Business and Government

Course prefix: PUBP

Course number: 4226

Section: RDC

CRN (you may add up to five):
93157

Instructor First Name: Mark

Instructor Last Name: Taylor

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course will serve as an introduction to the interdependence of business and government. Businesses produce the private goods & services that are fundamental to a functioning economy. Government supplies the public goods, regulations, and redistribution that enable business and society to thrive. This course will therefore investigate the different roles and capacities of government and business for solving economic and social problems. It will draw upon on theory and evidence rather than philosophy or political ideology. The realms of fiscal, trade, monetary, and regulatory policy will be explored. In doing so, students will consider the questions: upon what scientific basis might one decide if government action is justified? If so, then what instruments or tools does government have at its disposal; how might we choose amongst them? How do we identify stakeholders; and how should we expect stakeholders to respond? Along the way, students will learn professional communications techniques: the proper use of presentation software, basic data visualization, brief and memo writing. Finally, this course will not dictate judgements about what functions government or business *should* or *should not* perform; students will decide for themselves.

Course learning outcomes:

The primary goal of this class is for students to learn the scientific basis for/against government regulation of business and for the limitations thereof. In doing so, students will be exposed to a wide variety of contemporary public policy controversies The work you do outside of class will be as important as the work in class. In addition, to the primary goal given above, by the end of this course you should be able to:

- Analyze, interpret, and explain major developments in fiscal, trade, monetary, and regulatory policy.
- Define/identify an economic or social problem and evaluate claims about the roles of business vs. government in solving it.
- Identify policy options for solving the problem
- Use policy analysis tools to compare the merits and disadvantages of different policy approaches to a particular problem and estimate the likely consequences of proposed policies
- Develop and strengthen skills in research, analysis, and problem-solving
- Develop and strengthen skills in written and oral communication.

These objectives satisfy designated learning objectives for courses carrying social sciences credit (Core Area E) at Georgia Tech: "Students will be able to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior."

Required course materials:

Required for purchase: None. Required readings will be made available on the course Canvas site. Assignments prefaced with "Mp3" are not readings but computer audio files which should be treated as seriously as an in-class lecture or assigned reading (i.e., you are responsible for knowing assigned Mp3 material).

Recommended (subject matter):

-*Microeconomics: A Very Short Introduction* by Avinash Dixit

-*Governance: A Very Short Introduction* by Mark Bevir

-*Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction* by James Fulcher

-*American Business History: A Very Short Introduction* by Walter A. Friedman

-*The Federal Reserve: What Everyone Needs to Know* by Stephen H. Axilrod

-*Banking: A Very Short Introduction* by John Goddard & John Wilson

-*Taxes in America: What Everyone Needs to Know* by Leonard Burman & Joel Slemrod

-*American Legal History: A Very Short Introduction* by G. Edward White

Recommended (writing and research):

-*Writing for Busy Readers: Communicate More Effectively in the Real World* by Todd Rogers and Jessica Lasky-Fink

-*Plain Style: A Guide to Written English* by Christopher Lasch (Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 2002)

-*Writing That Works: How to Communicate Effectively In Business* by Kenneth Roman & Joel Raphaelson

-*Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* by Theodore Porter (Princeton Univ. Press, 2020)

-*Counting: How We Use Numbers to Decide What Matters* by Deborah Stone (WW Norton, 2020)

-Serious students of Business & Government should also consider subscriptions to *The Economist*, *Wall Street Journal, Financial Times,* and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* or accessing them for free via the Tech Library.

Grading policy:

Your grade will be determined by: how well you **communicate** to me that you **understand** the **fundamental** definitions, concepts, and causal relationships of policy analysis **as presented in the lectures, readings, discussions and other assigned materials**.

It bears repeating that your personal (dis)agreement with the definitions, concepts, & relationships presented in this class will *not* affect your grade. You do however need to show that you understand these fundamentals as they are currently accepted by the community of top researchers in public policy. You need not agree with them, but you do need to show that you understand them. Your understanding of the course material will be communicated to me via the following:

25% In class Q&A and discussion

25% Mini-Briefs and Quizzes

25% Oral presentation

25% Final Policy Brief

Students should note that, for individual assignments (papers, tests, etc.), grades in this course are not rigidly related to numerical scores, distribution functions, predetermined percentages, or your knowledge of academic jargon. As can be seen from the following grade descriptions, individual assignment grading in this course is related more directly to a student's demonstrated mastery of the material. This also means that the relative performance of one's peers is less important, though not irrelevant, to one's grade. Finally, in determining an assignment's grade, consideration is given for elegance of presentation, creativity, imagination, and originality *only* where these have been appropriately be called for, and where mastery of the fundamentals has already been demonstrated. A satisfactorily completed individual assignment will receive one of the following grades:

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field. Writes at the level of ChatGPT.

Other grades awarded include:

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. Has not demonstrated familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field. This includes:

- citation of non-existent sources

- citation of an irrelevant source or one that fails to support the claim cited
- blatantly inaccurate facts, data, or quotations
- failure to use the citations guidelines (see handout)
- inability to knowledgably discuss written deliverables
- use of AI in research, analysis, or writing

Note that this course's internal grading system may include plus (+) and minus (-) modifiers for use with the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F. However, they are not officially part of students' grades, they do not appear on Georgia Tech transcripts, and they do not affect internally or externally reported grade-point averages.

Attendance policy:

   A) Students are responsible for all materials, discussions, comments, etc. covered in class (i.e. don't miss

      class, it may effect your grade).

   B) Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification.

   C) If you do miss class for a non-emergency or non-approved event, do not apologize or explain why. I

      completely understand that "life happens" and that you have priorities other than this class. However,

      unless it's an emergency (see above), it will not affect grading policy. That is, if you miss class for some

      awesome extra-curricular adventure or opportunity, I'm not offended…but I cannot grant you a special

      tutoring session, extension, or make-up either. You will be responsible for any material, assignments, or

      announcements covered in class that you missed.

   D) Students who arrive late to, or leave early from, class are required to do so with minimum disturbance.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

In this course, plagiarism is defined, for the purposes of this class, as: copying, borrowing, or appropriating another person's work **and** presenting it as your own in a paper or oral presentation, deliberately or by accident. Acts of plagiarism will be reported in accordance with the Honor Challenge. In particular, if you engage in plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, you will fail the assignment in which you have engaged in academic misconduct and be referred to the Office of

Student Integrity, as required by Georgia Tech policy. In order to avoid being charged with plagiarism, if you use the words, ideas, phrasing, charts, graphs, or data of another person or from published material, then you must either: 1) use quotation marks around the words **and** cite the source, or 2) paraphrase or summarize acceptably using your own words **and** cite the source. The plagiarism policy is not restricted to books, but also applies to video & audio content, websites, blogs, wiki's, and podcasts.

Another serious type of academic misconduct is the improper use of Artificial Intelligence. In this course:

- Students *may not* use AI when conducting research because one goal of this course is to learn how to identify, find, digest, and interpret expert sources.
- Students *may not* use AI when writing because one goal of this course is to build skills and experience in critical thinking, communication, and original thought (i.e., avoid plagiarism).
- Students *may* use AI when creating graphics and data visualizations because, while one goal of this course is to learn how to identify high v. low quality visualizations, students need not become skilled graphic designers.

Students are also expected to read and abide by the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. All violations will be reported. The complete text of these two Codes may be found at:

1. https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct
2. https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code

Students are also strongly urged to be familiar with these Georgia Tech sites:

1. Honor Challenge — https://osi.gatech.edu/students/honor-code
2. Office of Student Integrity — http://www.osi.gatech.edu/index.php/Core

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

• How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

• Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic,

political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

• Intercultural Competence

• Perspective-Taking

• Persuasion