

University of California, San Diego  
Department of Economics  
Spring 2023

Professor Katherine Meckel  
kmeckel@ucsd.edu

## **ECONOMICS 151: Public Econ, Expenditures I (Sections A & B)**

Overview of the public sector in the United States and the scope of government intervention in economic life. Theory of public goods and externalities. Discussion of specific policies, such as mandates and taxes, and expenditure programs, such as education and welfare.

**Lectures:** Tuesday and Thursday at RWAC (Ridge Walk Academic Complex 0103)

**Section A:** 9:30 AM to 10:50 AM

**Section B:** 11:00 AM to 12:20 PM

**Textbook:** Jonathan Gruber's Public Finance and Public Policy, 6th Edition. Earlier versions are OK, but homeworks may reference page numbers and problem numbers that change across editions.

**Website:** Class Materials on Canvas: Syllabus, Problem sets and Answer Keys, Lecture notes, Practice Exams from previous quarter.

**Pre-Requisites:** ECON 100C (Microeconomics C)

**Professor's Office Hours:** W: 3:30-4:30 PM on Zoom. Please email me (kmeckel@ucsd.edu) on Tuesday and I will send you a Zoom link.

### **Teaching Assistants:**

Andre Gray ([adgray@ucsd.edu](mailto:adgray@ucsd.edu))

Hannah Bae ([hbae@ucsd.edu](mailto:hbae@ucsd.edu))

### **TA Discussion Section**

W: 11:00-11:50 AM Design and Innovation Building (DIB) Room 122

W: 12:00-12:50 AM Design and Innovation Building (DIB) Room 122

The TA section is helpful for understanding how to solve the problem sets due the next day.

### **TA Office Hours:**

Andre (weeks 6-11): Tue, 8:30 – 9:30am ECON 123

Hannah (weeks 1-5): Thur, 4:30 – 5:30pm ECON 126

### **Grading:**

Homeworks (best 6/7): 20%

Midterm Exam 1: 20%

Midterm Exam 2: 20%

Final Exam: 40%

**Homework:**

- All homework is due as an Assignment submission on Canvas, by:  
Wednesday night at midnight (12:00 AM)
- Homeworks are graded pass/fail. Pass indicates that “a serious attempt was made to solve all problems.” Note that there is a significant penalty for not turning any homework in.
- Students are encouraged to collaborate on problem sets, but everyone must write up his or her own answers.
- The lowest homework will be dropped

**Exams:**

- Exams include a mixture of conceptual problems and analytical problems. The final is cumulative.
- There will be no make-up exams. Please see UCSD policy regarding missing exams here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/courses/epc-policies-on-courses/policy-exams-including-midterms-final-exams-and-religious-accommodations-for-exams/>

**Midterm Review Session:**

During regular discussion session on 5/3 and 5/31

**Final Review Session**

Zoom session with TAs on 6/9 (time TBA)

**Final Exam (Location TBA):**

**Section A:** Wednesday, June 13, 8 AM to 11 AM

**Section B:** Friday, June 13, 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

**Administrative Issues:**

- (1) Exams are closed book/open notes. To help maintain the integrity of the midterms and finals, please bring your student ID to the exam.
- (2) Any student found responsible for violating academic integrity will earn a failing grade for the course. In addition to the academic sanction that I impose, the Council of Deans of Student Affairs will impose a disciplinary penalty. For a review of UCSD policy, please see <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>.
- (3) If you have a documented disability, please bring your documentation and come to talk to me as soon as possible so that I can make suitable accommodations for you. If you believe that you may have a disability and will desire accommodation, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities, Building 202 University Center

**Course Schedule (Preliminary, subject to change)**

Week	Topic	Reading (Gruber)	Homework
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<b>Week 1</b>			
Tuesday, 4/4	Introduction to US Public Sector	Chapter 1	
Thursday, 4/6	Intro/Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 1/2	
<b>Week 2</b>			
Tuesday, 4/11	NO CLASS		
Thursday, 4/13	Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 2	HW 1 due Wed night (4/12)
<b>Week 3</b>			
Tuesday, 4/18	Theory of Public Finance	Chapter 2	
Thursday, 4/20	Empirical Tools	Chapter 3	HW 2 due Wed night (4/19)
<b>Week 4</b>			
Tuesday, 4/25	Empirical Tools	Chapter 3	
Thursday, 4/27	Empirical Tools, Externality Theory	Chapter 3/5	HW 3 due Wed night (4/26)
<b>Week 5</b>			
Tuesday, 5/2	Externality Theory	Chapter 5	
Thursday, 5/4	<b>Midterm #1</b>		
<b>Week 6</b>			
Tuesday, 5/9	Externality Theory	Chapter 5	
Thursday, 5/11	NO CLASS	Chapter 5/6	HW 4 due Wed night (5/10)
<b>Week 7</b>			
Tuesday, 5/16	Externality Theory	Chapter 6	
Thursday, 5/18	Externalities: Applications	Chapter 6	HW 5 due Wed night (5/17)
<b>Week 8</b>			
Tuesday, 5/23	Externalities: Applications	Chapter 7	
Thursday, 5/25	Theory of Public Goods		HW 6 due Wed night (5/24)

<b>Week 9</b>			
Tuesday, 5/30	Theory of Public Goods	Chapter 7	
Thursday, 6/1	<b>Midterm #2</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>			
Tuesday, 6/6	Theory of Public Goods	Chapter 11	
Thursday, 6/8	Education		HW 7 due Wed night (6/7)