Course Description & Objectives

This course is designed to examine the different strategies institutions within the American government use to structure budget decisions. Each week examines, in detail, the scholarly arguments over the complexities of decisions are made within an institution or across the separation of powers, as well as discuss the many ways the level of funding priority for programs and services are justified.

Required Books

All texts can be found in the bookstore or online.


Additional required readings can be found on the course web page if not available through the library’s online databases.

Student Evaluation

Participation

I believe actively participating in discussion are an important part of a class, which is why participation will make up 120 points of your final grade. The participation grade is a proportion of the high quality contributions to class discussion throughout the class on the discussion board and during video conferences. Missed deadlines for discussion board posts or absences from video discussion - that are not preapproved - result in a 0 for that week’s assignment.

In-Depth & Collaborative Discussion

On four specific weeks there are opportunities to apply your understanding of budget politics and procedures to drive the class discussion on an issue. In addition to asking questions, respond to your peers, and build on their responses to your questions. Appropriate methods of discussion leadership include:

1) Identify an aspect of the article and ask your colleagues to critique the study. Possible examples include theoretical assumptions, selection of data, omitted variables, or interpretation of the findings.
2) Suggest an alternative option on how the study may have been conducted to ask you colleagues whether we should continue to expect the same findings?

3) Present a relevant example (recent or historical) that can help us validate a theory. Then develop questions that help us analyze the example.

**Reflection Journal**

There are three prompts during the semester February 15-19, March 21-25, and April 4-8. Each prompt will be available in the weekly module and is tied to that week’s readings. Use the new information from the weekly readings, as well as other past information you deem relevant, to develop a typed three page answer to the question. *Choose 2 of the 3 prompts. No extra credit will be given to a third submission.*

**Quizzes**

There will be four quizzes during the semester that ask you to identify components of the budget process, compare when and how different tools are effective, and apply your knowledge to a specific problem.

**Process Explanation Brief**

Provide two briefs, by selecting from the four comparisons below. Each brief should be two pages double-spaced and describe the similarities and differences between each term. Pay particular attention to the constraints each process may introduce as a trade-off.

1) Budget Reconciliation compared to Budget Resolution
2) Continuing Resolutions compared to Omnibus Legislation
3) Limitation Rider in the Senate compared to the Effect of the “Byrd Rule”
4) Recision compared to Sequestration

**Budget & Spending Decisions: Case Study Analysis**

Revenue, inputs, and outlays create a foundation for establishing a budget. However, the process and procedures that define how each term is defined as a policy decision can change (i.e. the evolution from tariffs to income tax). Therefore, understanding the relevance of a procedure and what alternatives were considered at the time provides a more complete understanding of budget decision. This assignment is a large and multi-staged project to analyze how federal appropriations decisions were made in a given year (i.e. budget reconciliation, twelve separate bills, omnibus, continuing resolution, CRomnibus. A unique year will be assigned to you by Professor Owens.

To aid with this process, I have assigned John Gerring’s article about writing case studies as a methodological approach in political science. Additionally, below there are four steps to help guide your initial selection and research.

*Suggested steps to begin this process*

1) Identify the budget constraints, procedures, and final decisions that occurred across multiple spending areas within a year.

2) Identify the motivation of any deviation from “regular order” and the context (economic and political) when it was considered. This can be done by reviewing the academic literature and looking into the legislative history of actions taken on a bill.

3) Hypothesize how aspects of the process influenced budget decisions that year. Then build out a justification for that view to develop a theory.

4) Examine whether the implementation of the law helped lawmakers achieve a specific goal. Additionally, present an analysis of what trade-off exists to create this outcome.
There are four assignments that contribute to the development of your project.

1) First, write a two page submission that identifies the cases and provides exploratory statement (Due on February 24, 2016). The exploratory statement should include steps one, two, and three above - as well as identify a plan for the case study examination (step four).

2) The case study project is due on March 30, 2016. Then on April 4, 2016 each case study will be distributed to a colleague for a peer assessment.

3) Each peer assessment and list of suggested revisions is due April 18, 2016.

4) The deadline for the submission of the revised case study with a description of the revisions made to improve the second draft is May 4, 2016.

For the case study analysis, there is no page requirement. Most papers are somewhere between 12 and 15 pages in length to explain what was found through all of the research collected on the different spending bills. Format for the paper should be typed, and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Reading your own work is helpful, as your grade will be penalized for grammatical and spelling errors, as well as omissions of important topics from the paper. Late submissions will lose 10 points for each day after the due date. Any plagiarism will result in a zero.

Texas Transparency Activity

The state of Texas takes extraordinary effort to make information about the budget available to the public. There are two specific resources that accomplish this effort 1) The Texas Legislative Budget Bureau, http://www.lbb.state.tx.us and 2) Texas Transparency from Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar. http://www.texastransparency.org/State_Finance/Spending.

Use these resources to examine and describe how state programs within a broader issue are prioritized in the state budget. Then in a one to two page memo to advocate for one advanced theory of budgeting to be used to evaluate the budget. An “A” paper use details and comparisons within the budget to describe a counter-factual of how the analysis chosen may change how the state prioritizes a particular program.

Reading your own work is helpful, as your grade will be penalized for grammatical and spelling errors, as well as omissions of important topics from the paper. Late submissions will lose 10 points for each day after the due date. Any plagiarism will result in a zero.

Short Biography

The class outlines how important the budget is as an informational document to organize decisions between the legislative and executive branches. However, by focusing on trends and long term impacts, we miss the politics and leadership that may exist at a more micro level. Conduct your own research to describe in detail the relevant contributions an individual at the federal or state level led to the innovation of decision-making on the budget. Then submit a two to three page double-spaced paper before March 3, 2015.

Examples of such individuals include – but are not limited to – Governor Greg Abbot, Senator William Allison (R-IA), Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), President Bill Clinton, Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX), Senator Edmund Muskie (D-ME), Robert McNamera, President Barack Obama, President Ronald Reagan, Alice Rivlin, President Theodore Roosevelt, or others...

Reading your own work is helpful, as your grade will be penalized for grammatical and spelling errors, as well as omissions of important topics from the paper. Late submissions will lose 10 points for each day after the due date. Any plagiarism will result in a zero.
Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Online meetings (x6)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-depth Discussions (x4)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Journals (x2)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (x4 at 25 points)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Process Explanation (before Mar 3)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Process Explanation (before May 3)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Project (4 parts)</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Biography (Mar 3)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Transparency Memo (Apr 15)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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Student Conduct

I have high expectations for each student in this class, which are based on your academic performance to get to this point and my belief that you will treat each of your fellow classmates with respect. My goal is to facilitate a supportive and engaging classroom for everyone and one part of that is eliminating disruptive behavior. I will allow computers in-class for note taking. However, it is unacceptable to use your cell phone or computer during class to chat, surf the web, talk, or text. Using technology in this way during class is distracting to others and demonstrates a lack of respect for the instructor.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The University of Texas at Tyler Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs will be strictly followed and can be found here at: [http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf](http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf). Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material—do not reference another student’s answers.

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will have a negative consequence on your classroom performance. In each instance a violation occurs, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment or the course, require work to be redone, and have you identify what the cause of the violation was. The matter will be referred to the Dean of Students if institutional action is necessary. Reference the rights and responsibilities of students: [http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php](http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php).

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at [http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar](http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar). Each semesters Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance:

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructors directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department,
or Fire Prevention Services.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is expected or permissible in this course or about academic integrity in general, please contact me.

Class Schedule

Jan 19-22 Getting Familiar with the Budget Process

Readings: Dauster 2008. Fiscal Challenges (Ch. 1).

Schick. 2007. Federal Budget (Ch. 1 & 2).


Task: 1) Log into Blackboard to view course

2) Get Zoom Account, important for future class meetings

3) One-on-One Meeting with Dr. Owens

Jan 25-29 What is at Stake in the Budgetary Process?


Block. 2009. Fiscal Challenges (Ch. 2).

Task: Discussion Board Dialogue #1

Feb 1-5 Groundhog Day: Designing a Budget Process

Readings: Schick. 2007. Federal Budget (Ch. 3 & 4).


Task: 1) Zoom Meeting with Class #1

2) Quiz #1

Feb 8-12 How are funds allocated on an annual basis?


Task: 1) Discussion Board Dialogue #2

1Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the Blackboard page.
Feb 15-19  
*Be my Valentine?: Presidential Leverage and Transparency in the Budget Process*

**Readings:**  
- Schick. 2007. *Federal Budget* (Ch. 5).  
- Garrett and Vermeule. 2008. *Fiscal Challenges* (Ch. 3).  

**Task:**  
1) Zoom Meeting with Class #2  
2) Two-Page Case Exploratory Statement Due

Feb 22-26  
*Shaping Particular Policy Outcomes for Presidential Allies*

**Readings:**  
- Kriner, Doug and Andrew Reeves. 2015. *Particularistic President.*  

**Task:**  
Reflection Journal #1

Feb 29-4  
*Congressional Spending and Budget Resolution*

**Readings:**  
- Schick. 2007. *Federal Budget* (Ch. 6 & 7).  
- Jackson. 2008. *Fiscal Challenges* (Ch. 6).  

**Task:**  
1) Short Biography Paper Due  
2) Deadline for First Process Explanation Brief  
3) Zoom Meeting with Class #3

Mar 7-11  
*Spring Break*

Mar 14-18  
*Constraints on What Can be Spent: Authorization and Politics of Agreement*

**Readings:**  
- Schick. 2008. *Federal Budget* (Ch. 8, 9, and 11).  

**Rec.**  
**Task:** Discussion Board Dialogue #3

**Mar 21-25**

**Topic:** Difficulties in Controlling the Purse

**Readings:**
Hanson, Peter. 2014. *Too Weak to Govern.*


**Task:**
1) Zoom Class Meeting #4
2) Reflection Journal #2

**Mar 28-1**

**Topic:** There is a Best Way to Budget: April Fool’s

**Readings:**


**Task:**
1) Case Study Due, *This is not to be a draft*
2) Discussion Board Dialogue #4

**Apr 4-8**

**Topic:** Fiscal Constraints at the State Level

**Readings:**
Musso, Graddy, and Grizard. *Fiscal Challenges* (Ch. 8).

Gordon. 2008. *Fiscal Challenges* (Ch. 9).

Kousser, McCubbins, and Rozga. 2008. *Fiscal Challenges* (Ch. 10).

**Task:**
1) Begin Peer-Review of Case Study
2) Zoom Class Meeting #5
3) Reflection Journal #3
4) Quiz #3

**Apr 11-15**

**Topic:** File your Taxes & the Texas Transparency Study

**Readings:**

**Task:** Texas Transparency Study
Apr 18-22  Financing Infrastructure


Task: 1) Peer-Revisions Due - Send to Dr. Owens

2) Quiz #4

Apr 25-29  Judicial Interpretation of Authority in Budget Policy

Readings:  Chapters 13 & 14. *Fiscal Challenges*


Task: Zoom Class Meeting #6

May 4  Turn in Revised Case Study of Annual Appropriations

Task: Final Deadline for Second Process Explanation Brief