



PADP 8810: State and Local Taxation

Department of Public Administration & Policy
School of Public & International Affairs
The University of Georgia

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number: PADP 8810
Call Number: 73706
Semester: Spring 2026
Credit Hours: 3.00
Class Location: Athens, Baldwin Hall 101D
Class Time: Wednesday 7:00 PM – 9:50 PM
Class Sessions: January 14th to April 22nd
Class Format: Face to Face

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Michelle L. Lofton
Email: mlofton@uga.edu
Office Location: 280A Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602-1615
Office Phone: 706-542-1746
Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM
or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a graduate level overview of the structure, political context, and policy implementation of the most common taxes levied at the state and local levels of American government. Discussion in the course will focus on property tax, sales tax, income tax, other excise taxes, interjurisdictional issues with taxation, researching taxation, and limitations to taxation.

Your learning is my primary concern in this course, so I may modify this course syllabus if, for instance, we discover we need to spend more time on a certain topic and less on another. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviation announced to the class may be necessary. Please stay tuned into eLC and in-class announcements to make sure you have the latest information in hand.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed for you to demonstrate your knowledge and skills to appreciate and navigate the complexities of government taxation. Although this is an elective course, you will display the core competency of demonstrating your ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to achieve the following:

1. Identify the types of local and state taxation in American governments.
2. Describe the process to establish and collect each type of tax provided at the state and local level of government.
3. Construct simple and professional memorandums that provide taxation analysis and evaluation.
4. Analyze taxation problems and propose different approaches to solving problems with a distinct public service perspective.

You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to achieve these learning objectives through the assessment of class discussions, written assignments, and examinations. The formal assessment of your progress in achieving these learning objectives is from your assignments.

ACTIVE LEARNING STATEMENT

Active learning is any activity that requires you to think about what you are learning, as you are learning it. A myriad of research studies on the effectiveness of activity learning in college classrooms points to improvements in engagement, long term retention of course content, improved competencies, and higher course grades. In this course, you will engage in the learning process through the construction of knowledge and understanding with interactive instructional activities that promote higher order thinking. During your successful completion of this course, you will engage in active learning opportunities designed to focus your attention on improving targeted skills that support the achievement of the learning objectives.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

The following community expectations will be developed by our class.

Expectations of Peers and Group Interactions

Expectations of Yourself

Expectations of Dr. Lofton

Expectations of Learning in the Course

COURSE STRUCTURE & GRADING

Course Structure

The course is a face-to-face course. This is a critical thinking and writing intensive course where you'll be expected to engage in high quality class participation. Each class session will focus on conceptual and analytical material contained in the assigned readings and lecture. During each class, you will make progress towards improving your skills to achieve the learning objectives through an active learning instructional framework. You will be expected to have read the assigned material and to have made a good faith effort to complete all written assignments. However, I am available to help you in supporting your learning both during and outside of class hours.

This course develops multiple skills with the following required tasks.

Course Grading

ASSIGNMENTS	RELEVANT LEARNING OBJECTIVES	PERCENT OF YOUR GRADE	DUE DATE
1. Group Research Project	Objective 2	35%	See description and schedule
2. Midterm Examination	Objective 4	25%	March 4 th
3. Two Memorandums	Objective 3	20%	April 1 th & April 15 th
4. Exercises	Objective 1	10%	See description
5. Excel Certification	Objective 3	10%	January 28 th

Group Research Project (35%)

The purpose of this project is to (1) improve upon your practical knowledge about taxation and evaluation of taxation; (2) synthesize information you have learned over the course; and (3) allow for you to participate in a working group of your peers to critically think and develop solutions to problems.

The class will be divided into teams to produce a research project about a local government. You will select your group shortly after the semester starts based on the enrollment and work as a group throughout the course. We will evaluate the structure of taxation, trends in taxation revenue, and financial implications of structural shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and recessions on taxation revenues. I have assigned specific days in the course to work with your group as well as indicated deadlines for each deliverable. Each group will submit one assignment, and each group member will receive the same grade. However, peer evaluations will be required at the end of the project, and I may adjust an individual group member's grade based on the peer feedback. Detailed information about the group project will be available on the group project assignment sheet on eLC.

Midterm Examination (20%)

You will complete one midterm examination worth 25% of your final grade. The midterm examination is completed individually but is open-book and open-note. The purpose of this exam is to (1) assess your ability to think critically, analyze data, and apply concepts learned in the course to a real-world scenario and (2) assess your written communication skills. These skills assessed are necessary to be successful in public sector employment opportunities. The exam will require you to apply and incorporate concepts and course materials to a hypothetical case. The midterm examination requires you to write an essay that responds to questions provided about a case and submit to the eLC course page.

A final exam will be provided as an option to replace the grade of the midterm examination, if you make a higher score. The final exam will be comprehensive, but you will receive at least one week to complete the exam. Please email a week before the final in-class session to indicate that you will take the optional final exam. If there are any extenuating circumstances regarding the following exam dates and times, please email me at your earliest convenience.

Examination Schedule

EXAM	AVAILABILITY DATE	DUE DATE	GRADE
1. Midterm	9:50 PM on February 25 th	11:30 PM on March 4 th	25%
2. Final (optional)	9:50 PM on April 28 th	11:30 PM on May 4 th	(replace)

Two Memorandums (20%)

You will complete two memorandums that will evaluate taxation data for a state and a local government. The purpose of these memorandums is to practice developing a professional document that allows you to present tax evaluation and analysis to a policymaker. Detailed information about the memorandums will be available on eLC.

Exercises (10%):

For each class session, you will participate in active learning exercises. The purpose of the exercises is to evaluate your engagement with the course materials and provide more timely feedback of your learning. The exercises will be completed in-class and be used in discussions and group activities to address concepts covered in the course. The exercises can be in relation to a class lecture, assigned readings, or your group research project. The exercises will be evaluated during class by the instructor.

You will receive feedback on the exercises in class. This feedback is for informational purposes only. **If you make a good faith effort, you will receive points for the exercises.** “√+” indicates work that is accurate and well-presented, “√” indicates work that is generally good but may have small errors, and “√-” indicates that the assignment was largely incorrect, and you are encouraged to see me for review of the exercise during my office hours or by appointment so we can work together on your learning of the content. In cases where the exercise shows a lack of real effort in-class, you will receive no credit for the exercise. I will evaluate your overall in-class exercise grade based on your engagement in-class with the exercises. If you have actively participated and put forth a good faith effort to contribute to activities, you will receive full credit for 15% of your final grade. You will be given the opportunity to make-up an exercise with an alternative assignment if you have an absence from class due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., sickness, hospitalization, birth of a child, and death of a loved one).

Microsoft Excel Certification (10%):

You will individually complete a Microsoft Excel certification – **Excel Data Visualization: Mastering 20+ Charts and Graphs** by Maven Analytics and Chris Dutton in LinkedIn Learning. The purpose of this assessment is to build your Microsoft Excel skills since this program is frequently used by public and nonprofit officials in their careers. In this course, you will use financial data to present charts and graphs to indicate trends and provide analysis and thus Microsoft Excel, an essential tool in budget compilation and analysis, has become an almost universally required skill for budget analysts. **You are required to complete the Excel certification by the third week of the course.** Log in to LinkedIn Learning with your UGA email: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning-login/> to access the Excel course by searching the bolded name of the course. You should complete the course and then upload the completion PDF certificate to eLC. You can consider watching more Excel videos (e.g., Excel Essential Training (Microsoft 365) which is more in depth) or those that focus on private or nonprofit budget, fiscal and performance information management (e.g., financial risk management solutions, financial

management and accounting (related to nonprofits), measuring team performance, and program budgeting and management), if it suits your interest.

Assigning A Course Grade

Your weighted average on assignments will be used to determine your letter grade. In determining grades, I will use the following grading scale.

Weighted Average	Letter Grade	Assessment
100% - 93.00%	A	Superior performance
92.99% - 90.00%	A-	
89.99% - 88.00%	B+	
87.99% - 83.00%	B	Good performance
82.99% - 80.00%	B-	
79.99% - 78.00%	C+	Minimal performance
77.99% - 73.00%	C	
72.99% - 70.00%	C-	
69.99% - 60.00%	D	
0.00% - 59.99%	F<	Failed course

Late Assignment Policy and Incompletes

You will be given the opportunity to make-up exams in this course and turn in late assignments only for extenuating circumstances and/or conflicts with institutionally approved absences. Incomplete or “I” grades are permitted in rare circumstances after discussing with me in a schedule meeting during my office hours or by appointment. Please let me know as soon as you see a problem developing. You can become familiar with the University’s course withdrawal procedures at: [UGA Withdrawal Policies](#).

COURSE MATERIALS

The research articles you will read in the course can be found by accessing the UGA library’s website or our eLC course materials.

Supplemental Materials

The following textbook will be used as a supplement to the class presentations. You can purchase a copy or reserve it at the library.

Lee Jr, R. D., Johnson, R. W., & Joyce, P. G. (2021). *Public Budgeting Systems*. 10th Edition. Jones & Bartlett Learning. ISBN: 9781284198980

Referred to as Lee, Johnson, & Joyce on the schedule.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

My goal is to create a learning environment in which you can be successful at achieving the learning outcomes. I will work hard to create and improve the learning environment throughout the semester based on my own observations of the course and your feedback on what would ease your learning process. In return, I ask and encourage you to make the most of this learning opportunity. Please take advantage of the academic support services available to you at the

University. Even if you have had excellent study skills in the past, it is easy to slip into suboptimal habits, and these services can help you excel in your studies. I am also available to aid in your learning process during the semester.

Library

The UGA librarians offer one-on-one consultations with students who are writing or re-writing research papers or projects. You can obtain assistance with appropriate research sources, avoiding plagiarism and properly citing work. Please send request to Elizabeth White: elizabethwhite@uga.edu or call at (706) 542-0516, and she will provide assistance or forward your request to the appropriate librarian subject specialist.

Office for Student Success and Achievement and Jill and Marvin Willis Center for Writing

The Office for Student Success and Achievement has several graduate student resources including student workshops. More can be found at their website: <https://ossa.uga.edu/>

The Jill and Marvin Willis Center for Writing provides a range of services from writing assistance to graduate students and small workshops. Graduate writing consulting comes from experienced writing instructors who work individually with students to assist with matters such as building a convincing argument development, how to self-evaluate work, and providing professional feedback to improve drafted work. Students can use their services free of costs and access to in-person appointments. To schedule an appointment, visit the following website: <https://uga.mywconline.com/>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accessibility Statement

UGA is committed to the success of all learners, and we strive to create an inclusive and accessible environment. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like for us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through the Accessibility and Testing office.

The Accessibility and Testing (<https://accessibility.uga.edu/>) works with students who have documented disabilities to access reasonable accommodations and academic supports. For more information or to speak with a coordinator, please call the Accessibility and Testing at (706) 542-8719. Adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process. If you determine that formal accommodation is necessary, it is important that you register with the Accessibility and Testing office and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodation to be made in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodation. Please contact me by the end of the second week of class if there are any problems in receiving your documentation with the Accessibility and Testing office.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must

meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty,” the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonest, which can be found at:

<https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. The UGA Student Honor Code states “*I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.*” Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments, and the academic honesty policy should be directed to me.

Academic dishonesty violations will result in a minimum penalty of a ‘0’ on the assignment or exam, can escalate to an academic dishonesty charge brought by me, and can result in dismissal from the program of study and the University.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this Course

The use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is not generally permitted in this course but will be permitted for select assignments. In this class, you can use GAI for class exams but MUST provide documentation of the GAI output and your changes given the response or for grammar improvements. You can use GAI for early stages of research to find sources. However, to ensure you develop and master the foundational knowledge and skills in this course, the use of GAI tools should not be used for other purposes or assignments since you need to critically think for yourself when responding to assignments.

Religious Accommodations

UGA’s religious accommodations policy, found at <https://eoo.uga.edu/definitions/religious-accommodations>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the Religious Holidays Attendance Policy, I can allow you to make up work because of a religious observance provided that you notify me. Please look over the course schedule and contact me by the end of the second week of class if there are any classes you will miss due to a religious observance.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

UGA has several resources to aid in your mental and emotional health needs. UGA Well-Being Resources promotes student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-Being Resources are here to help. You can take note of the following support and well-being resources.

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. SCO helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting you with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the [Embark@UGA](#) program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit Well-Being Resources (<https://well-being.uga.edu/>) for a list of FREE workshops, mentoring, and

health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

- UGA has several digital well-being resources to support your well-being (<https://healthcenter.uga.edu/digital-mental-health-resources/>) and mental health (<https://healthcenter.uga.edu/bewelluga/>).
- The University Health Center offers FREE workshops, classes, mentoring and health coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) is your go-to, on-campus resource for emotional, social and behavioral-health support: <https://caps.uga.edu/> and 24/7 support at 706-542-2273.
- For health promotion and the Fontaine Center, please visit <https://healthpromotion.uga.edu/>
- Additional information and resources can be accessed through the UGA Mobile App.

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/> FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, major, activities, degrees, awards, and prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.

COURSE POLICIES

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. The term "diversity" covers differences of culture, background and experience among individuals and groups. Such differences include, but are not limited to, differences of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and abilities, as well as political and religious affiliation and socioeconomic status.

The University of Georgia prioritizes diversity in education and recognizes that diversity is an integral component of educational excellence. Diversity and inclusion are also central to excellence in the public and nonprofit sectors. In the classroom, you are encouraged to honor the uniqueness of peers and to appreciate the opportunities to learn from one another. All persons have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, you will have a chance to indicate the name that you prefer to be called, and if you choose, to identify pronouns with which you would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to you accordingly and encourage you to support classmates in doing so as well.

During the semester, we will cultivate a practice of open and courteous dialogue. You are encouraged to share diverse experiences, ask questions, and explore different perspectives. Please demonstrate respect for each other's opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. **In addition, please remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.**

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to me with each student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records and how I communicate with you in class.

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that the land I live and work on by naming the Muscogee-Creek, Cherokee, and Chickasaw Peoples upon whose territory the University of Georgia stands. I further acknowledge the enslaved peoples, primarily of African descent, whose labor built much of the University of Georgia.

Academic Calendar and Schedule

You can access the academic calendar at: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/calendars/academic-calendars/> You can access the daily class schedule at: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/daily-class-schedule/>

Participation Policy

Your active participation through in-person attendance is highly encouraged in this course. However, there might be instances in which you cannot attend in-class sessions. Excused absence from class can include properly documented sickness or hospitalization, birth of a child, active-duty service requirements, documented family medical emergencies, or university business. In the event that the university cancels classes, such as for severe weather, you are expected to continue with readings as originally scheduled. Any assignments scheduled during those missed classes, such as a group project deliverable or the exercises, are due at the next class meeting unless other instructions are posted at the course eLC page or communicated via email.

Staying in Touch and Checking Your Email

Office hours are encouraged and can be scheduled by appointment if the office hours provided do not fit with your schedule. Please email me with three preferred times to schedule a meeting when making an appointment outside of office hours. If preferred, office hour meetings can occur with you online via Zoom or by phone. Please, **check your university email** regularly so you don't miss important information.

Prohibition of Recording Lectures

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, you may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. If you have a recording accommodation, you agree in writing that you:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.

- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

Additional Course Policies

- Class begins at 7:00 PM and continues until 9:50 PM. Please arrive promptly since all announcements will be made at the start of each class meeting.
- I encourage you to bring a notebook, tablet, or computer to class, for notetaking and active learning activities. However, please do not spend time in class using social media or doing work not related to this class; the goal is for our time together to be focused and engaged, and I encourage you to adopt strategies that will help both you and your classmates.
- The course is structured with active learning activities, group discussion, and short lectures. For this reason, I expect you will actively participate by responding to questions posed by myself or your colleagues. There is no mandatory attendance policy in the class however, active participation and the exercises requires your engagement. To facilitate a collegial learning process, you should have reviewed all the assigned materials prior to class.
- Please aim to communicate with me if you have concerns. I can address most of your questions before or after class, during office hours, or over email. The office hours listed on the first page are *not* the only times when I will be available to meet. If the listed times don't suit your schedule, please send me an e-mail (mlofton@uga.edu) and propose three alternative times you could meet and I will let you know which option works best. Please send me an email that concisely articulates your question(s) or concerns. I will check my e-mail regularly and make every effort to respond to your question(s) in a timely manner, within 24-hours.
- You will be required to submit your assignments to the electronic drop-box at the course eLC website. For the group assignments, please provide one submission per group and list all group members. Let me know as soon as possible if you can't deliver an assignment on time due to emergencies.
- Extra credit will be provided for attending the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) student chapter guest talk meetings. You can receive up to three extra points on your mid-term exam grade for attending a GFOA guest talk and providing a one-page double spaced evaluation of how topics covered in the course were addressed in the guest talk. If you take this opportunity, please provide your evaluation by the last day of in-person class.

Class Meeting Schedule¹

Session	Date	Class Topic	Assignment(s) Due	Readings*
		Part 1: State and Local Taxes		
1	1/14	Overview of Course and Principles of Taxation		
2	1/21	Foundations of State and Local Taxes (SALT) and Reading an Annual Report		Lee, Johnson, & Joyce (2021) – Chapter 5a
3	1/28	The Property Tax <i>Guest Speaker: Representative from Arizona Governor’s Office of Strategic Planning & Budgeting</i>	<i>Excel Certification Due</i>	Lee, Johnson, & Joyce (2021) – Chapter 5b Kim (2024)
4	2/4	The Sales Tax		Lee, Johnson, & Joyce (2021) – Chapter 6 Afonso (2023)
5	2/11	The Income Tax	<i>Group Project: 3-Page Synopsis</i>	Lee, Johnson, & Joyce (2021) – Chapter 5c Sewordor & Sjoquist (2016)
6	2/18	Excise Taxes: Tobacco, Alcoholic Beverages, Cannabis, and Sugary Beverages		Miller & Seo (2021)
7	2/25	Excise Taxes: Taxes on Legal Sports Gambling and Casino Revenues		Auxier (2019) Srinivasan & Lambert (2016)
8	3/4	MIDTERM EXAMINATION	<i>Due at 11:30 PM</i>	
	3/11	<i>Spring Break – No class</i>		
		Part 2: Taxation Analysis		
9	3/18	Principles of Tax Analysis and Research and Data in State and Local Taxation		Kavanagh (2019a)
10	3/25	Group Workday	<i>Group Project: Tax Analysis</i>	
11	4/1	Tax and Expenditure Limitations	<i>Memorandum One</i>	Jimenez (2017) Stallmann, Maher, Deller, & Park (2017)
12	4/8	Interjurisdictional Relations in Revenue Collection and Distributional Effects of Taxation Changes		Yang, Yu & Chen (2024) Kavanagh (2019b) Burge & Rogers (2018)
13	4/15	Transparency About Tax Subsidies and Taxation and Growth	<i>Memorandum Two</i>	Mayhew & Waymire (2015) Gale, Krupkin, & Rueben (2015)
14	4/22	Group Project Presentations	<i>Group Project Presentation, Final Report,</i>	

¹ Please note that the course syllabus is a general plan for the course. The schedule and readings are subject to change at the discretion of me. All deviations will be announced to the class and noted on the course eLC page.

			<i>and Peer Assessment Due</i>	
	5/4	Final Exam Due (Optional)	<i>Due at 11:30 PM</i>	