

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

School of Public Affairs

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Course: PADM 7323 (CRN 61694)
Title: Public Financial Administration
Semester: Fall 2021
Meeting date / time: Thursday 6:00-8:40 pm
Location: Hybrid

General Course Description:

This course introduces graduate students to the principles of public finance and the skills necessary for sound management of public sector financial resources. The course covers theoretical and practical issues related to public sector budgeting. How governments obtain revenue and determine expenditures will be explored. The theory of why a public sector exists and how society makes collective choices will be discussed. The legal, political and economic perspectives of public budgeting will be emphasized.

Student Learning Objectives:

The goal of this course is for students to obtain public budgeting and finance knowledge and skills that will be useful in their careers and in their role as citizens. Students who successfully complete this course will be able:

1. To lead and manage in public governance
 - a. Students will study how public organizations construct budgets and other financial statements.
 - b. Students are expected to distinguish between effective and ineffective management
2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
 - a. Students are expected to learn how to effectively critique, construct and present arguments for legislative, judicial and administrative change
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
 - a. Show mastery of up-to date theoretical and practical (applied) knowledge in public budgeting and finance
 - b. Show mastery of specialized knowledge and skills appropriate to executing the tasks associated with public budgeting and finance
 - c. Show an understanding & appreciation of organizational, political and socio-economic environments
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective
 - a. Students are expected to work cooperatively on some class projects
 - b. Students are expected to internalize the values of justice, equality, diversity and transparency through coursework
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry
 - a. Students are expected to successfully complete team projects
 - b. Students are expected to communicate with one another in class discussion with sensitivity to the diversity within the classroom and subject matter

Specifically:

1. Develop an understanding of
 - a. Key concepts and terms utilized in public budgeting and finance;

- b. The budgetary process and budget reforms;
 - c. The impact of the political, social, economic, technical, and legal environment on public budgeting and finance decisions; and
 - d. Managerial issues related to public budgeting and finance including financial ethics, and teamwork.
2. The ability to
- a. Effectively communicate issues related to public budgeting and finance; and
 - b. Apply analytic skills in addressing public budgeting and finance issues.

Required Textbooks

Nice, David C., and Patrick Fisher. 2021. *Public Budgeting*. 3rd ed. San Diego, CA: Birkdale Publishers.

Rubin, Irene S. 2020. *The Politics of Public Budgeting: Getting and Spending, Borrowing and Balancing*. 9th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

You are responsible for all required readings. You are encouraged to use any additional materials that will help you with the material we will cover. Periodically I will post peer reviewed journal articles or media that supplement the required reading.

Course format

The course will include the use of both theory and practice. The course will consist of lectures and discussion. The hybrid course format means that some classes will take place in person and some will be held virtually during our regularly scheduled class period via Zoom.

Course Policies

Attendance

Our course requires active participation and discussion. Therefore it is important that you come to class and be prepared to discuss the readings. If you are unable to attend class because of work, family or other obligation please email me at arwilliamson@ualr.edu. More than two (2) absences from class will lower your grade by a full letter grade. If you experience challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can develop a solution with regard to class attendance.

Blackboard

A Blackboard site is set up for this course. Announcements related to readings, assignments, and other issues will be made via Blackboard with a copy sent to your UA Little Rock email address. Exams and assignments will be posted to Blackboard, and you will submit them via Blackboard. There may also be supplemental material posted to Blackboard.

Written Work

This is a graduate-level course. Accordingly, all written work will be evaluated not only based on substance and persuasiveness, but also spelling, style, grammar, and organization. Proofread your work prior to submission. All assignments are to be uploaded via Blackboard.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to be familiar with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Integrity Standards. The UALR Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed here: <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/academic-integrity/>.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on how we can meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact the DRC, at 501-916-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-246-8296 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability.

Classroom Culture

It is expected that **learning** in our class will depend on **active participation and vigorous discussion**, but in **an atmosphere of mutual respect** among students and the instructor. Be creative and question what you read. All ideas and contributions are encouraged. It is important to recognize that others may have different opinions and that we should discuss these issues in a cooperative and respectful manner. Students should feel free engage in discussion with the assurance that **the classroom is a safe environment to explore ideas**.

Course Requirements

1. Course **readings as assigned** and **active participation in class discussions is expected**. Students are also encouraged to read the daily newspaper in order to follow current budgeting discussions from a local, state and national perspective.
2. **Mid-Term Exam**. A take-home mid-term exam will be administered.
3. **Final State budget analysis group project**. Students will be given a budget analysis research project. Directions for the assignment will be distributed in class. Note, there is a peer review component of the final that also impacts your grade. **Due December 6th**.
4. **Final Exam**. A take-home final exam will be administered.

Grading Policy

The weight of each assignment/examination will be as follows:

Class Participation (including case discussions)	15%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
State Budget analysis, presentation and peer evaluation	35%
Final Exam	30%

Grading

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	91-100
B	81-90
C	71-80
D	61-70
F	<60

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center provides students with writing at any stage of the process. The Writing Center is offering online assistance in Fall 2021. Visit the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://ualr.edu/writingcenter/home/owl/>. You may also contact the Writing Center's director, Dr. Earnest L. Cox for more information by emailing him at elcox@ualr.edu.

Virtual Protocol

If the university determines that all classes must go online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will transition to synchronous online classes at the regular class time.

ATTENDANCE is a component of class participation. Being present in class is a key to success. Attendance is defined as being present and participating in the in person or virtual class session. (This is a hybrid course.) Use of a video camera during class sessions is encouraged but not required. We may have occasional asynchronous course days throughout the term to give students a break from being present at a fixed time. During this time of pandemic I understand that students may face interruptions related to illness/family illness, abrupt changes in work schedule or children's schooling situation, and other unforeseen circumstances, so the following option is available:

- Being absent more than 1 total class session will **lower your participation grade**. **An absence is:** a) missing a class without completing alternate attendance within 7 days [with a limit of 3 total alternate attendance days]; b) for asynchronous class days, not completing the asynchronous session work on time.
- Communication is essential during this time. If you experience a serious obstacle that impacts your ability to attend and complete work in the course, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss your progress and potential accommodations.

Health and Wellness Resources

Free, confidential counseling is available for enrolled students, including referrals. More information about the UALR Counseling Center, including hours and how to sign up here: <https://ualr.edu/counseling/>. Phone: 501.569.3185

CHASSE link to student resources and UA Little Rock Care Team:

Having trouble with class (or life!) and not sure where to find help? Start your search at <https://ualr.edu/chasse/student-resources/>

- Resources on this CHASSE website range from big picture needs such as transportation and childcare; to general needs available on campus such as printing, counseling, student success workshops; to specific academic assistance such as communication, math, supplemental tutoring, blackboard; and includes a link to the university's main student services list. Some of these resources include the [Trojan Food Pantry](#), the [Career Closet](#), [Disability Resource Center](#), [Health Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Military Student Success Center](#) and more.
- You can also [request student support from the UA Little Rock Care Team](#).

The Office of Student Success has prepared a list of [academic](#) and [community](#) resources for students. You can also submit requests for academic, technical, and financial assistance through the Care Team. A member of the Care Team will consult over the phone to identify appropriate campus and community resources. [Click here](#) to request assistance.

Food/Housing insecurity

The well-being of students is of primary importance. If you are facing any challenges related to your physical or mental health, or obstacles like food or housing insecurity, please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss ways we can put you in the best possible position to succeed. If you do not feel comfortable discussing this with me go to the following link for some helpful university and community resources:

<https://ualr.edu/studentssuccess/community-resources/>

[Trojan Food Pantry](#) The Pantry is open to all UALR students, faculty, and staff with a UALR ID. Participants can visit each week, and they receive a three-day supply of food when they visit. <http://ualr.edu/foodpantry/>

Any student who faces challenges securing their food and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the UA Little Rock Trojan Food Pantry for support. ualr.edu/foodpantry.