Public Policy Analysis (21883)

**Degree:** AD/E-GRAU  
**Course:** third and fourth years  
**Term:** third  
**Language of teaching:** English

**Professor:** Ana Tur-Prats (anna.tur@upf.edu)  
**Lectures:** Thursdays and Fridays 15:00-16.30  
**Office hours:** Wednesdays 11:00-12:00, Office 20.1E68 (Jaume I building). Please, email me before to make an appointment.  
**Seminars:** Mondays afternoon from 14:30 to 17:30, depending on group (14:30-16:00 and 16:00-17:30)

1. **Objective**

The objective of this course is to familiarize students with Public Economic Analysis, by focusing on specific topics with recent policy applications. For each topic, the theoretical analysis of public economic concepts will be linked with actual public policy applications. We will also put a specific emphasis on public policy evaluation, with a step-by-step critical analysis of some relevant empirical papers. **By the end of the course, students should be able to understand the main questions behind the contemporary public economic policy topics reviewed in the course and the basic empirical methods used in public policy evaluation.**

2. **Requirements**

Basic knowledge of microeconomic theory and econometrics is required to be able to understand and interpret the results of the empirical papers.

3. **Competences to be achieved**

1. Analytical and synthesis skills.  
2. Ability to identify and solve economic problems and the potential trade-offs arising in their resolution.  
3. Ability to understand and use economic models, and to understand the public economic concepts of the course.  
4. Ability to participate actively in lectures and seminars (know how to intervene, to listen and acquire oral and written communication skills), keeping an open mind; communication skills (to make a short presentation in front of the class).  
5. Ability to work individually (reading material for the course, solving exercises, reading research papers and answering related questions, etc.), and in a small group (preparing the student presentation).  
6. Ability to relate the analysis of socio-economic problems with the objectives and the main instruments of economic policy.
7. Research skills (search and review academic literature in order to expand your knowledge in the field), ability to independently find information (databases, media, etc.) in order to build an argument using available evidence.

4. Validation of the course

The course is based on the principle of continuous assessment, with an important weight put on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. This course also requires active student’s participation.

4.1. Assessment rules

a) The evaluation of the course will be based on continuous evaluation in seminars (seminar assignments and participation) (25%), student presentations (10%) and the final exam (65%).

b) To pass the course, one must obtain a final grade equal or superior to 5. The final grade is a weighted average of the three components of the grade (seminar assignments and participation, student presentations, and final exam). A minimum grade of 4 in the final exam is required to pass the course. Students who attended the course but failed can take the re-sit (recuperació). In this case, students have to take the part(s) of the re-sit corresponding to the part(s) of the course they failed: continuous evaluation and/or final exam (for students who failed the presentation part, the re-sit exam will count for both final exam and presentation). See rules below for the re-sit.

c) Seminar assignments will be posted on Aula Global one week in advance and will have to be handed in the following week at the seminar’s classroom.

d) Attendance to seminars and participation is required to get a grade for a seminar (i.e. handing in the homework without attending the seminar will result in a grade of 0 for the seminar). Seminar attendance without participation does not ensure any minimum grade (i.e. if a student attends but does not participate, she/he may fail in the “continuous evaluation”). One needs to participate appropriately to ensure good grades: handing in the work and attending without participating is not sufficient to pass the “continuous evaluation” part.

e) Student presentations in small groups on public policy questions will complement the main lectures.

f) Approved partial grades are not saved (exam or participation/seminars) for subsequent academic years.

g) In order to be able to take the final exam, a student must have a minimal grade from the seminar.

h) According to university regulations for courses taught in English, students will take all the exams (instructions, questions and answers) exclusively in English.

ALL students enrolled in the course are subject to the criteria described in this PDA, as well as to the dates of delivery of assessable and examinations (which will be known during the term). This includes those who come from exchange agreements.
4.2. Rules for re-sit (recuperació) exam

The re-sit exam will take place on the date scheduled in the academic calendar (the date will be published in Aula Global). A student can take the re-sit exam if and only if she/he has participated in the teaching and evaluation activities of the course during the term, but has failed to pass the course. Students who did not participate in such activities or have cancelled their participation in the evaluation of the course cannot take the re-sit exam.

It is considered that a student has participated in the teaching and evaluation activities of the course when:

- she/he has participated in the continuous evaluation of the course, handing in the work and attending to at least 50% of the seminars and participating in the other activities mentioned in the syllabus of the course (except for duly justified reasons); and,
- she/he has done the final exam.

The re-sit exam is only for students who attended and participated in the activities of the course but failed. Students who attended the course and passed with a final grade equal or greater than 5.0 cannot take the re-sit exam.

A student who participated in the teaching and evaluation activities of the course but failed, can take the re-sit exam for the parts of the course that she/he initially failed during the term: continuous evaluation, exam, or both; but the student cannot take the re-sit for a part of the course for which her/his initial grade is already higher than 5.0 (the initial grade will be kept). The re-sit exam will therefore consist in two parts, the first part corresponding to the re-sit for continuous evaluation and the second part corresponding to the re-sit for the exam.

5. Seminars

Seminars will take place on weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9. Assignment to seminar groups will be done by the University. Seminar assignments will be posted on Aula Global one week in advance and will have to be handed in the following week at the seminar’s classroom.

6. Student Presentations

Small groups of students must prepare a short presentation on a topic related to the course materials and present it during the lectures. Detailed information regarding this activity will be posted in Aula Global on a separate document.

7. Outline of the Course and Planning

Lectures:

Introduction (week 1)

1. Empirical Tools of Public Economics (weeks 1 and 2)
2. Environmental and Health Externalities (weeks 2 and 3)
3. **Education** (weeks 3, 4 and 5)
4. **Social Insurance** (weeks 5 and 6)
5. **Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance and Workers’ Compensation** (weeks 6 and 7)
6. **Health Insurance** (weeks 8 and 9)
7. **Income Distribution and Welfare Programs** (week 10)

## 8. General References


## 9. Methodology

The methodology of the course is based on student autonomy. Students must provide a systematic and continuous effort, guided by the instructor. Thus, the course combines activities performed in the classroom with activities that students must carry out on their own, either guided or independently. Specifically, students are expected to:

1. Read and critically think about the readings and material made available for classes.
2. Complement the content presented in lectures and the readings analyzed in seminars by using the recommended bibliography.
3. Identify and summarize the most important points of each reading.
4. Ask questions and go to office hours with the instructor if they are having difficulties understanding the topics.
5. Attend all classes.
6. Participate actively during lectures and seminars.
7. Hand-in all the homework assigned.
8. Work in group to prepare the student presentation.

On their side, instructors are expected to:

- Present and explain the main points of each topic in class.
- Answer questions of the students.
- Supervise their student presentation preparation.
- Illustrate the application of theoretical material through exercises and case studies.