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**ECON 32200: ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC POLICY**  
**SPRING 2026**

**Instructor:** AVIK SANYAL  
**Meeting:** Tuesday and Thursday 5:00 PM to 6:15 PM Gyte 117  
**Office:** Classroom Office Building, CLO 256  
**Office Hours:** Monday 3:30 to 5PM  
**Work Phone:** (219) 989-2313  
**E-mail:** Sanyal8@pnw.edu  
**Department Contact:** (219) 989-2347; CLO 215, 2200 169th Street, Hammond, IN 46323-2094  
<https://www.pnw.edu/history-philosophy-politics-economics/>

**UNIVERSITY CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the role of government in market economies. The aim of the course is to provide an understanding of the reasons for government intervention in the economy and how individuals and firms respond to taxation and other government actions and how to evaluate the benefits and costs of public programs. For example, what effects do taxes have on incentives to work, save, and invest? Emphasis is placed on current U.S. policy issues including Social Security, health care, education, environmental regulation, welfare programs, and tax reform. *Pre-Requisite: ECON 210 or ECON 251.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course focuses on analyzing and evaluating government expenditures and finances to help policy makers formulate public policies for various government activities. We attend public schools; travel on streets, highways, and buses; receive clean water and dispose dirty water; have our trash collected; enjoy the security of police and fire protection; use public hospitals; vacation at parks and beaches; support the less fortunate with services and income maintenance; receive government funds; etc. This course will focus on these government activities. Using economic theories and concepts, we will study how government can efficiently allocate resources and how we evaluate and recommend public expenditure and taxation policies. Various government activities with respect to government spending and taxation will be analyzed by applying basic principles of economics.

**REQUIRED REGISTRATION WITH CONNECT:**

All students must register with McGraw-Hill Connect through BRIGHTSPACE. Click on “McGraw-Hill Connect Access” on the Content section of your Brightspace page..

Public Finance, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (eBook) with Connect Access

Author: Harvey Rosen

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

**OTHER RECOMMENDED MATERIALS:**

In addition to the assigned text chapters, readings from other sources, such as lecture notes, articles, and videos for viewing will be posted in weekly folders.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explain how the provision of government goods and services through political institutions differs from market provision of goods and services.
- 2) Examine and analyze how taxes and subsidies impact efficiency in competitive markets vs market failure.
- 3) Describe and analyze the different types of taxation, such as, income tax, consumption/sales tax, corporate income tax, wealth tax,
- 4) Examine and analyze the role of public policy in providing public goods/services, such as, education, health care, infrastructure, social security, income assistance, unemployment compensation, etc.
- 5) Identify Policy limitations and participate in Civic engagement and advocacy for policy reform
- 6) Apply public finance tools and concepts for a project on a real world public finance topic.

**ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Completing assigned readings, homework assignments, quizzes, and exams in BRIGHTSPACE are the basic requirements to meet the five learning objectives. Each of these learning objectives will be assessed in the following way:

Learning Objective	Assessment Tools
1 - 5	HW & Discussion
5,6	Public Policy and Social Action Project

**GRADED ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION POLICIES:**

1. **HW Assignments:** 160 points
2. **Discussions and Debates:** 50 points
3. **Public Policy and Civic Engagement Project:** 150 points
4. **Attendance** 40

**GRADING POLICY:**

A+: 390 – 400;	A: 375 – 389;	A-: 360 – 374
B+: 350 – 359;	B: 335 – 349;	B-: 320 – 334
C+: 310 – 319;	C: 295 – 309;	C-: 280 – 294
D+: 270 – 279;	D: 255 – 269;	D-: 240 – 254
F: Below 240		

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**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:**

There will be multiple homework assignments, which need to be submitted through Brightspace. The homework assignments will be multiple choice, graphing and possibly a few video assignments. I will issue announcements on Brightspace when a new assignment has been created and you will have 10 to 14 days to submit the homework assignment is posted. Late submissions will involve a penalty.

**DISCUSSIONS and DEBATES:** We will have a number of in-class and Brightspace debates, podcasts and discussions regarding various topics in the syllabus. In each such discussion you get points for participating. The nature of such Discussions will include role playing debates as politicians in class to recording a podcasts on Brightspace.

**PUBLIC POLICY and CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT:** The course will also involving learning how to engage in civic engagement campaigns and activism for advocating for policy reform. We will begin by identifying policies that we feel may need change or reform and then engage in activities such as carrying out surveys, distributing flyers, create awareness via social media. In the Finals week you will have to present your findings and share your experience. Details will be provided as we go along the semester

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**NO CELL-PHONES:** To ensure a focused and respectful learning environment, this class has a strict no-cell phones policy. Cell phones should be set to silent mode and stored out of site during a lecture unless explicitly permitted by an instructor for learning purposes (such as clicking pictures of stuff written on a board). If you have any emergency call/text then you can exit the class, respond to your call/text outside the classroom and return once you are done.

**Attendance Policy:** This course has 40 points for attendance. Your score will depend on the percentage of lectures you attend. For example, if you attend 90% of the lectures, your attendance score will be 90% of 40 or 18 points. You are required that you sign the attendance sheet for every class you attend. It is your responsibility to make sure you sign it. If your signature is not there, you will be marked absent.

**Communication Policy:** It is very important that we engage in active and effective communication in this course. This will require that you read the syllabus, class announcements on Brightspace, and emails very carefully before you contact the instructor with your questions/concerns. I will try to respond to your emails with relevant concerns within 48 hours. However, any email received between Friday and Sunday will take longer time. I will give preference to responding to emails with questions related to course materials/issues that have not been covered in the syllabus, course contract, announcements, emails, and any assignment instructions.

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**OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**[Honor Code](#)<sup>1</sup> [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#)<sup>2</sup> [Classroom Civility Policies](#)<sup>3</sup> [Students](#)**

**with Disabilities:**

“Students who may need accommodations to address barriers caused by documented disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act need to register with the Disability Access Center (DAC) to receive accommodations. To request and receive accommodations, students schedule an appointment with the DAC to initiate review and approval of supporting documentation showing their disability, the barriers it causes, and the recommended accommodations. If documentation is approved, the DAC will email a letter to the student’s current semester faculty members outlining the accommodations needed to ensure accessibility. Accommodations will be provided from the date the letter originates from the DAC. It is important to register as soon as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. The DAC is located at the Hammond campus in the Student Union & Library Building (SUL) 341 and Westville in the Technology Building (TECH) 101. The DAC can be reached at (219) 989-2455 or emailing: [dac@pnw.edu](mailto:dac@pnw.edu). [DAC website](#)<sup>4</sup>.

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

“Purdue University Northwest is committed to supporting and advancing the mental health and well-being of our PNW students. During the course of their academic careers, students often experience personal challenges that contribute to barriers in learning, such as drug/alcohol problems, strained relationships, chronic worrying, persistent sadness or loss of interest in enjoyable activities, family conflict, grief and loss, domestic violence, difficulty concentrating, problems with organization, procrastination and/or lack of motivation. Students also sometimes come to college with a history of learning difficulties (e.g., any form of special education), experience difficulties succeeding in a particular subject (e.g., math, reading), or have experienced some form of trauma be it emotional or physical (e.g., head injury). These mental health concerns can lead to diminished academic performance and can interfere with daily life activities. If you or someone you know has a history of mental health concerns or if you are unsure and would like a consultation, a variety of confidential services are available. The Counseling Center is located in Gyte 05 in Hammond and TECH 101 in Westville. You can also reach us at (219) 989-2366 or on [the Counseling website](#).<sup>4</sup> [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)<sup>5</sup> at (800) 273-TALK or on the web.

**Non-Discrimination:**

Purdue University Northwest prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. Any student who believes they have witnessed or experienced discrimination are encouraged to report the incident to the Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in Lawshe 231, Hammond or call (219) 989-2337 or in Schwarz 25, Westville or call (219) 785-5545. Additional information can be found on the [Diversity website](#).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/honor-code](http://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/honor-code)

<sup>2</sup> [www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/purdue-university-northwest-academic-integrity-policy/](http://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/purdue-university-northwest-academic-integrity-policy/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/toward-a-model-of-community-civility-student-guide-12006/](http://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/toward-a-model-of-community-civility-student-guide-12006/) <sup>4</sup> [www.pnw.edu/dac](http://www.pnw.edu/dac)

<sup>4</sup> [www.pnw.edu/counseling/](http://www.pnw.edu/counseling/)

<sup>5</sup> [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pnw.edu/diversity>

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**Emergency Preparedness:**

“An information sheet, with instructions for various types of possible emergencies, is posted in each room on campus. These emergencies include criminal activity, severe weather, fire, medical emergencies, and noises sounding like gunshots. Students are strongly encouraged to review this instruction sheet carefully and acquaint themselves with these important guidelines. PNW will hold annual drills to prepare for emergencies such as severe weather, active shooter and fire. It is strongly encouraged that all students participate in these drills in an effort to strengthen our emergency preparedness efforts.” **COVID-19 Preparedness:**

To keep our students, faculty, staff, and community safe, students are required by the University to maintain [social distancing and face covering protocols](#) established by the Director of Public Safety. (Face coverings must cover both nose and mouth.) These are required while students are on campus or participating in University-sponsored activities. These same protocols will be followed in the classroom environment. Because of the importance of these protocols to the safety of the University community, failure and refusal to comply with the protocols will be treated as “obstruction or disruption of a University activity” as defined in the [Code of Conduct](#). If class is meeting face-to-face, students should utilize available cleaning supplies in the classroom to disinfect their desks, tables, and chairs before class begins. Full cleaning and disinfecting by facilities staff will occur nightly.

As we navigate through this unprecedented time, it may be necessary to move a class that is meeting face-to-face to a remote course delivery. Depending on circumstances that may arise, students need to be prepared to continue taking a course while switching to a different modality. The University will do its best to communicate such changes with at least a 24 to 48-hour notice.

If you feel any symptoms, please stay at home. You will not be penalized for putting your health and those around you first, rather, such consideration is encouraged and praised.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please contact Colin Fewer, Dean of Students at 219.989.4141 or through email at [fewer@pnw.edu](mailto:fewer@pnw.edu).

**Course Engagement & Policies:**

Student engagement in coursework and class activities is essential for learning and student success. Additionally, to comply with federal mandates related to financial aid, the university is required to track attendance and engagement in course activities. Depending on the delivery format of your course, attendance and engagement in the course may be defined and tracked in different ways. Meaningful engagement in a course may include attending live class sessions (in person or remotely), engaging with learning materials, participating in learning activities, completing assessments, and interacting with classmates and/or the instructor. Logging into the course site in Brightspace alone does not constitute meaningful engagement in a course. You are expected to be actively engaged in the course activities as explained in the course syllabus.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (Tentative):**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	CHAPTER READINGS
1	1/13 – 1/15	Introduction to Public Finance	1
2	1/20 – 1/22	Public Finance Theoretical/Empirical Tools	2
3	1/27 – 1/29	Review of Microeconomics, Public Goods and Externalities	Lecture Notes
4	2/3 – 2/5	Political Economy	4, 5
5	2/10 – 2/11	Political Economy, Education	6, 7
6	2/16 – 2/19	Cost-Benefit Analysis	8
7	2/24 – 2/26	Healthcare Market	9, 10
8	3/3 – 3/5	Social Security	11
9	3/10 – 3/12	Income Redistribution, Expenditure for Poor	12, 13
<b>10</b>	<b>3/17 – 3/19</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
11	3/24 – 3/26	Taxation and Income Redistribution	14
12	4/3– 4/5	Taxation and Efficiency	15
13	4/10 – 4/12	Personal Income Tax	17, 18
14	4/17 – 4/19	Corporation Tax	19
15	4/22 -4/24	Deficit Financing	20
16	<b>4/29 – 5/1</b>	Public Finance in a Federal System	22
17		Final Project and Presentation	