

San José State University
Department of Economics
ECON 132 – Public Finance - Section 01, Fall 2025

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Patralekha (Pat) Ukil
Office Location:	DMH 131
Email:	patralekha.ukil@sjsu.edu
<u>Office Hours:</u>	<u>Tuesdays 1 – 3 pm PST (via Zoom)</u>
Class Days/Time:	Mon/Wed 3 – 4:15 pm
Classroom:	Dudley Moorhead Hall 166
Prerequisites:	ECON 1B

Course Description

From the SJSU course catalog: Microeconomics of the public sector, role of government in market systems, cost-benefit analysis, public choice theory, taxation, fiscal federalism, state, and local government sector.

The focus of this course is on understanding the microeconomic foundations of public sector involvement in an economy. Essentially, we will start with the question: “why does a market economy need a government?” We will use economic principles to understand the *reasons for* government involvement and intervention in a market economy and study the *impacts of* government expenditure programs and tax systems on the citizens’ behavior and welfare. We will be covering a wide range of theoretical issues relating to public finance with a specific focus on practical issues relating to education, social insurance, healthcare, and taxation.

Course Format

This course will follow an **in-person** format where there will be regular in-person classes held on Mondays and Wednesdays at the scheduled class time. This course will also utilize the [Canvas Learning Management System](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. All students will require a reliable internet connection and an electronic device for access to Canvas LMS. You can borrow laptops and other equipment from the MLK library. Please visit the library or this website: <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services>.

Lecture materials relevant to the course will also be posted on Canvas and you will also receive weekly notifications from me. ***Please make sure that you check your Canvas notifications regularly.***

Course Web Page and Canvas Messaging

All relevant course materials such as syllabus, additional readings, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any course updates.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Review and understand relevant economic concepts relating to government intervention in market economies and issues relating to government expenditure and revenue systems.
2. Identify and apply relevant microeconomic principles related to government involvement in a market economy to real-life case studies.
3. Understand and analyze public finance topics with a focus on U.S.-based social issues such as insurance, healthcare, taxation and education, etc.

Required Readings

Recommended textbook: *Public Finance and Public Policy, 7th edition, Jonathan Gruber, Macmillan.*

Lecture slides, additional materials, articles and other reading materials will also be posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practical. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

The course grading/assessment will be based on the following:

1. Quizzes assigned regularly on Canvas
2. One midterm examination (may include both multiple-choice and short answer-type Qs)
3. 2 - 3 homework assignments (take-home problem sets)
4. One final exam (as per the SJSU Final Exams schedule)
5. Participation in all class discussions, or via any questions, surveys, or discussions posted online in Canvas

Late policy on exams, quizzes and homework assignments:

- **There will be no extensions allowed on the midterm and the final examination.**
- **You will receive ample time to submit the quizzes and homework assignments**, and you will also get a 48-hour (2-day) grace period on these assignments.
However, there will be a fixed 30% grade penalty for any submission after the 2-days/48 hours have passed from the assignment deadline.
- **If you have a medical emergency/extenuating circumstance, please contact me at the earliest opportunity to discuss any extensions with the necessary documentation.**

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final evaluation for this course will be a final examination taking place during the Final Examinations week as per the SJSU Fall 2025 schedule, which will be the culminating activity based on the course material covered in the semester. Details regarding the final exam will be announced ahead of time in class and on Canvas.

Grading Information

Course grades will be as follows: **Please remember that the final score that shows on your Canvas grades section may not reflect your actual final course grade. Your final grade depends on the following information:**

Problem Sets:	15%
Quizzes:	25%
Midterm Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	30%
Participation:	5%

Grade	Percentage
A plus	98 to 100%
A	94 to 97%
A minus	90 to 93%
B plus	86 to 89 %
B	83 to 85%
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	76 to 79%
C	73 to 75%
C minus	70 to 72%
D plus	66 to 69%
D	63 to 65%
D minus	60 to 62%

Office hours/emails information

I will hold weekly office hours via Zoom. If you wish to set up a meeting with me outside of office hours or on campus, please send me an email. **I also welcome you to submit any questions or doubts via email if you prefer.** I generally respond to emails/messages within 1-2 days.

Strategies for Success in this course:

1. I will set up the weekly lectures to be as comprehensible as possible, **but if you can't understand something, please let me know as soon as possible.**
2. Completing the assignments on Canvas will benefit you a lot to prepare for the midterm exam and the final exam.
3. **The expectation from me is that you will attend classes, review the lecture materials and the readings for each week, let me know if you have any questions/doubts, and then complete the necessary assignments on time.**

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

I will follow the [SJSU policy regarding academic integrity](#) and honesty, and will take it very seriously. Please read and understand what constitutes a violation in this respect and all instances of academic dishonesty will be reported by me.

Please come and talk to me as soon as you can if you are in need of any course changes, adaptations or any accommodations due to a disability. According to the [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\)](#) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following university policies:

- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>)
- [University Attendance and Participation Policy F15-12](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>)
- [University Grading System Policy F18-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf>)

You may also find the following information useful:

- [SJSU Cares](#)
- [The SJSU Food Pantry Program](#)
- [SJSU Counseling](#)
- [SJSU Learn Anywhere](#)

You may also find the following information useful:

- SJSU Cares: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/>
- The SJSU Food Pantry Program: <https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/spartan-food-pantry/index.html>
- SJSU Counseling: <https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/>
- SJSU Learn Anywhere: <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/>

ECON 132 – Fall 2025 Course Schedule

This is the **tentative schedule** for the course and is subject to change.

If any changes must be made to the syllabus, those changes will be communicated to all students on Canvas. Timely notice and consideration will be provided to all students if any changes need to be made.

Course Schedule

Week	Classes on	Topics	Notes
1	8/20	Introduction to the course and syllabus	
2	8/25; 8/27	Introduction to Public Economics (The Four Questions of Public Finance)	
3	9/1; 9/3	Introduction to Equilibrium and Social Welfare	
4	9/8; 9/10	Externality Theory – Part 1	
5	9/15; 9/17	Externality Theory – Part 1 (contd.)	
6	9/22; 9/24	Externality Theory – Part 2	
7	9/29; 10/1	Economics of Addictive Behavior (Health Externalities)	
8	10/6; 10/8	Theory of Public Goods - Part 1	
9	10/13; 10/15	Public Goods – Part 1 (contd.)	
10	10/20; 10/22	Public Goods - Part 2: Education in the U.S.	Midterm exam this week
11	10/27; 10/29	Social Insurance - Part 1	
12	11/3; 11/5	Social Insurance & Moral Hazard	

Week	Classes on	Topics	Notes
13	11/10; 11/12	Health Insurance Theory and Concepts	
14	11/17; 11/19	Healthcare in the United States	
15	11/24	Thanksgiving Break	
16	12/1; 12/3	Introduction to Taxation Tax Incidence: Equity Implications	
17	12/8	Topics in Taxation (contd.)	Final exam on 12/12/2025

SJSU Land Acknowledgement:

San José State University and Surrounding Region Thámien Ancestral Muwekma Ohlone Territory.

The San José State University community recognizes that the present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 550, is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Santa Clara, San José, and Dolores, during the advent of the Hispano- European empire into Alta California; and who are the successors and living members of the sovereign, historic, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County.

Furthermore, the San José State University community recognizes that the university is established within the Thámien Ohlone-speaking tribal ethnohistoric territory, which based upon the unratified federal treaties of 1851-1852, includes the unceded ancestral lands of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. Some of the enrolled Muwekma lineages are descended from direct ancestors from the Thámien Ohlone tribal territory whose ancestors had affiliation with Mission Santa Clara.

The San José State University community also recognizes the importance of this land to the indigenous Muwekma Ohlone people of this region, and consistent with our principles of community and diversity strives to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe whose land we occupy.