

Syllabus

Course description

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| Course title | Public Economics |
| Course code | 27199 |
| Scientific sector | SECS-P/03 |
| Degree | Bachelor Economics and Social Sciences (L-33) |
| Semester and academic year | 1st semester 2023-24 |
| Year | 3rd year |
| Credits | 7 |
| Modular | No |
| Total lecturing hours | 42 (P. Roberti: 12 hours + S. Stillman: 30 hours) |
| Total lab hours | -- |
| Total exercise hours | 21 |
| Attendance | Highly Recommended, but not required. |
| Prerequisites | Previous attendance of an introductory course in microeconomics is strongly suggested, to properly follow the lectures. |
| Course page | https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/bachelor-economics-social-sciences/ |

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| Specific educational objectives | <p>The course belongs to the scientific area of public sector economics and is a typical educational activity for any degree in Economics. The course gives a general overview on the subject and related scientific research including the analysis of externalities and topics in environmental and resource economics. The course aims to link knowledge and understanding on the public sector of the economy through the application of basic skills in economic analysis. Students will develop the capacity to understand economic, social, cultural, and policy issues related to the public sector economy, the environment and natural resources. They will learn about how to apply economic concepts in the field and how to relate their knowledge to real world economic issues.</p> |
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| Lecturers | <p>Paolo Roberti, Office I3.03, paolo.roberti@unibz.it tel. 0471 013552, https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/41969-paolo-roberti</p> <p>Steven Stillman, Office E3.03, steven.stillman@unibz.it, tel. 0471 013132, www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/36390-steven-stillman</p> |
| Scientific sector of the lecturers | SECS/P-03 |
| Teaching language | English |
| Office hours | 6 hours Prof. Roberti + 15 hours Prof. Stillman |

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| | Cockpit – students’ zone – individual timetable Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/timetable/?department=26&degree=12833%2C13016 |
| Lecturing assistant | TBA |
| Teaching assistant | None |

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| List of topics covered | <p>Prof. Stillman: Introduction, Review of Basic Microeconomic and Empirical Tools, Education, Social Insurance, Social Security, Unemployment, Disability and Injury Insurance, Health Insurance, Income Distribution and Welfare Programs, Taxation, Political Economy</p> <p>Prof. Roberti: Theory of Externalities, Externality Problems and Solutions, Dynamic Efficiency, Sustainability, Sustainable Resource Use, Public Goods.</p> |
| Teaching format | Lectures, discussions, small group projects, exercises, etc. |

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| Learning outcomes | <p><u>Knowledge and understanding:</u> Students should know analytical tools used in public economics and acquire knowledge on the theory of externalities with applications to environmental and health, dynamic efficiency and sustainable development, sustainable resource use, public goods and their provision, political economy models, social insurance and social security, taxation and government regulation.</p> <p><u>Applying knowledge and understanding:</u> Students should be able to comprehend and apply research contributions. They will learn how to interpret theoretical ideas and applied research results such as to the ability to adapt government interventions.</p> <p><u>Making judgments:</u> Student should be able to reflect on specific problems and formulate judgments that include a critical reflection on the relevant social and economic issues involved.</p> <p><u>Communication skills:</u> Students should be able to communicate content, key concepts, research ideas, problems and solutions as well as research results to both a specialist and non-specialist audience.</p> <p><u>Learning skills:</u> Students are able to link economic theory and specific economic problems related to the public sector. They are expected to extend their knowledge acquired during the course autonomously by reading and understanding scientific research and analysis and to continue to undertake further study in order to do a literature review and to frame a proper research question.</p> |
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| Assessment | A voluntary midterm and mandatory final exam, both written, as well as a mandatory writing assignment and presentation. Non-attendees are allowed to take the midterm exam and are encouraged to do the presentation. The midterm grade can be rejected in which case the student will take a longer final exam covering all of the material in the course. |
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| | <p>For attending students, the course project is done in groups of 2 students and it includes a written project report (about 10 pages) and short 10-minute presentation of the main ideas developed.</p> <p>Non-attending students can do a course project in groups of 2 students if they prefer but must sign-up when this is offered, i.e. agree on a topic with the instructors at the least 2 months before the exam that they wish to take. Non-attending students can also do instead so a written 10-page project on their own.</p> <p>For the exams neither textbooks, nor other teaching materials, nor any electronic devices are allowed in the examination room. Dictionaries without notes and simple calculators are permitted.</p> |
| Assessment language | English |
| Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks | <p>The final grade will be a weighted average of the writing assignment (25%), presentation (5%), midterm exam (35%) and final exam (35%). Students that do not take the midterm or reject their midterm grade will be given a longer final that will count for 70% of the final grade. For non-attending students who choose not to do the presentation, the writing assignment will count for 30% of the final grade.</p> <p>The textbook, "Public Economics" by Jonathan Gruber, additional reading materials made available to the class and the in-class slides of the instructors will form the basis for the material covered in the exams and will be made available to the students online.</p> <p>Relevant for assessing the written exam is the clarity of answers, mastery of the teaching language, and the ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics and to solve formal problems. Relevant for assessing the course project is the ability to work on a specified topic, creativity, critical thinking, ability to structure and summarize ideas in your own words, teamwork and an effective presentation.</p> |
| Required readings | Gruber, J. 2013. Public Finance and Public Policy. 4 th Edition. Worth Publishers. Older editions of the book are also OK. |
| Supplementary readings | <p>Mankiw, G. 2014, Principles of Economics. 7th Edition. Cengage Learning. Including previous editions for review of basic microeconomic tools.</p> <p>Selected articles are suggested as supplementary readings. They will be presented during the lecture and uploaded to the reserve collection.</p> |