

EC320-15 Economics of Public Policy

21/22

Department

Economics

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Atisha Ghosh

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module aims to train students in the theory and applications of public policy. It will equip students with various tools of analysis and skills that can be applied to selected theoretical and applied problems in the economics of public goods, public expenditure, externalities and taxation, as well as in aspects of political economy.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module aims to provide a firm foundation of knowledge; equip students with tools of analysis; enable students to develop the ability to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to the solution of selected theoretical and applied problems in the economics of taxation and of public expenditure, and in aspects of political economy.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

This course is concerned with understanding the role of government in the economy through taxation, expenditure and regulation. This course will typically cover both the classic topics in this area, such as the provision of public goods, the design of taxation, and inter-generational distribution, as well more modern themes. In particular, we will focus on three of these. First, we will look at the political economy approach to public finance, which stresses that governments are not benevolent dictators, but take decisions via a political process, and thus may themselves take inefficient decisions; thus, we should be aware of “government failure” as well as market failure. Second, due to globalisation, the international dimension in government decision-making is becoming more important, especially on the tax side, with issues of mobile tax bases and tax competition. Third, many countries (although, so far, notably, not the UK) are undergoing a process of fiscal decentralisation; we will examine the fiscal relationships between central and local government, a topic known as fiscal federalism.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Subject-specific and Professional Key General Skills:...demonstrate proficiency in study and research skills such as: reviewing the relevant literature and evidence. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, guided reading and independent study
- Subject knowledge and understanding:...demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of public economics. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, classes, and independent study.
- Subject knowledge and understanding:...demonstrate familiarity with some applications of economics that have been specific to the study of public policy. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, classes, and independent study.
- Key skills:...ability to understand and manipulate simple economic models, and to read critically the empirical literature, in the area of public policy. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, classes, and independent study.
- Subject-specific and Professional Key General Skills:...demonstrate proficiency in study and research skills such as: mathematical/statistical skills: use/application of mathematics and diagrams in economic analysis; understanding of statistical analysis of data. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, guided reading and independent study.
- Cognitive skills:... apply critical analysis to the topics of the module, formulate concepts and hypotheses, and show how they are tested in relevant literature. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, classes, and independent study.
- Professional skills:...review the relevant literature and evidence. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, classes, and independent study.
- Subject-specific and Professional Key General Skills:...demonstrate proficiency in study and research skills such as: communicating their knowledge and understanding to others, verbally and in writing. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve

this learning outcome are: Lectures, guided reading and independent study.

- Subject-specific and Professional Key General Skills:...demonstrate proficiency in study and research skills such as: data skills: Use of library and internet as information sources. Knowledge of how to locate relevant data, extract appropriate data, analyse and present material. The teaching and learning methods that enable students to achieve this learning outcome are: Lectures, guided reading and independent study.

Indicative reading list

Please see Talis Aspire link for most up to date list.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

Students will have the opportunity to develop skills in:

Analytical thinking and communication

Analytical reasoning

Critical thinking

Problem-solving

Abstraction

Policy evaluation

Analysis of incentives

Analysis of optimisation

Understanding of Uncertainty and Incomplete Information

Transferable skills

Students will have the opportunity to develop:

Research skills

Numeracy and quantitative skills

Written communication skills

Oral communication skills

Mathematical, statistical and data-based research skills

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	20 sessions of 1 hour (13%)
Seminars	4 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Total	150 hours

Type	Required
Private study	126 hours (84%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study will be required in order to prepare for seminars/classes, to review lecture notes, to prepare for forthcoming assessments, tests, and exams, and to undertake wider reading around the subject.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Policy brief	20%		No
Group policy brief			
Multiple Choice Test online	10%		No
Online Examination	70%		No

A paper which examines the course content and ensures learning outcomes are achieved.

~Platforms - AEP

- Students may use a calculator
- Answerbook provided by department

Assessment group R1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Online Examination - Resit	100%		No

- Students may use a calculator
- Answerbook provided by department

Feedback on assessment

The Department of Economics is committed to providing high quality and timely feedback to students on their assessed work, to enable them to review and continuously improve their work. We are dedicated to ensuring feedback is returned to students within 20 University working days of their assessment deadline. Feedback for assignments is returned either on a standardised assessment feedback cover sheet which gives information both by tick boxes and by free comments or via free text comments on tabula, together with the annotated assignment. For tests and problem sets, students receive solutions as an important form of feedback and their marked assignment, with a breakdown of marks and comments by question and sub-question. Students are informed how to access their feedback, either by collecting from the Undergraduate Office or via tabula. Module leaders often provide generic feedback for the cohort outlining what was done well, less well, and what was expected on the assignment and any other common themes. This feedback also includes a cumulative distribution function with summary statistics so students can review their performance in relation to the cohort. This feedback is in addition to the individual-specific feedback on assessment performance.

[Past exam papers for EC320](#)

Availability

Pre-requisites

Any of:

EC201-30 Macroeconomics 2 AND
EC202-30 Microeconomics 2

OR

EC204-30 Economics 2

To take this module, you must have passed:

- All of
 - All of
 - [EC201-30 Macroeconomics 2](#)
 - [EC202-30 Microeconomics 2](#)
 - [EC204-30 Economics 2](#)

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- TECA-L1PA Postgraduate Taught Economics (Diploma plus MSc)
 - Year 1 of L1PA Economics (Diploma plus MSc)

- Year 2 of L1PA Economics (Diploma plus MSc)
- UECA-3 Undergraduate Economics 3 Year Variants
 - Year 3 of L100 Economics
 - Year 3 of L116 Economics and Industrial Organization
- UECA-4 Undergraduate Economics 4 Year Variants
 - Year 4 of LV16 Economics & Economic History with Study Abroad
 - Year 4 of L103 Economics with Study Abroad
 - Year 4 of LM1H Economics, Politics & International Studies with Study Abroad
 - Year 4 of L114 Industrial Economics with Study in Europe
- Year 3 of UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
- USTA-G300 Undergraduate Master of Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics
 - Year 3 of G300 Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics
 - Year 4 of G300 Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics
- Year 3 of UMAA-GL11 Undergraduate Mathematics and Economics
- Year 4 of UECA-GL12 Undergraduate Mathematics and Economics (with Intercalated Year)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
 - Year 4 of V7MH Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Philosophy Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MF Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Politics Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MI Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Economics Bipartite (Philosophy Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MJ Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Politics Bipartite (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MG Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Politics/Economics Bipartite (Politics Major) (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of USTA-Y602 Undergraduate Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics
- Year 4 of USTA-Y603 Undergraduate Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics, Economics (with Intercalated Year)