

POLS 7300—Public Budgeting

North Georgia College & State University

Master of Public Administration Program

Fall 2009

Monday 7:05-9:55

214 Young Hall

Three Graduate Credits

Professor: Dr. Ross C. Alexander
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Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00
Tuesday 10:00-11:00
Wednesday 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00
Thursday 10:00-11:00
**or by appointment

Course Purpose

This graduate seminar is designed to ameliorate your understanding of the role, mechanics, and dynamics of budgeting and finance in the public sector. We will cover budgeting at the federal, state, and local levels in detail in addition to developing basic competencies in a diverse range of political, economic, organizational, and psychological theories as they relate to the budget process. We will then use the tools and lessons from these frameworks to deepen our understanding of how budgeting works in practice. Throughout the course, we will study actual budgets and topical issues, and use these cases to strengthen applied analytical, communication, administrative, and management skills.

Budgets are one of the most significant policy documents in the public domain. They reflect and enforce priorities, values, and power relationships. Although they have important technical aspects, budgets are fundamentally political statements because they reflect the choices that result from the political process. The study of budgeting only begins with the production of a budget. Budgets, in their organizational contexts, are tools for organizational development and change. We will thus study budgets as plans, policy statements, managerial tools, and legislative contracts.

Learning objectives for the course include the following:

- 1) Develop and understanding of the political context of budget development and implementation at the federal, state, and local levels
- 2) Learn some basic skills in budget development and analysis
- 3) Gain an understanding of budgets as tools for accountability and control, coalition-building, risk management, and organizational structuring
- 4) Understand the decision-making parameters inherent within the budgetary process
- 5) Understand the range of ethical obligations and questions implicit in budget development, analysis, and implementation
- 6) Sharpen applied written and oral communication skills, in both academic and professional modes of discourse

Course Delivery Method: Hybrid

Success in this Course

Your chances of earning an “A” in this course are largely a function of the following:

- 1) Attending every class...you should rarely or ever miss a graduate seminar
- 2) Doing all the assigned readings...critically analyzing the material and being prepared to discuss it during class
- 3) Turning assignments in on time
- 4) Turning assignments in according to specifications...i.e. correct number of pages, sufficient citations, correct citations style, etc...
- 5) Wholeheartedly participating in class discussions and projects
- 6) Having an open mind and respecting the opinions of others

Assigned Text

- 1) Rubin, *The Politics of Public Budgeting* (5th)
- 2) Other articles as assigned...all articles available on GALILEO via the NGCSU library website

Assignments/Assessments

Midterm Exam: 100 points. This is a take-home exam covering material from the first half of class primarily, consisting entirely of essay questions. Exams must be uploaded to the Assignment Dropbox in Vista to receive credit no later than 7:05 p.m. on *Monday, October 12*. Exams should be written in Times New Roman or Calibri, using double-spacing, standard margins, 12-point font, and page numbers. All borrowed material must be cited appropriately in APA format. No outside sources are required.

Final Exam: 100 points. This is a take-home exam covering material from the second half of class primarily, consisting entirely of essay questions. Exams must be uploaded to the Assignment Dropbox in Vista to receive credit no later than 7:05 p.m. on *Monday, December 7*. Exams should be written in Times New Roman or Calibri, using double-spacing, standard margins, 12-point font, and page numbers. All borrowed material must be cited appropriately in APA format. No outside sources are required.

Research Paper: 200 points. This exercise is a 15-20 page paper addressing public budgeting in some fashion. Be creative. The paper must utilize APA format and a minimum of 15 sources; 12 of which must be either peer-reviewed journal articles or books. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman or Calibri, 12-point font, standard margins and must be paginated. Papers must be submitted to turnitin.com prior to 7:05 p.m. on the due date to receive full credit. Late papers will be deducted 10% per calendar day late. See attached paper guidelines for further requirements.
Paper Due Date: Monday, November 23.

Turnitin.com ID: 2796361

Turnitin.com Password: 7300F09

Research Paper Presentation: 100 points. You will present the major findings, contentions, and conclusions of your research paper in a 15-20 minute presentation. You should treat this as though you are presenting the material to a public body. The presentation should incorporate technology (like Power Point) in some fashion. Dress for presentations is professional. **Presentation Dates:** Monday, November 23 & Monday, November 30

Budget Analysis: 100 points; 5-7 pages. It is your task to analyze the budget of any public agency (like the one for which you work). This is a relatively informal exercise that requires no outside research. It can be written in first person and should conform to APA format. It must utilize Times New Roman, 12-

point font, double-spacing, with standard margins, page numbers and a staple. Describe what the budget looks like. Is it easy to follow, understand, digest and read? How could it be improved? Is it professional? Is it simple or complex? Would the average citizen be able to understand it? What form does it follow? Try to apply some of the theories/ideas from class in your analysis. What about the budget is well presented, what is poorly presented? How are monies allocated, is it appropriate? What strikes you as unique, odd, or interesting? **Budget Analysis Due:** Monday, October 5

Participation—100 points. Active participation in class and group discussion is integral to your success in this course. As a graduate class, this course centers in large part upon debate, discussion, and interaction. As a result, you must be prepared for each and every class. Participation points will also be reliant in large part upon presentations you undertake periodically throughout the semester.

700 points total for the course

Attendance

Because this is a graduate class, I will not take attendance. However, you should rarely, if ever, miss class, except for an unavoidable professional or personal reason. You should inform the professor beforehand if you know you will miss an upcoming class. Attendance will have an effect on your participation grade.

Make-up Exams

Students missing the midterm exam for a *valid reason* will be allowed to make up the exam at a time determined by the professor.

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to change the syllabus as I deem appropriate and necessary, especially with regard to the day-to-day and week-to-week schedule.

Class evaluations

Class evaluations at NGCSU are now conducted on-line through Banner. Evaluation of the class is considered a component of the course and students will not be permitted to access their course grade until the evaluation has been completed. The evaluations will be accessible beginning one week prior to Final Exam week. Specific instructions will be made available when the surveys are activated.

Grading Scale

90-99=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 and below=F

Cheating and Plagiarism

Any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in the following: zero grade for the assignment; the submission of an academic integrity report to the Academic Integrity Council which may result in serious disciplinary action by the university; and possible assignment of an "F" grade for the course. Don't cheat, and don't tolerate those who do (see below).

Academic Integrity Policy

Honor Code: "On my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those who do (Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 81-83)."

If the professor concludes that a violation of the Academic Integrity policy has occurred, the professor will either (1) penalize the student and file an incident report with the Academic Integrity Council or (2) refer the matter directly to the Academic Integrity Council. If an incident report is filed, the professor will review the completed report with the student and will request that the student sign the report as an indication that the student is aware of its contents.

“Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site (Turnitin.com).”

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

NGCSU is committed to the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities to the principle of individual rights and responsibilities. To the end, the policies and procedures of NGCSU reasonably ensure that a person with a disability is not, on the basis of that disability, denied full and equal access to and enjoyment of academic programs and co-curricular activities or otherwise is subjected to discrimination in such programs and activities.

The policies for access by individuals with disabilities at NGCSU are designed to ensure full compliance with all pertinent federal and state legislation, specifically to include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. To receive disability accommodations, the student should contact the Coordinator of Disability Resources, Office of Academic Support Programs, room 207 Barnes Hall. Approval of reasonable accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Course Schedule

Monday, August 24

Course overview and purpose; syllabus; meet and greet; expectations; Vista orientation; general discussion of public budgeting

Monday, August 31

Lecture—What is Public Budgeting?

Budgeting: An Historical Overview from the Literature

Key, “The Lack of a Budgetary Theory”

Lewis, “Toward a Theory of Budgeting”

Levine, “Organizational Decline and Cutback Management”

Monday, September 7

No Class—Labor Day Holiday

Monday, September 14

Lecture—Putting the Public Sector in Perspective

Lecture—Budget Cycles

Rubin, Chapter One

Monday, September 21

Lecture—Budget Preparation: The Revenue Side
Rubin, Chapter Two

Monday, September 28

Lecture—Budget Preparation: The Expenditure Side
Rubin, Chapter Three

Monday, October 5

Lecture—Budget Preparation: The Decision Process
Rubin, Chapter Four

Budget Analysis Due

Monday, October 12

Midterm Exam due to Assignment Dropbox in Vista no later than 7:05 p.m.

Monday, October 19

Lecture—Policy and Program Analysis
Rubin, Chapter Five

Monday, October 26

Lecture—Budget Approval: The Role of the Legislature
Rubin, Chapter Six

Monday, November 2

Lecture—Budget Approval: The U.S. Congress
Rubin, Chapters Seven & Eight

Monday, November 9

Rubin, Chapter Nine
Ebdon and Franklin, “Searching for a Role for Citizens in the Budget Process”
Ebdon and Franklin, “Citizen Participation in Budgeting Theory”
Alexander, Paterline, and Hulsey, “Citizen Involvement in the County Budget Process in Georgia”

Monday, November 16

Guest Speaker, John Hulsey, M.P.A.—Jackson County Finance Director

Monday, November 23

Research Paper Presentations
Research Paper Due

Monday, November 30

Research Paper Presentations

Monday, December 7

Final Exam due to Assignment Dropbox in Vista no later than 7:05 p.m.

Research Paper Guidelines
Dr. Alexander
Graduate Courses
North Georgia College & State University

Basic Framework

Papers must be 15-20+ pages in length utilizing 12-point font, Times New Roman, with standard margins, double-spaced. Short papers will be deducted 10 points per page short. Papers not utilizing the correct font, type, margins, etc...will be deducted 10 points per infraction. Papers should be written in third person primarily, only use first person sparingly. Pages must be numbered.

Required Sections

Papers must include the following sections in this order: 1) Title Page, 2) Abstract, 3) Introduction, 4) Literature Review, 5) Main Argument (with subheadings if necessary), 6) Conclusion, and 7) References. Papers not using this format or these sections will be deducted 10 points per section missing or out-of-order. Title Page, Abstract, and References sections do not count toward paper page total.

Title Page: Self-explanatory, I appreciate snappy or creative titles

Abstract: A one-paragraph, double-spaced overview and summary of your paper highlighting major assertions, its thesis, and important conclusions.

Introduction: Here, you are explaining why the topic is worth examining; why the reader (me) should be interested; how the paper relates to the class, etc...Most importantly, this section contains your **thesis statement**—the single most important sentence in the whole paper. The thesis statement should be an assertion and is the basis for the entire project. Take a stand! It is your purpose then to bolster your thesis with evidence and arguments throughout the rest of the paper. You are making a case here, not writing a book report. Make sure you have a clear, concise, and defensible thesis that clearly chooses a side on an issue. (about 2-3 pages)

Literature Review: In this section, you are demonstrating that you have a mastery of the literature (articles, books, interviews, etc...) you have used to write the paper. Ultimately, you are analyzing the works you read to explain how other authors have examined your subject, highlighting their main theories, theses, and conclusions. Every source you used for the paper should be analyzed in the literature review. Similar sources can be analyzed together. At the conclusion of the literature review, you will explain how your paper is different, how it fills a void apparent in the literature, how your thesis differs from what has been written before. The literature review should be written in paragraph form just like any other section of the paper. (about 4-5 pages)

Main Argument: Here is where you present your case and defend your thesis using academic evidence. It is vital that you convey your opinion, assertions, point-of-view while defending your thesis with evidence, i.e. legitimate academic sources. This section can be broken down into sub-sections of your choosing to make the paper flow. (about 8-10 pages)

Conclusion: Wrap it all up. Explain exactly what you accomplished in your paper and your major conclusions. Also, perhaps, explain what future research should be done on this topic. (about 2 pages)

References: Each source you use must be listed here in APA format.

Appendices, Tables, Etc...not required

Citation Format

Papers must be written in APA or APSA format, which is the most user-friendly and utilizes in-text citations. Remember, all paraphrased and quoted material must be cited appropriately. Paraphrased material must be cited in the author, year, page number and all quoted material must also be cited in the author, year, and page number format. Failure to cite either paraphrased or quoted material is plagiarism, which is a major infraction that will lead to disciplinary action. Plagiarism is defined and detailed in the 2006-2008 NGCSU Student Bulletin. Resubmitting work done for another class constitutes plagiarism as well. For a much more detailed explanation of APA format, either purchase an APA style manual in the university bookstore or go to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University which can be accessed at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Sources

Papers must use at least 15 sources, the vast majority of which must be peer-reviewed articles or books; only three of which may be Internet, web-page type sources. Legitimate, peer-reviewed academic articles retrieved from the Internet using Galileo, JSTOR, or another online article database are not considered Internet sources, neither are periodical/journal articles retrieved from online sources. If you use some Internet sources, use .org, .edu, .gov for the most part. It is better to rely upon journal articles than books because they can be analyzed more readily. Interviews, documentaries, etc...are acceptable sources, but should be secondary to peer-reviewed articles and do not count towards your 15 sources.

Turnitin.com

Papers must be submitted to turnitin.com prior to the due date. It is your responsibility to create a user profile on turnitin.com prior to submitting your paper using the passwords and account numbers provided by the professor in the course syllabus. If you have problems doing this, contact the professor before the due date. Turnitin.com is an effective plagiarism detection device; therefore, any effort of deception or plagiarism will be caught!

Grammar/Spelling/Syntax

I am more concerned with content than grammar or spelling for the most part. However, your paper should be written professionally and reflect your ability to convey your thesis in a cogent and articulate manner. Repeated grammar and spelling problems will negatively affect your grade. Remember, papers must be written in third person. It is also best to avoid contractions in a formal research paper and to spell out numbers less than 10. Also, never end a sentence with a preposition if at all possible.

Grading

I grade research papers much more stringently than I do either analysis/opinion papers or exams. The research paper is the culmination of a semester's worth of progress, work, and research and should reflect this effort. If you try to slap it together the night before it is due, your grade will reflect your poor effort. I expect a graduate-level finished product. Do not expect an "A" just because your paper is

long enough and utilizes the correct number of sources. Average papers will warrant a grade of "C."
Only exceptional papers will receive grades of "A."