

**ECON 481: Seminar in Microeconomics
Fall 2019**

Microeconomics and Public Policy

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30 – 12:30; Thursday 10-11:00am; or by appointment

Course Description

This is a seminar course in which each student will be required to research and write a major paper, present it to the class, discuss another student's presentation, and participate in general discussion of the presentations. Attendance at presentations is mandatory, as is attendance at classes.

The general focus of the papers is the application of microeconomics to public policy issues. You may write on the following topics: the economics of professional sports, social policy, tax policy, or health policy. If you have an alternative in mind, please discuss it with me and we may be able to work something out.

Your approach to the topics may involve changing an existing theoretical model and working out the implications, an econometric analysis of an issue or a public policy analysis of a topic (to be explained in class).

It is up to you to decide upon and define a research question, gather the relevant data and evidence, and write the paper. Please get started early and work on the paper throughout the term.

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The Paper

The paper is to be a maximum of 25 pages in length, double-spaced and in a normal-sized font. The hard copy will be due later in the term. The paper will comprise 60% of your grade. If you wish to present me with a brief two-page written outline early in the term, I will offer comments on it. You may be required to submit your paper for electronic scanning that aids in the detection of plagiarism. Please ensure that you understand the rules surrounding academic integrity, as outlined below.

The Presentation and Discussion

Time slots for presentations and discussion will be assigned early in the term. Each student will give a 20-minute presentation of his/her paper to the class, followed by 5 minutes of formal discussion, and 15 minutes of general questions and discussion. The presentation is worth 20% of your grade and is based more on presentation skills and ability to answer questions than on the content of the presentation. The formal discussion of another presentation is worth 5% of your grade.

Participation

Participation in the general discussion is worth 10% of your grade. The mark will be based on the frequency and quality of your questions. You will note that I have scheduled individual meetings with you on a regular basis. A final 5% of your grade will be based on attendance at these meetings and evidence of progress on your paper. This is to provide you with an incentive to work on the paper over the entire term.

Schedule of Events

The diversity of the material covered dictates that there be no lectures delivered in the class. Instead, I opt to hold individual meetings with students to engage in discussions about their topics. The dates for these meetings will be provided in the first class. You should not feel limited to just these times if you have an issue to discuss. Please drop by during office hours or email me for an appointment at another time.