

University of Waterloo
Department of Economics
ECON 241: Introduction to Public Economics (Section 001)
Course Outline – Fall Term 2020

Instructor Information

Instructor: Corey Van de Waal

Office: Home

Website: <http://economics.uwaterloo.ca/corey-van-de-waal>

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Class Meets: Asynchronously

Classroom: Online

Email: chvandew@uwaterloo.ca

When sending email to your instructor, always use your University of Waterloo email account. "ECON 241" must appear in the subject line and the message must include your *full name and student ID number*.

Office Hours and Other Support Resources

Virtual Office hours:

Wednesdays from 10:00am – 11:00am on Virtual Classroom for ECON 101 sections

Wednesdays from 11:00am – 12:00pm on Virtual Classroom for ECON 241 section
(Starts September 9th and ends December 2nd).

Office hours for the Final Exam Period will be announced in November.

Office hours are the appropriate venue for asking questions about the material from the course. Email is an inefficient method for communicating course content, and I will not respond to detailed questions regarding the material other than during the virtual office hours.

If these office hours are not convenient for you, I am also available by arranging a mutually convenient appointment via e-mail.

Where to find this course outline:

This course outline is available at two locations for the duration of the term:

- Department of Economics website <http://economics.uwaterloo.ca>
- LEARN web site (requires UW user id and password) <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>

Brief Summary

This course examines the scope and level of government involvement in economic activity. The main focus is on historical trends and recent developments in the extent and composition of

government spending, taxation, and regulation in developed nations. A secondary focus is to introduce the current policy debates in these areas.

There is a voluminous amount of material to cover in this course. We will attempt to get as far through the topic list as our limited time will allow.

Prerequisite: ECON 101 or ECON 100/COMM 103; ECON 102

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

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

- apply elements of microeconomic theory to understand how consumers and producers make rational decisions;
- explain the fundamental features of public goods, externalities and information asymmetry;
- apply theoretical understanding to problems of social welfare maximization;
- apply theoretical understanding to a variety of policy issues;
- explain the need for government intervention under certain market conditions;
- use applied economic techniques to analyze conceptual problems in a social insurance context.

Textbook, Coursenotes, and Other Resources

COURSE NOTES

I will be posting complete lecture notes on LEARN at the beginning of the term. These notes are intended to highlight key learning objectives and will include all of the testable course material.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK (I.E. NOT STRICTLY REQUIRED)

Rosen, Harvey S., Jean-Francois Wen, and Tracy Snodden, *Public Finance in Canada*, 5th Canadian edition, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2012.

Examinations and assignments in this course are based on the material contained in the course notes.

Materials Available on LEARN

As mentioned, I will be posting the course lecture slides on LEARN at the beginning of the term. It is your responsibility to keep yourself current with the assigned readings as well as maintaining an understanding of the online lecture content.

- Any additional course materials (news, updates, announcements) will be posted on the LEARN web site <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>
- The LEARN site is down occasionally. Save the course materials to your computer as soon as they are posted. Always be prepared!

- Students writing test and exams are responsible to save course materials on LEARN before the access to their courses is shut off (normally on the first day of classes of the next term).

Course Requirements and Assessment

The two individual assignments in this course will each be worth **25%** of your final grade. The two online quizzes will be written on the dates specified below and the results will be worth **10%** of your final grade for each quiz. The Term Paper will constitute **30%** of your final grade.

The course grade will be based on the weighted sum of the two assignments, the two online quizzes, and the Term Paper. The breakdown is as follows:

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Online Quiz #1	October 5	10%
Online Quiz #2	November 20	10%
Assignment #1	due on October 19	25%
Assignment #2	due on November 27	25%
Term Paper	due on December 6	30%
Total		100%

Notes

- The format for both the online quizzes will be a potential mix of multiple-choice questions and written problems.
- The final exam period for the Fall Term 2020 is December 9 – 23 inclusive. Students are expected to be available during this time. Travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting an alternative final examination time. <http://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/final-examinations/examination-regulations-and-related-matters>
- There is no final exam for this class.
- Only the Registrar’s Office can issue final grades.

This grading scheme will be implemented strictly for all students in the course (with the exception of verified illnesses – see below).

Examination Policy

Missing a Midterm Due to Illness during the Term

- Missing a midterm will automatically result in a grade of zero for that midterm. If the illness can be documented with a UW Verification of Illness Form (the only acceptable document), with approval you may transfer the weight of the missed midterm to the final exam. This remedy is a privilege and not a right.
- The midterm exam schedule has been set and will not be changed for whatever reason (no make-up midterm exams will be offered).

Missing the Final Exam Due to Illness

- Missing the final exam is a very serious matter which automatically results in a grade of zero for the final exam and possibly a failing grade for the course. Please carefully read the Economics Department policy on deferred final exams for instructions.
- No deferred final exam will be provided for students who missed all the exams (including the final exam) in this course.

Submission of Exam Papers

- Late submission of exam papers is not accepted and missed submissions will receive a zero mark for whatever reason.
- Exam papers must be submitted in whole and on time in the exam room. Exam papers (a) not submitted on time, (b) submitted with missing pages, (c) submitted elsewhere, with the exception of students with permission to write in the AS Office, (d) not received at all will receive a grade of zero for whatever reason.
- It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they write exams in the location, date, and time assigned to their section. Students writing exams in the wrong section will be assessed a 20% penalty on the final exam grade. There will be no accommodation for possible differences in exam material or content.

Policy on Missed/Late Assignments and Tests

Any assignment that is not submitted by the date and time at which this assignment is due will not be marked and will receive a grade of zero. If you miss a course element due to illness and therefore cannot submit your assignment, it will be accepted late for grading if and only if accompanied by a relevant medical certificate.

No make-up attempts will be provided for the quizzes. Students who miss a quiz and do not have a relevant medical certificate will receive a mark of zero. Students with a valid medical certificate will have the weight of the relevant quiz added to their term paper weighting.

Topics covered

- Preliminary Review
- Consumer Theory
- General Equilibrium and Welfare Economics
- Government Intervention in Markets
- Public Goods
- Externalities
- Information Economics
- Income Redistribution
- Public Choice Perspective
- Fiscal Federalism
- Health Care in Canada
- Employment Insurance
- Public Pensions

Tentative Class Schedule

This class schedule is ambitious. Modifications and/or eliminations of certain content might be required given our limited time together. Any necessary modifications to the course content

will be communicated to you in an online announcement. The following table outlines the expected pace of the class.

DATE	LECTURE #	TOPICS
Sept. 7 – 11	1, 2, 3	CS, PS, and Total Welfare with Applications READINGS: Lecture #1, Lecture #2, and Lecture #3 slides.
Sept. 14 – 18	4, 5	Consumer Theory (WARP), Indifference Curves, and Budgets READINGS: Lecture #4 and Lecture #5 slides, Chapter 1 (Rosen).
Sept. 21 – 25	5, 6, 7	Indifference Curves and Budgets, Consumer Equilibrium, General Equilibrium: Walras and Pareto READINGS: Lecture #5, Lecture #6, and Lecture #7 slides.
Sept. 28 – Oct. 2	8, 9	General Equilibrium: Edgeworth Box and Pareto Production, Social Welfare Functions READINGS: Lecture #8 and Lecture #9 slides.
Oct. 5 – 9	10, 11, 12	Consumer Theory – Welfare Theorems, Welfare Measures (EV & CV). READINGS: Lecture #10, Lecture #11, Lecture #12 slides, and Chapter 2 (Rosen).
Oct. 5	-	ONLINE QUIZ #1.
Oct. 12 – 16	-	MIDTERM STUDY BREAK
Oct. 19 – 23	13, 14, 15	Information Economics, Economic Justice and Redistribution, Public Goods READINGS: Lecture #13, Lecture #14, Lecture #15 slides, Chapter 5 and 6 (Rosen).
Oct. 19	-	ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE.
Oct. 26 - 30	16, 17, 18	Public Goods, Externalities, Private Responses, and Institutional Constraints READINGS: Lecture #16, Lecture #17, Lecture #18 slides.
Nov. 2 – 6	19, 20, 21	Theory of Second Best, Income Redistribution, and Food Stamps READINGS: Lecture #19, Lecture #20, Lecture #21 slides.
Nov. 9 – 13	22, 23, 24	Public Choice, Arrow’s Impossibility Theorem, and Representative Democracy, Fiscal Federalism and Community Formation. READINGS: Lecture #22, Lecture #22, Lecture #24 slides, Chapter 7, 8, and 9 (Rosen).
Nov. 16 - 20	25, 26	Health Care in Canada. READINGS: Lecture #25 and Lecture #26 slides.
Nov. 20	-	ONLINE QUIZ #2.
Nov. 23 – 27	27, 28	Employment Insurance. READINGS: Lecture #27 and Lecture #28 slides, Chapter 10 (Rosen).
Nov. 27	-	ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE
Nov. 30 – Dec. 4	29	Employment Insurance as a Redistributive Tool. READINGS: Lecture #29 Slides.
Dec. 6	-	TERM PAPER DUE

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may or may not have already given their consent).

Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009.

[Economics Department Deferred Final Exam Policy](#)

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) webpage for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. [Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: [The Accessibility Services office](#), located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

If you are using Turnitin® in your course

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. See [guidelines for instructors](#) for more information.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe](#) app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.