

## **ECON 309-D01: Economic Problems and Public Policies**

Summer 2022

May 23, 2022 – July 30, 2022

Online

Instructor: Hairuo Tan

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Office Hour: Zoom (by appointment)

### **Course Information from the University Catalog:**

Credits: 3

Economic problems in light of current and proposed public policies. Topics include environmental issues, international trade policies, and regulatory issues and their historical roots. Limited to three attempts.

Recommended Prerequisite: ECON 100 or 103 and 104 or permission of instructor.

### **Course Outcomes:**

This course is aimed at applying economic concepts, such as efficiency, cost-benefit analysis, present value, risk and uncertainty & etc. to the analysis of public policies targeted at urban transportation, pollution, poverty, health-care & etc.

### **Course Format:**

This is a fully online course in the asynchronous mode. There is no scheduled meeting time. All course material, including lecture slides, quizzes, problem sets, and final exam will be posted on Blackboard. Other relevant information will be sent to your GMU e-mail account. You are required to have access to both Blackboard account and GMU e-mail account. Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard every Monday at 12 pm. Details on quizzes, problem sets, and final exam can be found in the "Grading" section of the syllabus. A tentative course plan can be found at the end of the syllabus.

### **Important Dates:**

First Day of Class	May 23, 2022
Last Day to Add (Census) / Last Day to Drop with No Tuition Liability	May 27, 2022
Last Day of Class	July 27, 2022
Final Exam	July 30, 2022

### **Required Textbook:**

*The Economic Analysis of Public Policy* (Second Edition) by William K. Bellinger ISBN: 9781138796348 (pbk)

### **Recommended Textbooks:**

*Economics of Public Issues* by Roger Miller ISBN: 9780134531984 (pbk)

*The Economic Naturalist: Why Economics Explains Almost Everything* by Robert H Frank ISBN: 9780753513385 (pbk)

**Grading:**

Weekly Quizzes	40 %	A	90.00 – 100.00
Problem Sets	30 %	B	80.00 – 89.99
Final Exam	30 %	C	70.00 – 79.99
		D	60.00 – 69.99
		F	<60.00

Links will be created on Blackboard for you to submit your quizzes, problem sets, and the final exam.

Weekly Quizzes: There will be 9 quizzes. Each consists of 10-15 multiple choice questions, based on materials from lecture slides and textbooks. I will drop your lowest score. Each of the remaining 8 quizzes is worth 5 % of the total grade. Weekly quizzes will be posted every Wednesday at 12 pm and will be due on **the next Tuesday**, 11.59 pm. You may cooperate with your classmates on quizzes, but each of you must submit your work on Blackboard.

Problem Sets: There will be 3 problem sets, consisting of computational questions. Each problem set is worth 10% of the total grade. Problem Set 1 will be posted on Wednesday, May 25, 12 pm, and will be due on Monday, **June 13**, 11.59 pm. Problem Set 2 will be posted on Wednesday, June 15, 12 pm, and will be due on Tuesday, **July 5**, 11.59 pm. Problem Set 3 will be posted on Wednesday, July 6, 12 pm, and will be due on Monday, **July 25**, 11.59 pm. You may cooperate with your classmates on problem sets, but each of you must submit your work on Blackboard.

Final Exam: The final exam will be composed of conceptual questions and open-ended essay questions. The final exam is open book. But you are **not** allowed to cooperate with your classmates. The final exam will be posted on Monday, July 25 and will be due on Saturday, **July 30**, 11.59 pm.

Extra credit opportunity: You may write a thought essay of 750-1000 words on any policy issue and email it to me before July 30, 11.59 pm. A minimum of 2 points and a maximum of 5 points will be added to your overall grade.

All the above-mentioned deadlines are in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). I allow for **a 12-hour grace period** for every piece of work that has a deadline. For example, the first quiz will be due on Tuesday, May 31, 11.59 pm (EDT). If you submit your work before Wednesday, June 1, 11.59 am (EDT), I will consider your submission on time. **Late submission is not accepted.**

**COVID-19 Accommodation:**

Your health, safety, and well-being are always the priority. If COVID-19 related issues prevent you from accessing materials on Blackboard or completing quizzes, problem sets, or final exam on time, please write me an email and I will make accommodations accordingly (e.g., deadline extension). For COVID-19 resources provided by George Mason University, please visit <https://www.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus>

**Privacy:**

Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.

**Academic Integrity:**

The Honor Code Statement reads: *“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.”* More information can be found at <https://oai.gmu.edu/>

**Disability Accommodation:**

Disability services is located at Student Union Building I (SUB I) - Suite 2500. You may email [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) or call 703.993.2474 for assistance. *George Mason University is committed to non-discrimination of students with disabilities and strives to ensure that they have equal access to higher education, programs, activities, and services in order for them to participate fully in the university. As a continuing commitment to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities, the university established and maintains Disability Services.* For full information, please consult <https://ds.gmu.edu/>

### Course Plan (tentative)

*I will inform you of any changes that have to be made.*

Week of May 23, 2022:

Module 1: Economic and ethical concepts for policy analysis (Bellinger, Chs. 1, 2, 3)

Week of May 30, 2022:

Module 2: Efficiency (Bellinger, Chs. 4, 5)

- Quiz 1 due on Tuesday, May 31, 11.59 pm

Week of June 6, 2022:

Module 3: Cost-benefit analysis, present value (Bellinger, Chs. 6, 7)

- Quiz 2 due on Tuesday, June 7, 11.59 pm

Week of June 13, 2022:

Module 4: Choosing a discount rate (Bellinger, Ch. 8)

- Problem Set 1 due on Monday, June 13, 11.59 pm
- Quiz 3 due on Tuesday, June 14, 11.59 pm

Week of June 20, 2022:

Module 5: Risk, uncertainty, health insurance, health care (Bellinger, Chs. 9, 10; Recommended reading: Miller Ch. 19)

- Quiz 4 due on Tuesday, June 21, 11.59 pm

Week of June 27, 2022:

Module 6: Economic impact analysis (Bellinger, Ch. 11)

- Quiz 5 due on Tuesday, June 28, 11.59 pm

Week of July 4, 2022:

Module 7: Urban transportation policy (Bellinger, Ch. 12; Recommended reading: Miller Ch. 24)

- Problem Set 2 due on Tuesday, July 5, 11.59 pm
- Quiz 6 due on Tuesday, July 5, 11.59 pm

Week of July 11, 2022:

Module 8: Pollution control policy (Bellinger, Ch. 13; Recommended reading: Miller Chs. 25-28)

- Quiz 7 due on Tuesday, July 12, 11.59 pm

Week of July 18, 2022:

Module 9: Poverty and income support policies (Bellinger, Ch. 14; Recommended reading: Miller Ch. 11-14)

- Quiz 8 due on Tuesday, July 19, 11.59 pm

Week of July 25, 2022:

Module 10: Policies for the working poor (Bellinger, Ch. 15)

- Problem Set 3 due on Monday, July 25, 11.59 pm
- Quiz 9 due on Tuesday, July 26, 11.59 pm
- Final exam due on Saturday, July 30, 11.59 pm