University of Colorado at Boulder Department of Economics

Prof. Jeffrey S.Zax zax@colorado.edu 303-492-8268 http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/Zax Economics 4231 Syllabus and Schedule 4 January 2018

Welcome. I am Pof. Jeffrey S. Zar. This is Economics 4231, Applied Economic Analysis and Public Polcy.

Course description:

This course applies economic analysisto current issues by blic policy in the State of Colorado. It begins with an extraination of the theoretical foundations for government economic activity. It then provides a description of the structure and procedures of the Colorado General Assembly (the official name of the Colorado State legislature). It continues with detailed dscussions of the basic principles of public finance, the economic justifications for government ation and the contents of specific Assembly bills. Throughout the semester, students individually choose current Assembly bills, review relevant economit terature and apply the implications of that literature and our economic principles through briefing papers, in-class presentations and testimony a Assembly hearings. In addition, we paticipate in a cooperative project in which we rate the economic content of the bills considered during the first half of the Assembly session, and distribute these ratings to the Assembly and the public.

This course explores the challenges of integrating informed economic analysis into the legislative process. It alows students who are interested in iscuesof public policy to learn both about the economic analysis that is relevant to those issues and to apply what is relevant to the process of determining public policy. Although issuesof public policy are addressed in many courses in the Economic Department, there is no other course in the Department that engages the public policy process directly. That engagement will be valuable to the many among our students who will be ative in public policy subsequent to graduation, either through their employment or as ditizens. This course should also be of benefit to the State of Colorado, because it should improve the quality and consistency of economic analysis available to the GeneraAssembly.

This course will meet on Thusdays from 3:30 p.m. until 1600 p.m. throughout the semester in Economics 205. Classeswill consist of lectures, discussions of assignments, discussions of Assembly procedures and individual presentations. You should expect to attend every tass. I will drop any student who is enrifted at the beginning of the semesternal who misses the first

class, 18 ahuary, without first obtaining an excuse from me. I will hold regular office hous between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on Tuesgla and between 200p.m. and 300p.m. on Thursdays in Economics 111, my office. Appointments may be made for meetings at other times, if these are inconveniert. Course information will be posted regularly on Desie2Lean. Notifications will be posted there aswell, and sent via ampus email. It is your responsibility to monitor both.

## Course prerequisites

This course requires previous completion of Economics 3070, Internediate Microeconomic <u>Theory</u> and Economics 3818, Introduction to Statistics, or their equivalents. These prerequisites willordinarily be enforced. If you have questions in this egard, contact me at the email address above.

## Course requirements

Performance in this ourse will be judged on the bais of six instruments. For 80 points, or 80% of the course, each student will be responsible for choosing four bills before the Colorado General Assembly during the course of the semester. Each bill can be chosen by no more that one student. The basic assignment for each of these bills will be worth 15 points, of 5% of the course. Each assignment will consist of three components.

The first component will be a briefing paper consisting of no more than five pages with additional pages only for reference lists. The paper will summarize the relevant literature and present an original economic analysis in language and figures that would convey the essence of the material to a general audience. Each of these papers will be woth 8 points, or8% of the final grade.

Each paper may be submitted in up to bur drafts. The deadlines for the final drafts are 15 February, 8 March, 5 Apil and 26 April, at 11:59p.m. The mouse cent draft as of each of these dates will be graded. If no draft has been submitted **a** of these dates, the grade will be zero. Papers can be submitted prior to these dates and may have to be, depending on the Asembly schedules for the bills in question.

These papers must be type-written, double-spaced, and have conventional magins. Papers that exceed the maxmum lengths, either in physeal length or because of compressed format, will be penalized. They must be submitted to me electronially at the email address above in the Addbe pdf format. The computers in the computer lab in the basement of the Economics Building can create pdf files from Word files. Make sure that you arrange to convert your papers to .pdf format before the decelline for submission. Speak with mein advance if you anticipate difficulty with this requirement. Only pdf files will be accepted.

The second and third components of the asignment for each bill can be undertaken only if the final draft of the paper attains agrade of at least 6 points out of 8. If the final draft does not attain this standard, the grades for the second and third components will both be zero.

The second component of each bill assignment will consist of confirmed dstribution of the briefing paper to appropriate members of the GeneralAssembly. I must approve each paper for distribution. Distribution should occur viaemal, with myself as one of the ecipients. Papers must be distributed after the receipt of approval, and within five days of that receipt in order to receive cedit. Each distribution will be worth 2 points, o2% of the final grade.

The third component of each bill assignment will consist of a testimony presentation. This presentation will condense the associated briefing paper into athree-minute oral presentation. This presentation will take place in class. Each of these presentations will be worth 5 points, or 5% of the final grade. Pesentations bould ordinarily follow the submission of final paper drafts. If the General Assembly schedules for the bills in question demands otherwise, youmust receive permission from me in advance.

In addition to the basic assignment associated with each bill, students will be required to present verblatestimony in person to the General Assembly. As aconsequence of the difficulty of coordinating Assembly and student schedules, this requirement will apply to any two of the four bills analyzed by each student. The accomplishment of each instance of verblatestimony will be worth 10 points, of 0% of the fial grade.

Students mus receive explicit approval from me before they may testify for course credit. Ordinarily, approval is granted only if the associated briefing paper has already been accepted, the associated oral presentation has occurred in class and has attained a grade of at least 3.5 out of 5 points. Any exerctions to this policy must be granted by me in dvance of testimony.

The fifth graded instrument will be amid-term legislative report card, to which all students will contribute. Each student will be assigned ashare of the current Assembly bills for the purpose of evaluating their sutability as objects of government ation. We will compile the evaluations of all students into a ingle document for distribution. Each student's contribution will be worth 10 points, or10% of the fial grade. The legislative report card will be due on 15 km/ch.

The sixth graded instrument is the final final sixth graded instrument is the final lectures and readings, as well as the experience of interacting with the Assembly. It will be worth 10 points, or 10% of the fial grade. It is sheduled to take place on Saurday, 5 May from 1:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> University policies regarding multiple final examinations on the same day are available at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/policies/final-examination-policy</u>.

Excuses for course requirements will be granted only underextraordinary dircumstances. If granted, the excused points will be reallocated to subsequent requirements. The our

1 Febuary Principles of writing, externalities, job creation

University policies:

The University adheres to the standards for student privacy rights and requirements as stipulated in the FederaRights and Pivacy Ad (FERPA) of 974<sup>2</sup>. Campus policy regarding disabilities requires that faculty adhere to the recommendations of Disability Services. In addition, campus policy regarding religious observances equires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments or required attendance. Any sudent eligible for and needing addemic adjustments or accommodations because of disability or religious practice should arrange to meet with me immediately. Those with disabilities should immediately submit a letter from Disability Services describing appropriate adjustments or accommodations.<sup>3</sup>

Students and faculty share responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment All are subject to the Univerity's polices on Sexal Harassment and Amorous Relationships<sup>4</sup> Students who fail to adhere to appropriate behavioral standards may be subject to dscipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide tassoom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in white students expressopinions<sup>5</sup> I am happy to discussary issues of individual or group treatment in office hous orby appointment.

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to this institution's policy regarding academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bibery, threatening behavior and assistance to acts of academic dishonesty are

<sup>2</sup> A description is available at

http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/resources/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa.

<sup>3</sup> University polices regading religious practice are available at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absencesclassesandor-exams</u>. University policies regarding disabilities are available at <u>http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu</u>. Disability Services can be contacted by telephone to 303-492-8671, oin person at Wilard 322.

<sup>4</sup> University policies regarding Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationaries are available at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/policies</u>. The Offce of Institutional Equity and Compliance can be reached by telephone at 303492-2127 or at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/</u>. The Offce of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution can be reached by telephone at 303492-5550 or ta <u>http://www.colorado.edu/oscr/</u>.

<sup>5</sup> University policies regarding dassroom behavior are available at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior</u>.

examples of behaviors that violate this policy. Ordnarily, a student engaged in any act of academic dishonest will eccive afailing grade for the course. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the HonorCode Office. Depending on itsinfidings, students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to non-academic sanctions, including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Honor Oode website is ta<u>http://honorcode.cdorado.edu/</u>. The Offce of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution can be contacted by email at <u>studentconduct@colorado.edu</u> or by telephone ta 303-492-5550. Aditional information regarding the Student Honor Ode Policy is available at <u>http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy</u>.