

University of Colorado at Boulder
Department of Economics

Prof. Jeffrey S. Zax
zax@colorado.edu
<http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/Zax>

Economics 4231
Syllabus and Schedule
13 January 2022

Welcome! I am Prof. Jeffrey S. Zax. This is Economics 4231,
Applied Economic Analysis

Course description:

This course applies economic analysis to current issues of public policy in the State of Colorado. It begins with an examination of the theoretical foundations for government economic activity. It then provides a description of the structure and procedures of the Colorado General Assembly (the official name of the Colorado State legislature). It continues with detailed discussions of the basic principles of public finance, the economic justifications for government action and the contents of

economic literature and apply the implications of that literature and our economic principles through briefing papers, in-class presentations and testimony at Assembly hearings. In addition, we conduct a cooperative project in which we rate the economic content of the bills considered during the first half of the Assembly session, with the intention of distributing these ratings to the Assembly and the public.

This course explores the challenges of integrating informed economic analysis into the legislative process. It allows students who are interested in issues of public policy to learn both about the economic analysis that is relevant to those issues and to apply what is relevant to the process of determining public policy.

Although issues of public policy are addressed in many courses in the Economic Department, there is no other course in the Department that engages the public policy process directly. This engagement will be valuable to the many among our students who will be active in public policy subsequent to graduation, either through their employment or as citizens. This course is also of benefit to the State of Colorado, because it improves the quality and consistency of economic analysis available to the General Assembly.

Course structure:

This course will meet on Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. throughout the semester. Our first two meetings, on 13th and 20th January, will take place synchronously via Zoom. The Zoom meeting ID is 976 430 6219, pass W

This course requires excellent reading comprehension in the English language. The remaining course material is presented in Assembly bills, textbook chapters and journal articles. The ability to understand their content and extract what is most important is essential.

Finally, the ability to write effectively in the English language is very important. Elements of the course that are based on essays constitute four-fifths of the final grade. One-tenth of the final grade is comprised of a final examination whose questions require original answers of approximately one to six sentences in length. I will provide substantial guidance with regard to writing skills throughout the semester.

Course requirements

Performance in this course will be judged on the basis of

The most recent draft available as of each of these deadlines will be graded. If no draft has been submitted as of these dates, and no excuse approved, the grade will be zero. First drafts should be submitted at least one week in advance of these deadlines. Final drafts can be submitted prior to these deadlines and may have to be, depending on the Assembly schedules for the bills in question.

These papers must be type-written, double-spaced, and have conventional margins. Papers that exceed the maximum lengths, either in physical length or because of compressed format, will be penalized. They must be submitted to me electronically at the email address above in the Adobe pdf format. Only pdf files will be accepted. Speak with me in advance if you anticipate difficulty with this requirement.

The second and third assignments of the project for each bill can be undertaken only if the final draft of the paper attains a grade of at least 6 points out of 8. If the final draft does not attain this standard, the grades for the second and third assignments will both be zero.

The second assignment of each bill project will consist of confirmed distribution of the briefing paper to appropriate members of the General Assembly. I must approve each paper for distribution. Distribution should occur via email, with myself as one of the recipients. Papers must be distributed after the receipt of approval, and within five days of that receipt in order to receive credit. Each distribution will be worth 2 points, or 2% of the final grade.

The third assignment of each bill project will consist of a testimony presentation. This assignment will condense the associated briefing paper into a three-minute oral presentation. This presentation will take place in class. Each of these presentations will be worth 5 points, or 5% of the final grade. Presentations should ordinarily follow the submission of final paper drafts. If the General Assembly schedules for the bills in question demand otherwise, you must receive permission to modify the ordinance.

The first of the remaining graded assignments will be a mid-term legislative report card to which all students will contribute. Each student will be assigned a group of the current Assembly bills for the purpose of evaluating their suitability as objects of government action. We will compile the evaluations of all students into a single document for distribution. Each student's contribution will be worth 10 points, or 10% of the final grade. The legislative report card will be due on 18 March.

The final graded assignment is the final examination. It will examine the material in the formal lectures and readings, as well as the experience of interacting with the Assembly. It will be worth 10 points, or 10% of the final grade.

The final examination is scheduled to take place on Monday, 2 May from 1:30p.m.-4:00p.m. Any student who has three or more final examinations scheduled on 1 May has the right to reschedule all exams following the first two. Any student wishing to invoke this right must do so by 18 March.¹

If we are not able to meet in person at this time, the final examination will take place in Canvas. In this case, it will be monitored by Proctorio. I will provide further details if they are needed.

The course as a whole is valued at 100 points. The score attained by each student, evaluated relative to those of other students and to the score which would be attained by an intelligent student of economics at this level, will determine final letter grades.

Course conduct:

Excuses for the course requirements will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances.

Attendance at lectures is essential!

or both. Dismissal during the first or second lecture will violate the attendance requirement and result in drops from the course.

Adhere strictly to all standards of academic integrity. In this course, academic integrity requires you to submit papers that consist largely of your own words, with proper attribution for text that originates from some other source. It also requires you to participate in the final examination without the assistance of any other person or any resource apart from your own mind.

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the Honor Code Office for possible non-academic sanctions. Information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Office for

- “The State Budget Process: A Staff Perspective”
- “Rules and Regulations: A primer on formal rulemaking processes and procedures in Colorado”
- “The Case for Representative Democracy: What Americans Should Know About Their Legislatures”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2001.
- “Learning the Game: How the Legislative Process Works”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005.
- “Making Your Case: How to Win in the Legislature”, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005.

3 February	Public goods Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosen and Oyer, chapter 4
10 February	Externalities and job creation Readings Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosen and Oyer, chapter 5 • First paper due today
17 February	Competition policy Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined
24 February	Legislative report card, education Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosen and Oyer, chapter 7
3 March	Health care Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosen and Oyer, chapters 9, 10
10 March	Equity and social welfare Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosen and Oyer, chapters 1-6

7 April	Taxation	
	Readings	• Rosen and Oyer, chapters 14-16
	Assignment	• Third paper due today
14 April	Government structure and legislatures	
	Readings	• Rosen and Oyer, chapters 6-22
21 April	Government structure and legislatures	
	Readings	• Rosen and Oyer, chapters 6-22
28 April	To be announced	
	Readings	• To be announced

SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). For more information, see the policy on [classroom behavior](#) and the St

symptoms and follow the further guidance of the [Public Health Office](#) (contacttracing@colorado.edu).

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

