

Knowledge is the thing that separates those with answers from those with opinions.

POLS 5220 - Budget and Finance in Public Agencies Fall 2014

Course: POLS 5220, Section 0, CRN: 40695
Title: Budget and Finance in Public Agencies
Class Schedule: T 5:30pm - 8:00pm
Class Location: Fletcher 416
Credit: 3
Professor: Dr. Marcus D. Mauldin
Office Location: Fletcher 417B
Office Phone: 423-425-5702
Office Hours: MW 11:00am-12:00pm; Tuesday 12:00pm - 1:30pm and 4:45pm - 5:15pm
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Accommodation Statement: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 425-4006 or come by the office, 102 Frist Hall.

<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/DisabilityResourceCenter/>

Personal Counseling: If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438.

<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/CounselingAndCareerPlanning/>.

Communication: To enhance student services, the University uses your UTC email address for all communications. Please check your UTC email on a regular basis. If you have problems with accessing your UTC email account, contact the Call Center at 423-425-4000. The course Blackboard will also be used to communicate class-related issues.

Course Description

Catalog Description: Problems and practices of fiscal management in public agencies. Emphasis on regional, state, and local governments.

Budget and Finance in Public Agencies focuses on the problems and practices of financial management in public agencies. The emphasis of this course is on the federal, state, regional, and local governments. However, many of the concepts and issues we discuss are applicable to the nonprofit sector as well. The overall goal of the course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to become effective producers and consumers of organizational financial information.

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Course Objectives

The overall objective for this course is that students will learn to think critically about public financial problems and their solutions. With this, this course is designed:

1. to provide a budgeting and financial management foundation that allows students to understand and use financial information in public and other organizations;
2. to introduce analytic techniques used in financial management and use them as part of organizational decision-making processes; and
3. to identify and address public financial management issues and problems through the use of news and current events.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain the steps in the budgeting process.
2. Understand the role that budgets play in financial management.
3. Use techniques and mechanisms available to effectively manage public funds.
4. Understand the ramifications of financial decisions.

Comment [1]: Need new objectives

Required Texts and Documents

Gary Bandy, Financial Management and Accounting in the Public Sector - (Bandy)

Gerald J. Miller, Government Budgeting and Financial Management in Practice (Miller)

Greg Chen, Dall Forsythe Lynne Weikark, and Daniel Williams, Budget Tools: Financial Methods in the Public Sector - (Chen)

Other readings listed in this syllabus will be available on the course Blackboard (Bb).

*Please note that public budgeting and financial management are dynamic fields. As such, additional light readings related to current developments may be assigned.

Suggested Resources

Steven A. Finkler, Financial Management for Public, Health, and Not-for-Profit Organizations - 3rd Edition (Finkler).

Several assignments require Microsoft Excel or an equivalent spreadsheet package. Have no fear, but spreadsheets are your friends. However, we will not spend a lot of time learning spreadsheet functions so if you are not an experienced user, please refer to Appendix C in the Chen textbook. Please feel free to use any other resources that will assist you.

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Other Recommended Items

Laptop or external digital storage device.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to be full participants in shaping the character of the course. Participation in classroom discussions and completion of assignments will help achieve a deeper, richer understanding of public budgeting and financial management and its opportunities, challenges, and rewards. This requires all students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and assignments for each session. Students will be evaluated on a midterm project and a final project. Students will also be evaluated on discussion board responses and homework assignments.¹ Late assignments may be accepted only under extreme circumstances.

Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

- Organizational Budgeting Profile: 100 points
- Financial Management Paper: 100 points
- Homework Problems: 100 points (5 @ 20 points each)
- Discussion Board Responses: 90 points (6 @ 15 points each)

Grade Scale: A = 351-390; B = 312-350; C = 273-311; D = 234-272; F = <234

Important Dates

September 30th: Organizational Budgeting Profile Due

October 20th-21st: Fall Break

November 25th: Financial Management Paper Due

Think and Achieve: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the habitual practice of raising questions, identifying problems, analyzing existing information, creating innovative solutions, and reflecting on the process and the product as a means of constant improvement.

Honor Code Pledge (from the UTC Student Handbook)

I pledge that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any test or assignment. I understand that plagiarism constitutes a serious instance of unauthorized aid. I further pledge that I exert every effort to insure that the Honor Code is upheld by others and that I will actively support the establishment and continuance of a campus-wide climate of honor and integrity.

¹ Discussion board responses must be submitted by 5:00 on the day noted. Homework assignments are due via your individual Group page by 5:00 on the date noted. Each homework assignment should be uploaded as a single file in your Group Journal.

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Course Schedule²

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	ASSESSMENT/ACTIVITIES
August 19th	Course Introduction	Grizzle: "Essential Skills for Financial Management: Are MPA Students Acquiring the Necessary Competencies?" (Bb); Purtell and Fossett: "Beyond Budgeting: Public Service Financial Education in the 21st Century" (Bb)	None
August 26th	Introduction to Budgeting and Financial Management	Miller: Chapters 1&2; Bandy: Chapter 1	Bb Discussion Board Post
September 2nd	The Art and Science of Budgeting	Miller: Chapter 3; Bandy: Chapter 2	Bb Discussion Board Post
September 9th	The Practice of Budgeting	Chen: Chapters 1-3	Chen: Chapter 2, Exercises 1-3; Chapter 3, Exercises 1-2
September 16th	Revenue	Bandy: Chapter 3; Miller: Chapter 8	Bb Discussion Board Post
September 23rd	Forecasting	Chen: Chapter 4	Chen: Chapter 4, Exercises 1-4
September 30th	Midterm Project	N/A	Organizational Budgeting Profile Due
October 7th	Financial Decision Making	Bandy: Chapter 5	Bb Discussion Board Post
October 14th	Financial Decision Making	Chen: Chapter 5	Chen: Chapter 5, Exercises 1-3
October 21st	Fall Break	N/A	
October 28th	Performance Based Financial Management	Bandy: Chapter 9; Miller: Chapter 5	Bb Discussion Board Post
November 4th	Performance Based Financial Management	Chen: Chapters 6-7	Chen: Chapter 6, Exercise 1; Chapter 7, Exercises 1-3
November 11th	Accountability and Reporting	Bandy: Chapters 7-8	Bb Discussion Board Post
November 18th	Planning and Analysis	Chen: Chapter 9	Chen: Chapter 9: Exercise 1
November 25th	Final Project	N/A	Financial Management Paper Due
December 6th	Final Exam: 6-8pm	N/A	

² This syllabus is subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to keep informed of changes, new materials, and missed content.

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PUBLIC BUDGETING AND FINANCE RESOURCES

U.S. Census Bureau – State & Local Government Finance: www.census.gov/govs/

Tax Policy Center: Urban Institute and Brookings Institution – State & Local Finance Data Query System: <http://slfdqs.taxpolicycenter.org/>

State of Tennessee Department of Finance & Administration: <http://tn.gov/finance>

Budget of the United States Government:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionGPO.action?collectionCode=BUDGET>

Financial Reports of the United States Government: <http://www.gao.gov/financial.html>

Association for Budgeting & Financial Management State Finance Links:
http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/pa/academics/ABFM_database/databases_by_state.html

National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>

National Council of Nonprofits: <http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/>

Government Finance Officers Association: www.gfoa.org