting this form in a manner that is consistent with the procedure outlined in the university's policy on student religious accommodation. Providing false information regarding sincerely held religious practice is a violation of the university's Standard of Conduct and will not be tolerated.