

# Economics 4315/7315: Public Economics - Spring 2023

**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

Office: E233 Locust Street Building

Office Hours: Virtually by appointment

Phone: 882 6073

Email: [auras@missouri.edu](mailto:auras@missouri.edu)

**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, 7th Edition (Worth Publishers). The textbook will be available via Canvas. 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	01/16 Introduction	1
2	01/23 Theoretical Tools	2
3	01/30 Theoretical Tools	2
4	02/06 Externalities	5,6
	02/08 Quiz 1	
5	02/13 Public Goods	7
6	02/20 Cost-Benefit Analysis	8
7	02/27 Political Economy	9
8	03/06 Political Economy	9
	03/08 Quiz 2	
9	03/13 Income Distribution	17
10	03/20 Welfare Programs	17
11	04/03 Taxation: Overview	18
	04/05 Quiz 3	
12	04/10 Tax Incidence	19
13	04/17 Tax Efficiency	20
14	04/24 Social Insurance	12
15	05/01 Social Security	13
	05/03 Quiz 4	
	05/04 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.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### 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.

## **Standard of Conduct for Academic Integrity**

In addition, 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."

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

## **Acceptable Use**

The University of Missouri's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for information technology applies to Mizzou websites. The AUP addresses federal and state laws, university regulations, intellectual-property rights, software-licensing requirements and prohibitions against plagiarism and obscenity. This policy applies to all users including faculty, staff, students, and guest users of University of Missouri computer networks, equipment, or connecting resources.

### **[UM System Acceptable Use Policy](#)**

## **Copyright**

This section helps you understand copyright in course materials, student work and pages published on Mizzou websites.

### **[UM System Copyright Information](#)**

## **Executive Order No. 38**

When you 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, your 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. 38”) to govern both situations you may encounter while taking a course—when your instructor allows recordings and when he or she does not allow them.

### **[Executive Order No. 38](#)**

## **FERPA**

The University of Missouri maintains educational records of students in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Related topics include privacy policies at MU, display of student directory information, and details about how MU manages FERPA-protected information.

### **[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)**

## **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 director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities, or the MU Equity Office.

### **[Statement on Intellectual Pluralism](#)**

## **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

The University of Missouri does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, genetics information, disability, or status as a protected veteran.

### **[MU Statement of Nondiscrimination](#)**

If you experience discrimination or sexual violence, you are encouraged (but not required) to report the incident to the Office of Institutional Equity. Learn more about your rights and options at the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) or by calling 573-882-3880. You also may make an anonymous report online.

If you are a survivor, or someone concerned about a survivor, and need immediate information on what to do, see [RSVP resources page](#). Both the Office of Institutional Equity and the RSVP

Center can provide assistance to students who need help with academics, housing, or other issues.

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced any of these forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment, Mizzou policies require that, as your instructor, I share this information with the MU Office of Institutional Equity. They will contact you to offer information about resources, as well as your rights and options as a member of our campus community.

## **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 additional 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 standard.

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.

## **Decreasing the Risk of COVID-19 in Classrooms and Labs**

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as someone who needs to quarantine, do not attend class in person until the mandated period for isolation or quaran-

tine has passed. Your instructor will work with you on arrangements to access class material while you are in isolation or quarantine.

Additionally, if you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.

Please consult [Show Me Renewal](#) for further guidelines. This statement will be updated as information changes. Last updated August 9, 2022.