

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

Fall 2013

Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am-12:15 pm

Marshall # 119

Dr. Barbara Patrick

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### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

Rubin, Irene (2010). The Politics of Public Budgeting: Getting and Spending, Borrowing and Balancing, 6<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.

### **GRADING SCALE:**

Budgetary Project and Presentation: 20%  
Class Participation and Assignments: 20%  
Test One: 20%  
Test Two: 20%  
Test Three: 20%

## **Budgetary Project**

This project requires students to serve as investigative task forces that examine different budgetary issues. They will study the issue, examine previous responses, and submit a proposal that will adequately address the problem. Proposals must be politically, economically, and administratively feasible.

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 under study. Papers should highlight the long term political and budgetary implications of budgetary policies. It should include the use of scholarly sources. **Out of fairness to all students, I will not accept late assignments.**

A list of possible topics is included below.

Topics:

- \*Tobacco Settlement funding to the States
- \*Financing the Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts (government respond/rebuilding the MS Coast and New Orleans)
- \*No Child Left Behind and the Politics of Federal Education Spending
- \*Financing the Obama Administration Health Care Reform Legislation
- \*Race to the Top and Performance Budgeting Techniques

## **COURSE OUTLINE:**

### **Week One (September 5, 2013)**

Thursday- Introduction

### **Week Two (September 10-12, 2013) Public Budgeting**

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.

**Thursday-** 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 Three (September 17-19, 2013) 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 Four (September 24-26, 2013) 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 Five (October 1-3, 2013) The Dynamics of Changing Budget Processes**

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)

**Thursday-Test One**

**Week Six (October 8-10, 2013) The Politics of Choice**

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

**Case Two Assigned**

**Week Seven (October 15-17, 2013) The Politics of Balancing the Budget**

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 Eight (October 22-24, 2013) Budget Execution: The Politics of Adaptation**

Chapter 7 (Tools for Changing the Budget; Reprogramming the Budget)

**Week Nine (October 29-31, 2013)**

Budget Execution continued

**Thursday-Test Two**

**Week Ten (November 5-7, 2013) Budget Implementation and Control**

Chapter 8 (The Discretion-Abuse-Control Cycle; Discretion and Control: The Politics of Finding Waste, Fraud, and Abuse)

**Week Eleven (November 12-14, 2013) Budgetary Decision Making and Politics**

Chapter 9 (Real Time Budgeting; A Comparison of the Decision-Making Streams, Common Themes; Reconceptualizing Reform; Avenues of Research)

**Week Twelve (November 19-21, 2013)**

Tuesday- Presentation Day

Thursday- Presentation Day

**Week Thirteen (November 26-28, 2013)**

Tuesday-Research Day

Thursday- Holiday

**Week Fourteen (December 3-5, 2013)**

Tuesday-Presentation Day

Thursday-Presentation Day

**Week Fifteen (December 10-12, 2013)**

Tuesday-Review Day

Thursday- Wrap Up Session

The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus.