

# **PS 5310 W01: Public Budgeting and Finance**

Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Yen-Hsin Chen

Office: LH 308

Phone: 432-837-8342

Email: Yen-Hsin.Chen@sulross.edu (Please give me 24 hours to respond)

Office hours: by appointment

## **Course Description**

This course focuses on the development and execution of various public budgeting systems, with special attention to the political content of the public-sector budgetary process. PS5310 will examine both national and local government financial management.

## **Course Objective**

The objective of this course is for the student to master the study of public budgeting through developing the following proficiencies:

- Student Learning Outcomes for PS 5310:
  1. The student will be able to conceptualize major concepts in budgeting, e.g., risk management, reduction management, as assessed in writing assignments.
  2. The student will be able to analyze the issues in public budgeting by relating major theories to the issues as assessed in response narratives to issues in public budgeting.
  3. The student will demonstrate competence in research in public budgeting as assessed by a monograph on a topic significant to public budgeting, e.g., law, agency, budgeting system, that the student will write.
- Program Learning Outcomes: The graduating student will:
  1. Demonstrate the ability to critique significant theoretical approaches of public administration.
  2. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international administrative processes.
  3. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis
- Marketable Skills: Among the marketable skills developed in the Master of Public Administration program are:
  1. Students can organize and execute presentations relevant to public administration.
  2. Students understand and can execute a program evaluation.
  3. Students can conduct statistical analyses that are useful to the work of public administrators.
  4. Students can read and interpret an organization's budget.

## Assigned Reading

The required text for this course is:

Lewis, Carol W. and W. Bartley Hildreth. 2012. *Budgeting: Politics and Power*. Oxford University Press: New York. ISBN: 9780199859214

All additional readings will be on Blackboard and through the library website.

## Assignments and Grading

**Exams** (60% of your grade, 30% for each exam):

Two closed-book exams will be given during this course. The exams will include multiple-choice questions and short essays on topics covered in the course. The midterm exam covers topics from Topic 1-1 to Topic 1-9, while the final exam covers topics from Topic 2-1 to Topic 2-6. The midterm exam will be open from 6/22 to 6/28, and the final exam will be from 8/3 to 8/9.

1. You need to install “Respondus” to lock down your browser for taking the exams.
2. You will lose 10 points for every calendar day your exam is late.

**Semester Paper & Presentation** (30% of your grade):

Students have a semester paper to write for the course. In the paper, students need to provide an analysis of a budget, including answers and responses to the essential questions and concepts we discuss. Students should present a reasoned, analytically sound, and empirically valid argument in their papers.

1. This paper is required to be between eight and 10 double-spaced pages in length.
2. It is due on **July 26**. You will lose 10 points for every calendar day when your paper is late.
3. You are not allowed to use any AI generator to write this paper. Otherwise, you will fail this course.
4. You must record your presentation on Blackboard by **July 26**.

In addition, students are **REQUIRED** to schedule **TWO** virtual meetings with me to discuss their plan and report on their progress. Please keep in mind that these meetings are **NOT** optional. I will not accept or grade your paper if you fail to meet this requirement.

1. First meeting by June 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Second meeting by July 5<sup>th</sup>

**Student Presentation Quiz** (10% of your grade)

After you record your presentation on Blackboard, you are required to make 5 quizzes about your presentation for your classmates to answer. A separate handout will provide additional details in the future.

## Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to read the assigned chapters and watch the lecture videos. We will also use the Discussion Board to discuss important topics. Although not participating in discussions will not directly hurt your course grade, it will affect my evaluation of your performance.

## Grade Scale

Your points: Midterm Exam  $\times$  0.3 + Final Exam  $\times$  0.3 + Semester Paper  $\times$  0.3 + Student Presentation Quiz  $\times$  0.1 + your total extra points.

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading scale:

Points	Letter Grade
100- 90.0	A
89.9-80.0	B
79.9-70.0	C
69.9-60.0	D
59.9 or less	F

Please remember that a “C” is required in graduate school to pass the class. In addition, you must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing. The program faculty evaluates students' progress at the end of each semester. Maintaining a “B” average in the program is not enough to be deemed eligible to continue or complete the comprehensive exam.

## Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics and reading assignments for the course. Items on this syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

### Week 1 (5/27): Introduction and Course Guidelines

- Please read this syllabus and all documents I posted on Blackboard
- Please complete the syllabus quizzes; you need to install “Respondus” for taking the quizzes and exams.

### Week 2 (6/1): Chapters 1 and 2

- Topic 1-1: Follow the Money
- Topic 1-2: Budget Process
- Topic 1-3: Participation

### Week 3 (6/8): Chapters 3 and 4

- Topic 1-4: Fairness and Trust in Budgetary Politics
- Topic 1-5: Redistribution
- Topic 1-6: Federal Budgeting Process I

### Week 4 (6/15): Chapters 4, 5, and 6

- Topic 1-7: Federal Budgeting Process II
- Topic 1-8: Budgetary Balance
- Topic 1-9: Unbalanced Budget

### Week 5 (6/22): Midterm Exam Week

- The midterm exam will be available on Blackboard from 6/22 to 6/28.

**Week 6 (6/29):** Chapters 6 and 7

- Topic 2-1: Public Spending and Spending Choice
- Topic 2-2: Public Opinion: What Do We Want
- Topic 2-3: Revenue System

**Week 7 (7/6):** Chapters 8 and 9

- Topic 2-4: Capital Projects I
- Topic 2-5: Capital Projects II
- Topic 2-6: How to Read and What to Read

**Week 8 (7/13):** Research week

- Please work on your semester paper

**Week 9 (7/20):** Student Presentation Week 1

- Semester Paper due 7/26.
- Students must record and post their virtual presentations on Blackboard by 7/26.
- Please make 5 quizzes about your presentation and send them to me.

**Week 10 (7/27):** Student Presentation Week 2

- Students need to complete watching others' virtual presentations and answering quizzes by 8/2.

**Week 11 (8/3):** Final Exam Week

- The final exam will be available on Blackboard from 8/3 to 8/9.

=====

## **Other Course Policies & Resources**

### **Academic Integrity**

Intellectual development requires hard work. Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. The policy can be found at: <https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/> In addition, please note that plagiarism detection software will be used in this class for written assignments.

### **Course Blackboard Resources**

There are several resources on the course Blackboard page. You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the items in Blackboard in the first week of class.

### **SRSU Disability Services**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Rebecca Greathouse Wren, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email [rebecca.wren@sulross.edu](mailto:rebecca.wren@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

### **Distance Education Statement**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

### **Blackboard Technical Support**

SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support Online Support Desk Contact Info: Toll Free: 888.837.6055. Email: [blackboardsupport@sulross.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@sulross.edu)

### **Supportive Statement**

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

### **SUSR Library Services**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website, [library.swtjc.edu](http://library.swtjc.edu). The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for Inter Library Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

### **ADA Statement**

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.