

ECO 4504

Randall Holcombe

# Public Finance

Fall 2010

TEXTBOOK: Randall Holcombe: *Public Sector Economics: The Role of Government in the American Economy*.

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:30, or by appointment. Office location: 162 Bellamy. e-mail address: holcombe@fsu.edu. Web site: www.RandallHolcombe.com.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The object of the course is to provide an understanding of the economic activities of government. This includes taxation, government spending, and regulation. Government activities will be analyzed both with regard to the government's actual activities and from the standpoint of what governments can and should do. The paper is designed to develop research and writing skills and to aid in understanding government taxation and spending over the past five decades.

COURSE OUTLINE: The course will follow the outline of the book. The following chapters will be covered in detail: 1-6 and 10-16. Additional chapters will be covered as time permits. Examinations may cover material in the book and all material covered in class, whether or not it is in the book.

NO CLASS OCTOBER 12 and 14. This will give you a week to get a good start on your paper.

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES: Grades will be assigned based on a mid-term examination, a final examination and a paper. The mid-term will be worth 30 percent, and the paper and final 35 percent each, of the final course grade. Both exams will be essay exams. The mid-term will be given on Thursday, October 7. The final will be given at the regularly assigned examination period for the class, which is Friday, December 10, from 3:00-5:00.

Students with disabilities should register with the Student Disability Resource Center, and provide documentation to me indicating any accommodations needed as a result of the disability.

Students are expected to abide by the FSU honor code. You may discuss references and sources for your paper with your classmates. You are expected to do all of your own work on the paper and on the examinations.

Look on the back for information about the paper assignment.

PAPER: The paper is to be an examination of the revenues and expenditures of the federal government of the United States. The paper should begin by comparing the current U.S. budget with the budget as it has changed since 1960. As a part of your paper assignment, you must include tables, charts, and/or other comparisons of the government budgets over the years. After examining the budget's evolution, your paper should then recommend any changes to the budget you think would be appropriate. Your recommendations may include the entire budget, or may single out particular budgetary items to examine in more detail. Recommendations should be justified by basing them on economic theory, using the textbook and/or other sources, and referenced as such.

Any material you obtain from outside sources should be referenced in an appropriate manner, and your paper should have a list of references at the end. Any material quoted directly from your references should be enclosed in quotation marks and referenced. Your paper should be your own work, and you should adhere to the standards of the FSU honor code, which is in the FSU General Bulletin. This means (1) upholding the highest standards of academic integrity for your own work, and (2) refusing to tolerate violations of academic integrity. For sources from the Strozier Library, list the call numbers along with the reference. Any references you use that are not from the Strozier Library should be annotated as such, and their sources given. For internet sites, list the complete URL and the date accessed. I check some papers by doing an internet search on the papers' contents. Any papers that do not list references this way will not be graded.

The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and the text of the paper should be about 20 pages in length. You must hand in a "hard copy" of your paper, and may not hand in your paper via e-mail or in another electronic form. The paper will be due at the end of the class period on Tuesday, November 23. Papers handed in after 12:15 pm will be counted as handed in the next day. One letter grade will be deducted from your paper for each day it is handed in late.