

University of California, San Diego
Department of Economics
Spring 2020

Professor Katherine Meckel
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ECONOMICS 151: Public Econ, Expenditures I

Overview of the public sector in the United States and the scope of government intervention in economic life. Theory of public goods and externalities. Discussion of specific expenditure programs such as education and national defense.

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:50 AM, on Zoom. Lectures will also be recorded and posted to Canvas. Please find the Zoom invitation information on Canvas under “Zoom LTI Pro” in the lower lefthand corner of the Course website.

Text: Jonathan Gruber’s Public Finance and Public Policy, 6th Edition. Earlier versions are OK, but homeworks may reference page numbers and problem numbers that change across editions.

Website: Class Materials on Canvas: Syllabus, Problem sets, and Answer keys

Pre-Requisites: ECON 100C (Microeconomics C)

Office Hours: W: 3:00-4:00 PM. Please email me during or before office hours and we can meet on Zoom.

Teaching Assistants:

Katherine Rittenhouse (krittenh@ucsd.edu)

TA Discussion Section

M: 11:00-11:50 AM, via Zoom. The Zoom meeting invitation can be found under Announcements in Canvas (“Discussion section Zoom invite”).

The TA section is helpful for understanding how to solve the problem sets.

TA Office Hours

Office hours will be held by Zoom on Wednesdays 9:30-10:30am. The Zoom meeting invitation can be found under Announcements in Canvas (“TA Office Hours Zoom invite”).

Grading:

Homeworks (best 6/7):	20%
Midterm Exam 1:	20%
Midterm Exam 2:	20%
Final Exam:	40%

Homework:

- All homework is due by 9:30 AM on Tuesday (start of class), as an Assignment submission on Canvas.
- Homework are graded as ✓ (100%), ✓- (75%), and 0 if not handed in. ✓ indicates “a serious attempt was made to solve all problems.” Note that there is a significant penalty for not turning any homework in.
- Students are encouraged to collaborate on problem sets, but everyone must write up his or her own answers.
- the lowest homework will be dropped

Exams:

- Exams are open book, open notes with a mixture of conceptual problems and analytical problems. The final is cumulative.
- There will be no make-up exams. Please see UCSD policy regarding missing exams here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/courses/epc-policies-on-courses/policy-exams-including-midterms-final-exams-and-religious-accommodations-for-exams/>

Final Exam: 6/09/2020, 8 AM-11 AM. Likely to be conducted electronically.

Administrative Issues:

(1) Exams are open book/open notes, but you may not communicate with other classmates. To help maintain the integrity of the midterms and finals, we will require you to show your student ID when turning in your exam.

(2) Any student found responsible for violating academic integrity will earn a failing grade for the course. In addition to the academic sanction that I impose, the Council of Deans of Student Affairs will impose a disciplinary penalty. For a review of UCSD policy, please see <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>.

(3) If you have a documented disability, please bring your documentation and come to talk to me as soon as possible so that I can make suitable accommodations for you. If you believe that you may have a disability and will desire accommodation, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities, Building 202 University Center

Course Schedule (Preliminary, subject to change)

Week	Topic	Reading (Gruber)
Week 1		
Tuesday	Introduction to US Public Sector	Chapter 1
Thursday	Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 2
Week 2		
Tuesday	Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 2
Thursday	Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 2

Week 3		
Tuesday	Empirical Tools	Chapter 3
Thursday	Empirical Tools	Chapter 3
Week 4		
Tuesday	Empirical Tools	Chapter 3
Thursday	Externality Theory	Chapter 5
Week 5		
Tuesday	Midterm #1	
Thursday	Externality Theory	Chapters 5
Week 6		
Tuesday	Externality Theory	Chapters 5
Thursday	Externalities: Applications	Chapters 6
Week 7		
Tuesday	Externalities: Applications	Chapter 6
Thursday	Theory of Public Goods	Chapter 7
Week 8		
Tuesday	Midterm #2	
Thursday	Theory of Public Goods	Chapter 7
Week 9		
Tuesday	Theory of Public Goods	Chapter 7
Thursday	NO CLASS	
Week 10		
Tuesday	Education	Chapter 11
Thursday	Education	Chapter 11