

## **PLSC 352- Politics of Government Budgeting**

Winter 2017

MW 11-12:15 pm

Pray Harrold Rm#403

Dr. Barbara Patrick

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### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

Rubin, Irene (2013). The Politics of Public Budgeting: Getting and Spending, Borrowing and Balancing, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

We will also make use of handouts and other reading material to supplement the text.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

Budget decisions allocate scarce resources between competing claimants. The course is designed to provide a basic understanding of public budgeting decision making processes and financial management practices. One goal of this course is to sensitize class participants to the political and bureaucratic realities of those endeavors. Another goal is to examine the extent that budget decision making processes and financial management procedures affect the tension between governmental responsiveness to outside stakeholders and governmental adherence to the professional standards of efficiency and effectiveness. We will also examine the conflict over budget decisions between agencies, governors, and legislatures.

### **Class Attendance and Etiquette:**

Class attendance is very important. You have 3 absences, after the third absence your grade will drop ½ a letter. Repetitive late arrivals will also result in an absence. If you arrive late or must leave early it is your responsibility to inform me; also it is very important that you arrive on time on exam days. If you arrive after the first student completing the exam has left the room, you will not be allowed to complete the exam. Make-up exams are only given with adequate documentation at the end of the semester. Class attendance on days that student present days is also very important. Failure to appear on present days without an excused absence will result in a grade deduction. Late arrivals on presentation days will also affect your presentation grade.

### **Classroom Conduct:**

Students should conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with promoting an efficient learning environment for themselves and everyone else. Students should be conscientious, helpful, properly motivated to learn, honest, and respectful of others and their opinions at all times. Such conduct is consistent with generally regarded norms of professionalism, including those found in graduate, professional degree programs. If a student “commits the offense of disorderly conduct when he/she does any act (e.g. being

disobedient) in such unreasonable manners as to alarm or disturb another and to provide a breach of peace,” the professor reserves the right to deduct points for inappropriate conduct and refer the student to the University for further investigation of the matter. The professor also reserves the right to excuse the student from class for the remainder of the semester and give the student a letter grade of “F” for the course.

### **University Policies:**

*Students With Disabilities:* If you wish to be accommodated for your disability, EMU Board of Regents policy #8.3 requires that you first register with the Access Services Office (ASO) in room 203 King Hall. You may contact ASO by telephone at (734) 487-2470. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with ASO promptly as you will only be accommodated from the date you register with them forward. No retroactive accommodations are possible.

*Notice to all foreign students* (F and J visa): To comply with all federal regulations, please contact the EMU office of International Students (OIS), 244 EMU Student Center, 734.487.3116

### **Academic Honesty:**

Each student in class is expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism violate the rules of the University and the ethical standards of professional public administration. Cheating and plagiarism will be punished to the full extent allowed by University rules and regulations. Plagiarism is generally defined in your student handbook as presenting as your own work that done by someone else, even if only an idea and/or not quoted directly. Cite, quote, and when in doubt, ask the instructor. Those caught cheating will be given a zero for the work in which the cheating occurred. Possible plagiarism will be dealt with on a case by case basis. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Services for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The *Student Conduct Code* contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty, and it can be accessed online at <http://www.emich.edu/studentconduct/>

### **Observance of Religious Holidays**

**University Policy:** Eastern Michigan University recognizes the rights of students to observe religious holidays without penalty to the student.

**University Practice:** Students will provide advance notice to their instructors in order to make up work, including examinations that they miss as a result of their absence from class due to observance of religious holidays. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made with the appropriate instructor(s), students may appeal to the head(s) of the department(s) in which the course(s) is/are offered.

There are many resources on line regarding the observance of religious holidays; here is one site with an extensive listing of holiday dates:

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/2013.htm>

### **GRADING SCALE:**

Budgetary Project and Presentation: 30%

Class Participation and Assignments: 10%

Test One: 20%

Test Two: 20%

Test Three: 20%

### **Budgetary Project**

This project requires students to serve as investigative task forces that examine different local governments in the state of Michigan that have undergone financial stress and required the appointment of an emergency financial manager.

The purposes of the term project are:

\*Familiarize you with local government and its budgets and processes;

\*Encourage you to relate budget concepts and processes examined in class to local situations;

\*Allow you to apply field research techniques in the study of public budgeting; and

\*Provide an opportunity to demonstrate writing and presentation skills

\*Given that the project comprises 30% of your grade, we will talk often in class about these projects and I am more than happy to spend whatever time you need outside of class to make your efforts successful. The report must be in essay form, typed, though not book length; source materials—interviews, documents, journal articles and so on—should be identified and or document.

The local government budget case study involves a narrative report describing the budget process in your local government

\*To organize your inquiry and analysis, use the following basic questions:  
who, what, when, where, why and how.

\*The intent is to allow you become an “expert” on the budget and budget issues and challenges associated with a particular governmental function of interest.

Students will be required to present their proposal to the class as well as submit a written paper to the instructor. The paper should present a well established argument with documented sources. The papers should highlight the politics of the budgetary decision understudy. Papers should highlight the long term political and budgetary implications of budgetary policies. **Out of fairness to all students, I will not accept late assignments.**

Possible Cities to Examine:

**Benton Harbor**

**Ecorse**

**Flint**

**Pontiac**

**Allen Park**

**Inkster**

**Ypsilanti**

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**Week One (January 4, 2017)**

Wednesday- Introduction

**Week Two (January 9-11, 2017) Public Budgeting**

Monday

Key, V.O. 1940. "The Lack of a Budgetary Theory" *The American Political Science Review*, 34(6): 1137-1144.

Rubin, Irene. 1990. "Budget Theory and Budget Practices: How Good the Fit?" *Public Administration Review*, 50(2): 179-189.

Wildavsky, Aaron. 1978. "A Budget for All Season? Why the Traditional Budget Last." *Public Administration Review* 38(6):501-509.

Lindblom, Aaron. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review* 19(2):79-88.

Lewis, Verne. 1952. "Toward a Theory of Budgeting." *Public Administration Review* 12(1): 42-54.

Wednesday

Chapter 1 begins

**Week Three (January 16-18, 2017) Public Budgeting**

**Monday-No Class/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Holiday**

Wednesday

Chapter 1 (What is Budgeting; Governmental Budgeting; The Meaning of Politics in Public Budgeting; Budgetary Decision Making; The Difference between Public and Private Budgeting)

**Week Four (January 23-25, 2017) Rational Budgeting and Revenue Politics**

Chapter 2 (Raising Taxes; The Politics of Protection; The Politics of Reform)

What is Rational Budgeting; What Are Key Differences between Rational Budgeting Approaches)

**Case One Assigned**

**Week Five (January 30-February 1, 2017) The Politics of Process**

Chapter 3 (Budget Process and the Characteristics of Public Budgeting; Macro and Micro Politics; Designing Process to Achieve Policy and Political Goals; Variation between and among Federal, State, and Local Governments)

**Week Six (February 6-8, 2017) The Dynamics of Changing Budget Processes**

Chapter 3 (Budget Process and the Characteristics of Public Budgeting; Macro and Micro Politics; Designing Process to Achieve Policy and Political Goals; Variation between and among Federal, State, and Local Governments)

**Wednesday-Test One**

**Week Seven (February 13-15, 2017) The Politics of Balancing the Budget**

Monday

Research Project Discussion/ Handouts

Wednesday

Research Project Day/Work with Group

Monday-Submit rough outline with team member assignments

**Week Eight (February 20-22, 2017)**

**No Class-Winter Break**

**Week Nine (February 27-March 1, 2017) Budget Execution: The Politics of Adaptation**

Chapter 4 (Major Changes in the Federal Budget Process; Changes in Budget Process at the State Level; Changes in Budget Process at the Local Level)

Wednesday

Chapter 4 Continued....

**Semester Project Preliminary Assignment Due**

**Week Ten (March 6-8, 2017) Expenditures: Strategies, Structure, and Environment**

Monday- Chapter 5 (Strategies of Agency Heads or Program Directors, Top-Down Strategies; The Environment Can Affect Spending Priorities; Accountability and Acceptability)

**Wednesday- Test Two**

**Week Eleven (March 13-15, 2017) Budget Implementation and Control**

Monday- Chapter 5 Continued....

Wednesday- Chapter 6 (Balance as a Constraint; Multiple Actors, Ideologies, and Deficits; The Environment, Unpredictability, and Deficits; Increasing Stress between Payer and Decider; The Politics of Deficits in the States; The Politics of Balance in Cities)

**Week Twelve (March 20-22, 2017) Budgetary Decision Making and Politics**

Monday- Chapter 6 Continued....

Wednesday- Research Day

**Week Thirteen (March 27-29, 2017) Budgetary Decision Making and Politics**

Monday- Chapter 7

Wednesday- Chapter 7

**Week Fourteen (April 3-5, 2017)**

**Monday-Test Three**

Wednesday-Presentation Day

**Week Fifteen (April 10-12, 2017)**

Monday-Presentation Day (**Semester Project Due**)

Wednesday-Presentation Day

**Week Sixteen (April 17, 2017)**

Monday-Presentation Day

The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus.

## **Budgeting Paper Outline**

### I. Introduction

### II. City Budget Overview

- a. Demographics Changes Over Time/Current Demographics
- b. Decline of Local Stability
  - i. Any Info on What Caused the Problem?
  - ii. Do you have info of total revenue and expenditures over time?
- c. Emergency Manager
  - i. Time point of entry
  - ii. Deficit Amount
  - iii. Sale of City Assets?
  - iv. Contracting Out Services?
  - v. Reduction in City Staff and Services?
  - vi. Overall Impact on the Budget
  - vii. Has the manager exited? If so, what's happened?
- d. Reactions to Emergency Manager
  - i. Were Interviews Conducted?
  - ii. Mayor/Council Reaction?
  - iii. Elected Officials Returned to Power?

### III. City Public Safety

- a. Police
  - i. Percent of Budget Dedicated to Public Safety
  - ii. Crime & Crime Rates/ Any Info, Possibly Change Over Time; Response Rates
  - iii. Budget Cuts (Change in Funding)
  - iv. Size of the Force; Changes in Personnel/Cuts?
  - v. Contracting Out?

vi. Future of the Force, Personnel, Funding

vii. Any Interviews?

b. Fire & EMS

IV. Conclusion