

JSGS 805 – Economics for Public Policy Analysis

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS		
INSTRUCTOR:	Murray Fulton	Yang Yang
PHONE:	(306) 966-8507	(306) 966-1748
E-MAIL:	murray.fulton@usask.ca	yang.yang@usask.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Email for an appointment	
OFFICE LOCATION:	Online	
TERM:	Spring 2021	
ROOM:	Online – http://canvas.usask.ca/	
DATE AND TIME:	Course materials available May 17 – June 25, 2021. Live sessions are scheduled on the following dates and time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 19, 1-3 pm • May 26, 8-10 am • June 2, 1-3 pm • June 9, 8-10 am • June 17, 1-3 pm • June 23, 8-10 am 	

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

We 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.

REMOTE LEARNING CONTEXT

This course takes place under exceptional circumstances. As you know, we have no in-person meeting opportunities, some of you may be taking this course from other countries and continents, and we all are concerned about our mental and physical well-being. We also acknowledge that remote teaching and learning context is probably new to many if not most of you. With that in mind, we urge everyone to participate fully in the course — take advantage of our virtual office hours, reach out to us (i.e., your instructors) via email, interact with your fellow students, participate fully in the discussion forums, and do all of that with empathy, care and patience.

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, the latter assumes the student has successfully completed JSGS 805.

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
- 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 and evaluation of public policy.

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.

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 Textbooks

Greenlaw, S.A., and D. Shapiro. 2017. Principles of Microeconomics, 2e. OpenStax. Rice University. Download for free [here](#). Please note that while not the course's main textbook, we do draw on it for some of the required readings.

The Economy (Economy): Available

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK	MODULE	DESCRIPTION AND READINGS	DUE DATES
Week 1 May 17 – May 21	Module 1: Demand, Supply, and Equilibrium	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. Required reading: ESPP: Unit 7 – https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/07.html . Specifically, Units 7.3 and 7.9 – 7.13.	
	Module 2: Elasticity and Applications	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. Required reading: Greenlaw & Shapiro: Unit 5 – https://openstax.org/books/principles-microeconomics-2e/pages/5-introduction-to-elasticity .	
Week 2 May 24 – May 28	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	Assignment 1 due on May 30, 11:59 pm

		issue – the Trans Mountain Pipeline project.	
Week 3 May 31 – June 4	Module 4: Consumer Choice	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. Required reading: ESPP: Unit 4 – https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/04.html . Greenlaw & Shapiro: Unit 6 – https://openstax.org/books/principles-microeconomics-2e/pages/6-introduction-to-consumer-choices .	Discussion board 1 due on June 6, 11:59pm
	Module 5: Policy Case Analysis II: Consumer Consumption	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 – and to highlight the necessity of considering these trade-offs when making public policies to regulate unhealthy behaviours.	
Week 4 June 7 – June 11	Module 6: Market Failures	The market does not always properly value the things that we care about. This module examines examples of market failure, such as pollution, public goods and credit. Required reading: ESPP: Unit 11 – https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/11.html	Discussion board 2 due on June 13, 11:59pm
	Module 7: Economic Analysis of Policy Instruments	The standard policy tools – e.g., taxes, subsidies, property rights – have important impacts on the economy and social welfare. Required reading: ESPP: Unit 5 – https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/05.html	

Week 5 June 14 – June 18	Module 8: Policy Case Analysis III: Carbon Tax	Examination of a real-world policy issue: the carbon tax. Discuss how the carbon tax affects consumers and producers and discuss the concepts of externality, tax incidence, and deadweight loss.	Assignment 2 due on June 20, 11:59pm
Week 6 June 21 – June 25	Module 9: Fairness and Efficiency	A key trade-off in policy is the one between efficiency and fairness. This module uses game theory to examine this trade-off. Required reading: ESPP: Unit 3 – https://www.core-econ.org/espp/book/text/03.html	
	Module 10: Policy Case 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.	
June 26 – June 29	Final Exam		Final Exam due on June 29, 11:59pm

* Readings may added during the course. See the Required and Supplementary Readings section in the module for the complete list of readings for each module.

EVALUATION

Discussion Board 1	Discussion board 1 due on June 6 by 11:59 pm	10%
Discussion Board 2	Discussion board 2 due on June 13 by 11:59 pm	10%
Assignment 1	Due on May 30 by 11:59 pm	20%
Assignment 2	Due on June 20 by 11:59 pm	20%
Final Exam	Due on June 29 by 11:59 pm	40%
Total		100%

* All times are Central Standard Time, which is the time zone for Saskatoon and Regina.

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION SESSIONS

This course includes a series of synchronous (i.e., “live”) discussion sessions. These sessions may consist of reviewing course material, discussing applications of the course material, in-depth discussion of particular case studies, and creating opportunities for interactions more akin to those in an in-person class. All discussion sessions will be held online via Zoom (a link will be made available in the Canvas LMS) and recorded for later reference. Students are expected to attend all the synchronous sessions. If you are

unable to attend (e.g., Internet problems), you must let the instructor know. Active participation in class discussion is expected by all students.

Live sessions are scheduled on the following dates and time:

- May 19, 1-3 pm
- May 26, 8-10 am
- June 2, 1-3 pm
- June 9, 8-10 am
- June 17, 1-3 pm
- June 23, 8-10 am

* All times are Central Standard Time, which is the time zone for Saskatoon and Regina.

THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This course is offered through the Canvas learning management system (LMS). Canvas is USask's new mobile-friendly learning management system. While many of you will choose to use the LMS on your desktop computer, you can also use the free [app](#) on your Android or iOS devices. Please ensure your Canvas Notifications are set to receive **Announcements**, **Conversations**, and **Messages** from us about grades and appointments.

If you are not yet seeing this course in Canvas, please go to canvas.usask.ca and log in with your NSID to see your course(s) on any of your browser or devices. Please note that the course will not be visible until we (your instructors) have published it. Based on experience to date, the Canvas LMS seems best suited to Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox.

If you need help with Canvas, please consult the following resources:

- USask's Canvas webpage for students: <https://students.usask.ca/study/canvas.php>
- This short [Canvas Overview for Students](#) video shows you the look and feel of Canvas.
- Access other and [Canvas Videos](#) and [Canvas Student Guide](#) for easy to follow instructions.
- USask has a 24/7 Canvas Support Hotline at 1-855-382-5556 and [Live Chat for Students](#); this information is also on the Help menu on your Canvas Dashboard.
- If you experience technical difficulties where you're unable to access Canvas, or if a feature isn't working as it should, then visit itsupport.usask.ca to search their Knowledge Base and/or submit a request to [IT Support](#).

Finally, please watch your PAWS Announcement feed and your USask email for updates on Canvas student resources.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Boards

There will be two discussion forums. Each forum closes at 11:59 pm on the following dates:

- June 6: Forum 1
- June 13: Forum 2

Each forum is worth 10% of the final grade for a total of 20%. Students are responsible for providing thoughtful comments on the discussion board in each forum. 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

In addition to the discussion boards, students must also complete two group-based assignments, each worth 20% of the final grade. The assignments are:

- **Assignment #1** – Demand, Supply, Elasticity and Economic Welfare: DUE on May 30, 2021 by 11:59 pm
- **Assignment #2** – Taxation, Market Failures: DUE on June 20, 2021 by 11:59 pm

Each group consists of *no more than three* students, and each assignment is worth 20% of the final grade. 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.

Please type solutions using a word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word, Google Docs), 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 (and excellent) open-source tool that allows you to collaborate on creating your diagrams. Images from this tool and those 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 **June 26 and concludes on June 29, 2021 at 11:59 pm**. The final exam is an individual exam. It is worth 40% of your final grade. Students have to submit their own solutions. All completed exams should be submitted electronically to the Canvas platform.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignment will be assigned a penalty of 5%. Assignments more than a week late will lose 10%. Students who feel they need a deadline extension due to unforeseen circumstances should submit their request prior to the due date. We will give each request due consideration.

USE OF VIDEO AND RECORDING OF THE COURSE

Video conference sessions in this course, including your participation, will be recorded and made available only to students in the course for viewing via Canvas after each session. This is done, in part, to ensure that students unable to join the session (due to, for example, issues with their Internet connection) can view the session at a later time. This will also provide students with the opportunity to review any material discussed. Students may also record sessions for their own use, but they are not permitted to distribute the recordings (see below).

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.

For questions about recording and use of sessions in which you have participated, including any concerns related to your privacy, please contact your instructor. More information on class recordings can be found in the Academic Courses Policy at <https://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php#5ClassRecordings>.

COPYRIGHT

Course materials are provided to you based on your registration in a class, and anything created by your professors and instructors is their intellectual property, unless materials are designated as open education resources. This includes exams, PowerPoint/PDF slides and other course notes. Additionally, other copyright-protected materials created by textbook publishers and authors may be provided to you based on license terms and educational exceptions in the Canadian Copyright Act (see <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>).

Before you copy or distribute others' copyright-protected materials, please ensure that your use of the materials is covered under the University's Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines available at <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/general-information/fair-dealing-guidelines.php>. For example, posting others' copyright-protected materials on the open web is not covered under the University's Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines, and doing so requires permission from the copyright holder.

For more information about copyright, please visit <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/index.php>. For information on students' rights, see <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/students/rights.php>, or contact the University's Copyright Coordinator at copyright.coordinator@usask.ca or 306-966-8817.

STUDENT RESOURCES

- DEU Writing Centre – Quality writing help for free! Anyone taking a distance class (online, independent studies, televised, or multi-mode delivery) administered by the DEU can use this free service. The Writing Centre provides tools and support to help you write effective essays, reports, or reviews. Simply submit a project draft, and a qualified tutor will assess your work and offer advice to improve your project. Contact the DEU Writing Centre at <http://distanceeducation.usask.ca/support/writing-centre.php>.
- Netiquette information resources for faculty, instructors and students highlight the basics of internet etiquette including how to appropriately connect and communicate in a remote teaching and learning context. See <https://teaching.usask.ca/remote-teaching/netiquette.php> and <https://studentstest.usask.ca/articles/netiquette.php>.
- Remote learning readiness tutorial for students. This resource engages students in learning about the skills associated with remote learning success. Feel free to send this to students or embed it in your Canvas or Blackboard course as a recommended or required activity. See – see <https://libguides.usask.ca/remotelearning>.
- Remote learning resources have been pulled together for students on the usask.ca website. This site is updated regularly. See <https://students.usask.ca/remotelearning/index.php>.
- Academic integrity tutorial for students. This resource introduces students to the concept of academic integrity and guides them to better understand their responsibilities regarding academic work, their rights, and the supports and services available to ensure they succeed within the larger scholarly community. Feel free to embed this in your Canvas or Blackboard course as part of your course-based activities on academic integrity. See <https://libguides.usask.ca/AcademicIntegrityTutorial>.
- Be Well at USask is a podcast for all members of the university community highlighting campus initiatives and resources designed to engage and support. Included are episodes on how to thrive at university, transitioning to remote learning, academic supports, career planning in a crisis, as well as many other student supports. See https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQptLdMDrox2_HZ0XAfHQW6DZoQOhoXes.
- Information on the Academic Courses Policy on course delivery, examinations and assessment of student learning can be found at: <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php>.
- The University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter is intended to define aspirations about the learning experience that the University aims to provide, and the roles to be played in realizing these aspirations by students, instructors and the institution. A copy of the Learning Charter can be found at: <http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php>.

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:

USask: Disability Services for Students (DSS) – 966-7273.

U of R: Coordinator of Special Needs Services – (306) 585-4631.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING STRESS

Students who are experiencing stress can seek assistance from one of the following:

USask: Student Affairs and Outreach – <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/student-affairs-and-outreach.php> or call (306) 966-5757.

U of R: Counselling Services – <http://www.uregina.ca/student/counselling/contact.html> or call (306) 585-4491 between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saskatchewan time Monday to Friday.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

Understanding and following the principles of academic integrity and conduct is vital to your success in graduate school. Ensuring that your work is your own and reflects both your own ideas and those of others incorporated in your work is important: ensuring that you acknowledge the ideas, words, and phrases of others that you use is a vital part of the scholarly endeavour. The JSGS has developed an Honour Code (see above) that encapsulates these values.

If you have any questions at all about academic integrity in general or about specific issues, contact any faculty member and we can discuss your questions. For more information, please see:

USask: Guidelines for Academic Conduct – www.usask.ca/university_secretary/council/reports_forms/reports/guide_conduct.php.

U of R: Academic Misconduct – <https://www.uregina.ca/president/executive-team/ed-governance-univ-secretary/student-appeals/student-behaviour.html>

JSGS GRADE DESCRIPTORS

85+ Excellent

A superior performance with consistent strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently; and
- an excellent ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

80-85 Very good

An excellent performance with strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
- a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently; and
- a strong ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

75-80 Good

A good performance with evidence of:

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
- a good understanding of the relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a good ability to organize, to analyze, and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner; and
- some ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

70-75 Satisfactory

A generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of:

- an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
- a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
- a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material; and
- a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.