

JSGS 805 – Economics for Public Policy Analysis

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA CAMPUS	
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OFFICE HOURS:	By Appointment Only
OFFICE LOCATION:	N/A
TERM:	Fall 2021
ROOM:	CB 330
DAY AND TIME:	Thursdays 5:30 pm – 8:15 pm (SK Time)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Saskatchewan campus of the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy is situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, while the University of Regina campus is situated on Treaty 4 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another. As we engage in Remote Teaching and Learning, we would also like to recognize that some may be attending this course from other traditional Indigenous lands. I ask that you take a moment to make your own Land Acknowledgement to the peoples of those lands. In doing so, we are actively participating in reconciliation as we navigate our time in this course, learning and supporting each other.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the prior work of Murray Fulton, Yang Yang, Marc-André Pigeon, and Martin Boucher in the development of this online course.

HONOUR CODE

At the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS), we believe honesty and integrity are fundamental in a community dedicated to learning, personal development, and a search for understanding. We revere these values and hold them essential in promoting personal responsibility, moral and intellectual leadership, and pride in ourselves and our University.

As JSGS students, we will represent ourselves truthfully, claim only work that is our own, and engage honestly in all academic assignments. Since articulated standards and expectations can influence attitudes, and because each of us shares the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity (see below for details on academic integrity at the JSGS), we are committed to upholding the Academic Honor Code.

Academic Honour Pledge

As a member of the JSGS community, I pledge to live by and to support the letter and spirit of JSGS's Academic Honour Code.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide an economic framework for the analysis of public policy. It develops concepts in microeconomics that are instrumental in understanding and conducting public policy analysis. The course uses microeconomic concepts to examine when and how the government should intervene in the economy and the consequences of that intervention. The course pays particular attention to how people and firms behave and how they are likely to respond to policy interventions. The course also develops the key concepts associated with cost-benefit analysis and shows how these concepts are used in the analysis of public policy.

Note: This course is intended for students who have had limited prior exposure to economics. Though it is not a formal pre-requisite for JSGS 802, it is assumed students have successfully completed JSGS 805 prior to taking JSGS 802.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

JSGS has developed a set of competencies that all graduates will be able to demonstrate. The specific readings, assignments and activities in JSGS 805 will help you both acquire and demonstrate the ability to:

- Demonstrate how economic factors influence policy through a series of policy case analysis;
- Think critically and analytically about policy problems and issues from an economic perspective;
- Analyze policy problems using economic theory; and
- Communicate information and analyses critically and effectively.

ATTRIBUTES OF JSGS GRADUATES

Through the development of the following competencies, JSGS MPA graduates will be prepared to meet the policy challenges of a rapidly changing world:

- Analysis and Use of Evidence – how to use evidence and develop the necessary analytical skills to succeed in a public administration career;
- Politics and Democracy – ensuring that students have a deep understanding of the role of politics and democracy in public policy development including the roles of the various institutions and policy actors; and
- Policy Delivery – the importance of effective service delivery and the ongoing management.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

In this class, students will learn the economic framework for the analysis of public policy by reviewing content related to economic concepts, engaging in interactive online activities, and completing independent and group-based applied assignments. To help students understand the key economic concepts and tools that have been covered, the course features modules focused on applying these concepts to solve real-world policy problems and issues. A critical component throughout this course will be the use of case studies and policy case analyses. These allow students to think critically and analytically about policy problems from an economic perspective.

TEXTBOOKS

Main Textbook

CORE Economics: Economy, Society and Public Policy (ESPP).

Available at: <https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/0-3-contents.html>

Throughout this course students will use the textbook *Economy, Society, and Public Policy (ESPP)* by CORE. Unlike most economics textbooks, this book focuses uniquely on public policy issues. Students in this class may have a variety of backgrounds and don't necessarily have a strong, or any, experience learning economics. The textbook builds from basic economic concepts to more advanced concepts that can be applied to real policy scenarios. Students with a stronger economics background may also find value in this textbook because it brings a unique policy perspective to the field of economics.

Supplementary Textbook

Greenlaw, S.A., and D. Shapiro. 2017. *Principles of Microeconomics*, 2e. OpenStax. Rice University.

Download for free at: <https://openstax.org/details/books/principles-microeconomics-2e>.

Please note that while not the course's main textbook, this book is needed because it is used for some of the required readings.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Module	Description & Readings	Due Dates
Week 1: Sept.2	Course Syllabus Review	Review the course syllabus with a Q & A session for students.	
Week 2: Sept.9	Module 1: Demand, Supply and Equilibrium	<p>The basic model of supply and demand offers some important insights into economic phenomenon and forms the basis for thinking around public policy. Thus, it serves as a good starting point for the course.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Units 7.3 & 7.9-7.13: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/07.html</p>	
Week 3: Sept.16	Module 2: Elasticity and Applications	<p>This module takes a deeper look at the demand and supply model. Economists use the concept of elasticity to measure the responsiveness of quantity to a change in price. The elasticity concept is a powerful tool in evaluating the effectiveness of public policy.</p> <p>Required Reading: Greenlaw & Shapiro, Unit 5: https://openstax.org/books/principles-microeconomics-2e/pages/5-introduction-to-elasticity</p>	
Week 4: Sept.23	Module 3: Policy Case Analysis I - Trans Mountain Pipeline	Apply the basic economic principles of demand, supply, and elasticity to the analysis of a real-world public policy issue – the Trans Mountain Pipeline	
Week 5: Sept.30	Assignment 1 Group Work Session	<p>Assignment 1 – Demand, Supply, Elasticity and Economic Welfare</p> <p>The assignments are group work assignments. Please see the Group Assignments section for more details.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity in this lecture to work together during class to solve the problems in the group assignment and/or to ask the instructor questions.</p>	October 4 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)

Week	Module	Description & Readings	Due Dates
Week 6: Oct.7	Module 4: Consumer Choice	<p>People make consumption decisions in a world of scarcity. The model of budget constraint and indifference curves provides an economic framework to understand consumers' choice decision.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Unit 4: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/04.html</p> <p>Greenlaw and Shapiro, Unit 6: https://openstax.org/books/principles-microeconomics-2e/pages/6-introduction-to-consumer-choices</p>	
Week 7: Oct.14	Module 5: Policy Case Analysis II - Consumer Consumption	<p>The consumer choice model can be used to understand the trade-offs people make when it comes to unhealthy drinking and eating behaviours (e.g. the consumption of alcohol and red meat highlight the necessity of considering these trade-offs when making public policies to regulate unhealthy behaviours).</p> <p>Students will complete a Discussion Board forum based on concepts in Modules 4 and 5. Please see the Discussion Boards section for more details.</p>	Discussion Board 1: Oct.18 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)
Week 8: Oct.21	Module 6: Market Failures	<p>The market does not always properly value all things that people care about. This module examines examples of market failure, such as pollution, public goods and credit.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Unit 11: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/11.html</p>	
Week 9: Oct.28	Module 7: Economic Analysis of Policy Instruments	<p>Examine the important impacts that standard policy tools (e.g., taxes, subsidies, property rights, etc.) have on the economy and social welfare.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Unit 5: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/05.html</p> <p>Students will complete a Discussion Board forum based on concepts in Modules 6 and 7. Please see the Discussion Boards section for more details.</p>	Discussion Board 2: Nov.1 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)

Week	Module	Description & Readings	Due Dates
Week 10: Nov.4	Module 8: Policy Analysis III - Carbon Tax	<p>People make consumption decisions in a world of scarcity. The model of budget constraint and indifference curves provides an economic framework to understand consumers' choice decision.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Unit 4: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/04.html</p> <p>Greenlaw and Shapiro, Unit 6: https://openstax.org/books/principles-microeconomics-2e/pages/6-introduction-to-consumer-choices</p>	
Week 11: Nov.11	N/A	No class due to Reading Week Break & Remembrance Day	
Week 12: Nov.18	Assignment 2 Group Work Session	<p>Assignment 2 – Market Failure and Policy Instruments</p> <p>The assignments are group work assignments. Please see the Group Assignments section for more details.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity in this lecture to work together during class to solve the problems in the group assignment and/or to ask the instructor questions.</p>	Nov.22 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)
Week 13: Nov.25	Module 9: Fairness and Efficiency	<p>A key trade-off in policy is the one between efficiency and fairness. This module uses game theory to examine this trade-off.</p> <p>Required Reading: ESPP, Unit 3: https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/03.html</p>	
Week 14: Dec.2	Module 10: Policy Analysis IV – Climate Policy	Limited policy approaches are available for Canada to reach its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target – carbon pricing, regulations and subsidies. This module discusses the trade-offs that are made when selecting climate policy.	
Week 15: Dec.3-6	Final Exam	The Final Exam is a take home exam completed individually. See the Final Exam section for more details.	Dec.6 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)

* Note: additional readings may be assigned by the instructor as required.

EVALUATION

Assignment	Due Date	Weight Of Total Grade (%)
Class Participation	Every Module Discussion (x 10)	10%
Group Assignment #1	Oct.4 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)	15%
Discussion Board #1 (completed individually)	Oct.18 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)	10%
Discussion Board #2 (completed individually)	Nov.1 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)	10%
Group Assignment #2	Nov.22 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time)	15%
Final Exam (completed individually)	Dec.6 @ 11:59 pm (SK Time) Note: 'take-home' Final Exam provided to students on Dec.3	40%
Total Grade		100%

MODULE DISCUSSIONS/CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course includes a series of synchronous (i.e. “live”) discussion sessions for each of the 10 modules. The purpose is to have a ‘flipped’ classroom. Rather than a traditional lecture format, students must be prepared to come to class to discuss the course material and be able to ask intelligent questions on the material. It is expected that students will have read any of the required material in advance of the class.

These sessions will consist of reviewing course material, discussing applications of the course material as well as in-depth discussions of particular case studies. The purpose is to create learning opportunities for everyone through these interactions between students (and the instructor). The goal is for students to thoroughly learn the concepts/material while also understanding how to apply them in a policy setting.

The discussion sessions will be held in the classroom (CB 330) but may also be held via Zoom (if so, a link will be made available in the Canvas LMS). If they are held via Zoom, the sessions will be recorded for later reference. Please see the Course Outline section for the various dates of the 10 modules.

However, students are expected to attend all the synchronous sessions. Active participation in class discussion is expected by all students. Students that actively participate in a module session will receive up to one (1) percentage point as a participation mark. Given, there are 10 modules, students can earn 10 per cent of their total grade through participation in these discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL EXAM

Discussion Boards

There will be two discussion forums. Each forum is worth 10 per cent of the final grade (for a total of 20%). The topics of the Discussion Boards are as follows:

- Discussion Board #1: Mortgage Interest Deduction and Home Ownership; and
- Discussion Board #2: Market Failure and (Appropriate) Policy Instruments.

Students are responsible for providing thoughtful comments on the discussion board in each forum. Students are required to complete this work individually (i.e. students are expected to provide their own individual thoughts/work).

Participation will be graded based on the quality and frequency of the comments, the degree to which the comments integrate and demonstrate understanding of class material, the quality of the writing, and the extent to which students show genuine engagement with the material and their fellow classmates' posts.

In other words, the online discussion should feel like a real, respectful and intellectually engaging conversation. Formulaic and "paint-by-number" response will not earn a good grade. More details are available in a document on the discussion board in the Canvas platform (discussed below).

Group Assignments

There will be two group assignments. Each group assignment is worth 15 per cent of the final grade (for a total of 30%). Students are responsible for providing thoughtful comments on the discussion board in each forum. The topics of the Group Assignments are as follows:

- Group Assignment #1: Demand, Supply, Elasticity and Economic Welfare; and
- Group Assignment #2: Market Failure and Policy Instruments.

Each group consists of ***no more than three students***. Each group will submit only one assignment and the final grade received by individual student will be determined by the quality of group work as well as the feedback from peer evaluation. More details and policy about the peer evaluation will be provided during the term.

Student will self-select their group for Assignment #1. However, the instructor reserves the right to choose the groups for Assignment #2.

Please type solutions using a word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word) but you can do graphs by hand and scan them for inclusion. Students may consider installing software designed for easily creating charts such as diagrams.net, a free, open-source tool that allows you to collaborate on creating your diagrams (<https://www.diagrams.net/>). Images from this tool, or others like it, can easily be ported over to MS Word (or other word processors). All completed assignments should be submitted electronically to the Canvas LMS.

Final Exam

This class has a take-home final exam that begins on December 3 and concludes on December 6, 2021 at 11:59 pm. The final exam is an individual exam. It is worth 40% of your final grade. Students must submit their own solutions. All completed exams must be submitted electronically to the Canvas platform.

Late Assignments

Late submissions for the Discussion Boards and Group Assignments will be accepted. A penalty of five (5) percentage points per day will be deducted up to a maximum of 20 percentage points (i.e. up to a maximum of 4 calendar days).

Late submissions for the Final Exam will NOT be accepted. The Final Exam is to be completed between Dec.3 and Dec.6.

Special circumstances may be considered by the instructor upon application by a student. Students must apply for an exemption prior to the due date and may be required to provide evidence/proof as to why they require an exemption.

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University of Regina Copyright information: <https://www.uregina.ca/copyright/guidelines/fair-dealing.html>

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students in this course who, because of a disability, may have a need for accommodations are encouraged to discuss this need with the instructor and to contact one of the following:

Centre for Student Accessibility – accessibility@uregina.ca or 306-585-4631
<https://www.uregina.ca/student/accessibility/students/index.html>

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING STRESS

Experiencing stress? Need someone to talk to? Contact Counselling Services at <http://www.uregina.ca/student/counselling/contact.html> or call (306) 585-4491 between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. SK time Monday to Friday.

USE OF VIDEO AND RECORDING OF THE COURSE

Please note the modules and other sessions may be completed and recorded on Zoom. If so, the videos will be posted on Canvas for students that cannot attend and/or for students to access later. The University of Regina may collect your image, voice, name, personal views and opinions, and course work under the legal authority of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Please contact the instructor if you have any questions about the recording and use of sessions in which you have participated. Please remember that course recordings belong to the instructor, the University, and/or others (like a guest lecturer) depending on the circumstance of each session and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share recordings without the explicit permission of the instructor.

(BRIEF) INSTRUCTOR BIO

Shaun Augustin has worked for the Government of Saskatchewan since 2000 in a variety of roles across different areas of the government. Shaun has served as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) since 2014. He is responsible for the finance, human resources, information technology and the delivery/scheduling of apprenticeship training functions for the organization. He is also responsible for modernizing the organization's IT infrastructure.

Prior to his current position, Shaun was the Director, Business Planning and Performance for SaskGaming (i.e. Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw) from 2011 to 2014. He was responsible for facilitating the strategic planning and reporting processes, managing the research and business intelligence services within the corporation as well as supporting business case development and continuous process improvement.

From 2008 to 2011, Shaun served within the Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport (TPCS) in a variety of positions. He served as a senior policy analyst in the ministry's Policy, Planning and Evaluation Branch providing a 'central policy' function working on a variety of policies and programs for the ministry. He was the Head of Business Development and Leasing for Saskatchewan Parks Service where he oversaw all of the private sector businesses that operate within provincial parks and created a new program aimed at stimulating private-sector investment within Saskatchewan's provincial parks system. Shaun also contributed to the development of a new policy framework for the arts, culture and heritage sector as well as helped develop new legislation for professional artists in Saskatchewan.

Shaun worked as a senior policy analyst with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services' Strategic Policy Branch from 2005 to 2008 on disability supports program design, client-centered research and led a legislation review project on Canadian and international jurisdictions as part of the Child and Family Services division's review of the *Child and Family Services Act* and *Adoption Act 1998*.

Shaun began his government career as an economist with Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance's Economic and Fiscal Policy Branch. Shaun's main duties while at Finance were to write the economic section of the provincial budget and provide analysis of the provincial, Canadian and global economy. Shaun wrote various papers (e.g. "Economic History of Saskatchewan" or "Yield Curves and Recessions") during this time. Additionally, he developed the Saskatchewan Diffusion Index as a tool to monitor changes in the provincial economy.

Shaun has taught a variety of economics courses at the University of Regina since 2001. He regularly teaches introductory microeconomics, introductory macroeconomics and a sports economics course for the Department of Economics. He also has taught economics for public policy (JSGS 805) and public finance (JSGS 802) for the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School (JSGS) of Public Policy several times each in the past.

Shaun is also an avid sports enthusiast and fan. His favourite sports are rugby, football, soccer, hockey, baseball, tennis and downhill skiing but he also enjoys games, reading and movies. Shaun is married with three daughters.