

Course: EC 597 Public Policy
Semester: Spring 2010
Instructor: Gary A. Hoover
Location: BID 13
Time: Section 992 —TTH 5:00-6:15pm

Course Description:

This seminar will deal with numerous policy questions that are currently being debated at the state, regional, and nation level. Through persuasive arguments, built on sound economic reasoning, we will seek to help add to these policy debates in some meaningful fashion.

Learning Objective:

By the end of this class you will be better equipped to write and discuss economic issues using sources available to the public and economists.

Required Text and Course Layout:

The required texts for this class are:

Income Distribution by F. Campano and D. Salvatore.
Health Economics (2nd ed.) by P. Zweifel, F. Breyer, and M. Kifmann.

The course will deal with public policy issues concerning income distribution and poverty in the United States. We will explore income density functions, goodness of fit measures, alternative models, summary measures, inequality measures, country comparisons, redistribution, poverty measures, in-kind transfers, welfare to work, expenditure programs for the poor, the demand for health insurance, government provision of health insurance, and government provided education programs.

There will be **at least** two exams. These exams will be scheduled once we have completed the necessary material. You will be informed well before the exam so that you have proper time to prepare.

Grading, Make-up, Class Behavior and Attendance Policy:

You will be given practice problems to work on during the semester. The exams will be made-up of problems similar to the practice problems (if not the exact same problems with different numbers). If you do not do the problems and understand them thoroughly, you can expect to fail the exams.

WRITTEN COURSE WORK

You will also be responsible for a considerable bit of writing for this course.

Position Papers:

Students will be required to turn in two mini-research papers on a topic of interest that is covered during the semester. I.e. a paper on income distribution/poverty, health economics/healthcare, and education. Each paper will be at least 5 typed pages long and will have a detailed bibliography of all sources cited. In addition, each paper will have a cover page with the student's name and title of the paper (the title page or bibliography do not count as pages).

First Draft of Term Paper:

By the first week of February, students must have received approval on any topic of their choosing for a term paper.

By the third week of February, a 3-page typed outline of the term paper is due. It must include all references (up to that point) that are to be used, even if they have not all been read. The outline should discuss all topics to be covered in the paper and other sources that might be used.

Final Draft of Term Paper:

By the last week of the semester, a 15 page term paper is due. This paper will have a cover page that lists the title and the authors name. In addition, it will have a detailed bibliography with standard margins and must be double spaced.

NOTE: The use of internet sources must be limited unless they are online versions of hard copy periodicals, such as the Wall Street Journal Online, New York Times Online, etc. Wikipedia and similar sites are not a valid research reference.

Paper Presentations:

During the last week(s) of classes, students will be required to present their term papers to the class. They must be able to defend their research and answer any questions raised. The presentations will be between 25 and 30 minutes.

Not coming to class regularly will hinder your ability to do well in this class. The material is not always easy (and most times rather confusing) to understand. Exams will have material only discussed in class. You need to attend every class and get the lecture notes for the classes that you might miss. Don't miss class!!!!!!

Cell phones and pagers should be turned off before class and remain off for the entire period. If you must have one, please make sure that it is on 'silent'. These devices are extremely distracting to other students and myself and you will be asked to leave should it go off during class.

Students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Office of Disability Services, 348-4285. Thereafter, you are invited to schedule appointments to see me during office hours to discuss accommodations and other special needs.

Office Hours and Office:

My office is in Alston Hall room 267. My office hours will be Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 to 11:00 am. You can also schedule appointments with me. The easiest way to reach me will be through email. Contact me at: ghoover@cba.ua.edu.

Prerequisites and Math:

The prerequisite for this course is EC 308. If it's been a while since you've reviewed the material in intermediate microeconomics I would advise you to go back and look it over. I've found that simple algebra often catches people off guard so go review it!!! A working knowledge of calculus and simple statistics is needed for this course. We won't use a lot of it but you will need to refresh yourself on derivatives if you're rusty.

Readings:

There will also be some outside readings to supplement the book. I will try to make them available on my webpage but this can not be guaranteed. Falling behind or failing to do your reading will hamper your ability to do well in this course.

Drop Dates:

The last day to drop the course is Wednesday, March 24th. If you are planning to drop, it would be best to do it early so that you can have plenty of time to find a suitable class replacement .

Plagiarism and Other Academic Dishonesty

Student Handbook Definition:

- Plagiarism: representing the words, data, works, ideas, computer programs or output, or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own

- Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information
- Fabrication: presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material
- Misrepresentation: falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts.

2. This is an extremely serious academic offense which can lead to your removal from the university and will definitely result in you failing this course.

3. Don't do it.