

PADP 6950: Foundations of Policy Analysis

Professor: Emily Lawler

Office: Baldwin Hall 280B

Email: emily.lawler@uga.edu

Classes: Mondays, 7:15-10pm, Caldwell 0046-0204

Office Hours: Mondays, 12-1pm, and by appointment

University of Georgia

Public Administration and Policy

Fall 2020

Description

This is a course in microeconomic analysis that provides broad exposure to the fundamental economic tools of policy analysis. While competitive markets are often efficient, there are many barriers to perfectly functioning markets that lead to the need for public policy. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to lead students to appreciate the economic method of thought - assuming rational agents respond predictably to incentives in order to allocate the scarce resources at their disposal as seems "best" to them - and how this method can be a widely useful tool for assessing the need for, and likely impact of, public policy.

By the end of the course, student should understand:

- Fundamental economic ideas of scarcity, opportunity cost, and rationality
- Utility and consumer surplus
- Production functions, marginal costs, supply functions and producer surplus
- Markets and how they work
- Market structures of perfect competition and monopoly
- Market failures and policy solutions: the cases of externalities and public goods

Part of the goals for University of Georgia MPA students are that they understand the public policy process at the federal, state and local levels, including formulating, implementing and evaluating public policy. Within the context of this course, students should develop the ability to interpret and persuasively communicate information regarding policy alternatives through written materials. Additionally, students should analyze policy alternatives using quantitative and qualitative tools to evaluate decisions and explain potential ramifications for diverse constituencies.

Additionally, the MPA program at UGA teaches students to utilize various methods and analytical tools to gather, analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision-making and policy creation. By the end of this course, students should learn to effectively inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and

research finding. Furthermore, they should learn to produce policy papers involving the synthesis of information, evaluation, and analysis of critical questions or problems currently facing the field of public administration and policy.

Optional Texts

Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach by Hal R. Varian (any edition)

Microeconomics by Austan Goolsbee, Chad Syverson, and Steven Levitt (**Highly recommended!** Either edition)

There will be additional readings and podcasts distributed throughout the semester.

Class Structure

This course will be conducted following a face-to-face-online hybrid model.

- All course lectures will be pre-recorded and available via eLC approximately one week in advance of the class meeting. **You are expected to have watched the lecture videos prior to participating in class.**
- In-class time will be used for working practice problems, applications of theory to real-life policy analysis, and games/experiments to help reinforce lecture concepts.
- You are welcome to attend class face-to-face for these sessions or participate remotely via zoom. Note, however, that since these activities are often done in groups, in order to allow for group interaction while maintaining social distancing, even if you attend class in-person you will be required to bring your laptop and log on to zoom to participate in group break-out sessions and the other in-class activities.
- Attendance (virtually or in-person) is not required, although it is highly recommended. Note that while the core lecture videos will be recorded and made available for the duration of the semester, the in-class sessions will not be.
- If you do choose to attend class in-person, you will be required to sign-up at least 24 hours in advance.

Per UGA policy, all class content will be fully online following Thanksgiving.

Grading

Assignments	Weight
1. Weekly Quizzes	5
2. Problem Sets	10
3. Puzzle Paper	10
4. Policy Memo	20
5. Midterm Exam	25

6. Final Exam	30
TOTAL	100

Two Exams

There will be two exams, the midterm will count for 25% and the final (cumulative) will count for 30% of the course grade. Any known scheduling problems should be brought to my attention as soon as possible. If you miss the midterm exam without a pre-approved excuse or medical emergency, you will receive a zero. If you have an approved absence, then the final exam will count for 55% of the course grade. No make-up exam will be given.

Both exams will be made available to you via eLC during our class time window on the designated date of the exams, and they will be open note, open book. Although these are open note/open book exams, in light of the time constraint I encourage you to study for them as you would any other closed book exam.

Weekly Quizzes

To promote engagement with course content, every week there will be a short online quiz over the content of the lecture and any assigned readings. These quizzes are intended to be taken *after* watching the lecture and completing the readings. No late quizzes may be completed, but your lowest grade will be dropped.

Weekly Problem Sets

There will be weekly homework problem sets, which will count for 10% of the course grade. These will be graded on a 3 point scale (check plus, check and check minus). No late assignments will be accepted, but your lowest grade will be dropped. Unless otherwise stated, homeworks can be completed in groups of no more than 3 people. Turn in only one assignment for the group, with everyone's names clearly listed. All homework assignments must be turned in via eLC. The deadline for submission will be the start of class time (7:15pm) on the due date. If assignments include math or graphs, you are welcome to upload photos/scans of handwritten assignments. Please do your best to make sure these documents are clearly legible.

Two Papers

1. **Explain a puzzle:** This paper will count for 10% of the course grade. This paper should be no more than 300 words (one page). Your assignment is to use a principle, or principles, discussed in the course to explain some puzzling pattern of events or behavior that you personally have observed. Do not use complex terminology. Imagine yourself talking to a relative who has never had a course in economics. Do not use any algebra or graphs. You can include a few citations, but you need not include a bibliography. You are not expected to do a lot of research in support

of your argument, although a relevant fact or two might help persuade you that your argument is correct. Your topic need not be important, but try to make it interesting. Your puzzle paper will be graded based on whether the puzzle is actually puzzling (paragraph 1), whether the economic reasoning is sound (paragraph 2), and on the clarity of the writing overall.

2. Policy memo: This paper will count for 20% of the course grade. The goal of the assignment is to provide a short (3 pages, single-spaced) economic evaluation of some existing or proposed policy. More detailed information on the assignment will be provided separately. An initial paper proposal will be due by class time (7:15pm) on November 9 (via eLC); the final paper is due by start of class on November 30 (via eLC). Late papers will lose 10 percentage points for every day that they are late.

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. Any form of cheating, including plagiarism without a clear citation, will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the assignment or exam, and possible additional action. The potential penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

Email

You are welcome to email me whenever you have a question or need clarification about something related to class. Note that you are expected to abide by professional standards in all written and spoken communications, including email; I will not respond to emails without a subject line or appropriate salutation. Please allow sufficient time (24 hours) for a response. I will do my best to reply as soon as possible but oftentimes I might be traveling, in day-long meetings, or engaged in other activities that take me away from email.

Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule of the topics to be covered in each class. Note that **all aspects of the class will move fully online following Thanksgiving break.**

Aug 24	Introduction		Varian Ch. 1
Aug 31	Consumer choice		GSL Ch. 4
Sep 7	Labor Day – no class		
Sep 14	Demand		GSL Ch. 5 (all sections except 5.3)
Sep 21	Surpluses		GSL Ch. 3 (3.1, 3.4, 3.5)
Sep 38	Intertemporal choice and uncertainty		GSL Ch. 14
Oct 5	Asymmetric information		GSL Ch. 16
Oct 12	<i>Midterm Exam</i>		
Oct 19	Theory of the firm		GSL Ch. 6 (6.1-6.4)
Oct 26	Supply		GSL Ch. 7 (skip 7.6 & 8.1, 8.2)
Nov 2	Perfect competition and monopoly		GSL Ch. 8.4, 9, 10.1-10.3
Nov 9	Game Theory	Policy paper proposal due	GSL Ch. 12.1-12.3
Nov 16	Welfare	Puzzle paper due	GSL Ch. 15 (skip 15.4, 15.5)
Nov 23	Externalities		GSL Ch. 17.1-17.3
Nov 30	Public goods	Policy paper due	GSL Ch. 17.4
Dec 7	Review		
Dec 14	<i>Final Exam</i>		

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Coronavirus Information for Students

Face Coverings:

Effective July 15, 2020, the University of Georgia—along with all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions—requires all faculty, staff, students and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use is in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at <https://drc.uga.edu/>.

DawgCheck:

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/>

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed?

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test?

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162.

UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive?

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is **required** to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.