

PUBPOL 516C
Economics for Policy Analysis and Management I

Tuesday: 5:30 pm - 8:20 pm
Savery 264

Instructor Contact Information

Office: 328 Parrington Hall
Email: ceweber@uw.edu
Office Phone: (206)-221-4565
Office Hours: 4:20 pm - 5:20 pm Tuesday and 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm Thursday
Personal Website: <http://faculty.washington.edu/ceweber/>
Course Website: On Canvas

Course Description

The objectives of this course are to provide you with a firm foundation in microeconomic theory and begin to develop your skills in applying this theory to public policy issues. You should aim to understand the tools, language, and core principles of microeconomics. Because the goal of this course is to learn how to solve problems within the standard microeconomic framework, not to identify specific policy conclusions, we will often make simplifying assumptions and study less-than-realistic scenarios.

We will begin the quarter with a brief review of supply and demand and some important economic concepts, such as elasticity of demand and supply. We then introduces taxes into this model. Next, we will learn about indifference curves and budget constraints—the building blocks of individual demand curves—and examine income and substitution effects with this model. Then we turn to the supply side of the market and learn about production and costs. We then learn about different forms of competition, particularly perfect competition and monopolies, and how competition affects welfare. We conclude with the special topic for this course: labor supply.

The neo-classical economic model of supply, demand, and competitive equilibrium provides the foundation on which much of policy analysis is built on. It is a powerful and flexible framework. Even when this framework is wrong, it generally provides a valuable starting place to frame the policy discussion. A mastery of core microeconomic ideas and a firm understanding of how to apply those ideas to real problems are essential for your forward progress both in the MPA program and in your careers to follow.

Prerequisites

It is expected that you have taken an introductory microeconomics course and this course will build upon that material. If you have not been exposed to (or have forgotten) basic microeconomics, please review this material immediately.

This course makes regular use of graphs and mathematics. A good understanding of basic algebra is essential. If you cannot quickly solve simultaneous equations, find the slope and intercept of a line, set up the equation of a line based on the slope and intercept, find the area of a triangle, and work with fractions, you should review this material right away. Calculus will not be used.

Textbook

The assigned text for this course is *Microeconomics* by Jeffrey Perloff (7th Edition, Addison Wesley, 2015). You are welcome to use the 8th edition if you prefer. You should not treat the textbook as a substitute for attending class, because I will supplement the textbook with additional notes and discussion in class that you will not find in the textbook.

Grades

Grades for this class will be assigned based on the following assignments: class participation, a short paper, 4 quizzes, and a final exam. These assignments are described in detail below. Your weighted average score from these assignments will be used to determine your numeric grade point.

Requirement	% of Final Grade
Class Participation	10%
Short Paper	10%
Quizzes	40%
Final Exam	40%

The course is graded according to the [University of Washington Graduate School requirements](#) and the guidelines for course grades provided in the Evans School Student Handbook. Following what is laid out in the handbook, grades in this course mean the following:

- 4.0: Exceptional graduate student work
- 3.7: Strong graduate student work
- 3.4: Competent graduate student work
- 3.2: Adequate graduate student work
- 3.0: Borderline graduate student work
- 2.6: Deficient graduate student work

Please remember that a minimum of 2.7 is required in any MPA course and a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 is required for graduation. This course will be curved as needed. Following Evans school policy, I expect the mean grade in this course to be near 3.4.

Class Participation

I expect everyone to contribute to the class dynamics by engaging in the material and discussion, asking questions as needed, and answering Poll Everywhere questions every class (<http://www.polleverywhere.com/>). Poll Everywhere is used to prompt you to work through problems in real time and provides valuable feedback to me about your current level of understanding. You can respond to these questions via the Poll Everywhere app on your smart phone or a website link on your tablet or laptop. There is no makeup available for this part of the course, but I will drop three days from your Poll Everywhere responses when calculating your grade.

Out of respect for me and your colleagues in class, please let me know in advance if you must miss a class.

Short Paper

The purpose of this two-page double spaced paper is to give you a chance to apply the tools learned this quarter to a policy discussion. For this paper, I expect you to find a news article on some public policy and discuss how what you have learned in this course informs your understanding of this issue. For example, perhaps there is a news article about a proposed Seattle head tax that ignores issues of tax incidence. You will provide a brief description of the issue, highlight what is missed by the news article, and discuss why this matters for policy. I will post more details for this assignment on Canvas.

It is due at the beginning of class on the last day, December 4th. I expect you to turn in this assignment on time. You will receive a grade penalty, unless you receive an extension in advance via email. Extensions will only be granted for family or medical emergencies. The grade penalty will be 0.3/day (which means, for example, that a paper receiving a 4.0 on its merit will be recorded as a 3.7 if one day late, and a 3.4 if two days late).

Quizzes & Final Exam

There will be four quizzes in this course. They will be given at the beginning of class on the following days: October 16, October 30, November 13, and November 27. Near the end of the term, there will be one optional problem set posted that you may submit for a grade if you choose. This problem set will replace your lowest quiz score if you turn it in (regardless of whether your problem set score or lowest quiz score is higher). This is your free pass for a bad day or missed quiz; there will be no other make-up quizzes offered.

The final exam will be 6:30 pm - 8:20 pm on Tuesday, December 11. It will be a cumulative exam, covering all the material in the course. If you cannot make this final exam date, do not register for the course. If you miss this exam due to illness or a family emergency *and* you notify me before the exam takes place, you will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Otherwise, you will receive a zero.

You may bring a one-sided 3x5 index card to each quiz and a two-sided 3x5 index card to the final exam. You may have a pen or pencil and a *non-programmable* hand-held calculator at your desk while taking an exam (you may not use your cell phone as a calculator). There is a zero tolerance cheating policy at the Evans school and any evidence of cheating will result in a zero on that quiz or exam.

Homework Problems & Sections:

I will post a set of homework problems and answer key after class every week. You will not turn in these problem sets. However, working through these problems is a fundamental part of this course and will provide valuable preparation for your quizzes and final exam. Please do your best to work through the problems *before* looking at the answer key or getting help from a friend, your TA, or myself. You will learn the material much better if you follow this approach. Your goal as you work through these problems should be to understand why you take each step to solve the problem. If you don't understand, even if you manage to get the right answer, it may be difficult for you to succeed on a quiz or exam when the question is different.

There are sections associated with this class. Sections are an important part of this course. These sections will provide a time to meet with your TA in a smaller classroom environment to work through problems similar to what you find in your homework problems for the week, to go over difficult concepts from lecture, and to ask any lingering questions you may have about the material.

Sections

PUBPOL 516 CA: Thursdays: 2:30 - 3:20 pm, Raitt 121

PUBPOL 516 CA: Thursdays: 4:30 - 5:20 pm, Parrington 108

Teaching Assistant Contact Information

Nicole Kovski

Office: 405 Parrington Hall

Email: kovskin@uw.edu

Office Hours:

Re-Grade Policy:

To request a re-grade, you must attach a written explanation of which problems should be re-graded and the reasons for the re-grade to the original assignment (emails with a scanned copy of the assignment will not be accepted). This must be given to me or your TA within one week of the assignment being returned to the class. We will re-grade the entire assignment, so your grade could go up or down as a result of the re-grade.

Community Conversation Norms

Tax policy can be a politically charged topic. Please engage in appropriate and respectful discourse throughout the duration of this course as laid out in the [Community Conversation Norms of the Evans School](#):

At the Evans School, we value the richness of our differences and how they can greatly enhance our conversations and learning. As a professional school, we also have a responsibility to communicate with each other—inside and outside of the classroom—in a manner consistent with conduct in today’s increasingly diverse places of work. We hold ourselves individually and collectively responsible for our communication by:

- *Listening carefully and respectfully*
- *Sharing and teaching each other generously*
- *Clarifying the intent and impact of our comments*
- *Giving and receiving feedback in a “relationship-building” manner*
- *Working together to expand our knowledge by using high standards for evidence and analysis*

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, you acknowledge you are a member of a learning community in the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. As a member of this community, you are obligated to uphold the fundamental standards of honesty, respect and integrity, and you accept the responsibility to encourage others to adhere to these standards. If you are uncertain about whether a particular action constitutes academic misconduct, please ask me for guidance *before* an assignment is due. If you engage in any type of plagiarism on an assignment or exam—this includes both from outside sources as well as from your classmates—you will receive a zero on that assignment. For more details, including a list of common types of plagiarism students engage in, please refer to the [Evans School Student Handbook](#).

Intellectual Property Rights

I do not consent to having any materials (class notes, homework, or exams) uploaded to the internet, including commercial note-selling websites. Some companies target students and solicit course material acting as if they are working in coordination

with colleges and universities but that *is not* true for this class. My course design is copyrighted by me and I do not consent to mass distribution of these materials. My lectures, assignments, and keys are my intellectual property and your creation of a derivative work (e.g. student notes from lecture or student written solutions to an assignment) falls under this copyright protection.

Student Resources

Writing Center and Librarian

The [Odegaard Writing & Research Center](#) is open to all members of the University of Washington community. They have tutors and librarians to help with you with writing and research. You can schedule an appointment or drop-in.

There is also a Political Science and Public Policy Librarian who is eager to help you with your research needs: <http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/emkeller>.

Well-Being Resources

If you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or isolated, there are many individuals here who are ready and wanting to help. Carrie Evans and the Student Services Staff in Parrington 109 are available to help all Evans Students. They are readily accessible during walk in hours or by setting up an appointment.

Alternatively, there are also other UW resources available. The Hall Health Center offers Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for individual and group sessions with students. Call (206) 543-5030 to get started and schedule an appointment. If you prefer to speak anonymously and confidentially over the phone, call 206-583-1551 or call King County Crisis after hours (206) 461-3222.

Access and Accommodations

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing appropriate accommodations in this course, you must make arrangements with me by October 9th, so that accommodations are in place by the first quiz on October 16th. Please request that the [University of Washington Disability Resources for Students](#) (DRS) email me a letter verifying your disability. When I receive this email, I will initiate a meeting with you to discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, me, and DRS. It is the policy

and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Communication with Me

My regular weekly office hours are 4:20 - 5:20 pm on Tuesday and 3:30 - 4:30 pm on Thursday. If you cannot meet me during my regular office hours, please email me with 3 days and times that will work for you.

I will host Zoom office hours the day before quizzes. These office hours will be recorded. I will answer questions you have posted on Canvas in advance. More on this to follow.

I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the week. I may not respond to emails sent after noon on Friday until the following Monday. Please write your emails professionally (i.e. include a salutation, sign your name, no "lol", etc). I prefer to be addressed as Caroline. Prof. Weber or Dr. Weber are also fine. I will not respond to emails addressed to Ms. or Mrs. Weber.

Electronics

Cell phones must be turned off (or on silent) during class and put away from sight. Laptops may be used during class, but only for activities directly related to the course. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

Course Outline

The course outline can be found on the next page. I expect the dates and coverage may move around as we go along. When we deviate from the syllabus, I will post an announcement on Canvas.

COURSE SUMMARY & GRADED ASSIGNMENT DATES

Day	Lecture	Book Chapters	Assignment Due
10/2	Supply & Demand	1 & 2	
10/9	Applying Supply & Demand	3.1 - 3.3	
10/16	Taxes & Present Value	3.4, 16.1	Quiz #1
10/23	Consumer Choice	4	
10/30	Applying Consumer Choice	5.1 - 5.3	Quiz #2
11/6	Production & Costs	6.1 - 6.5, 7.1 - 7.4	
11/13	Applying the Competitive Model	8, 9.1 - 9.6	Quiz #3
11/20	Monopoly	11.1 - 11.5	
11/27	Cost of Living & Labor Supply	5.4 - 5.5	Quiz #4
12/4	Finish Up & Review		Short Paper
12/11	Final Exam, 6:30 pm - 8:20 pm		