Class meeting: Monday 1:00pm to 3:50pm  
Location: Chilton Hall Room 220  
Class number: 14396

Instructor: Yu (Kelly) Shi, Ph.D.  
Email: yu.shi@unt.edu  
Office: Room 204N, Chilton Hall  
Office phone: 940-369-7248  
Office hours: Monday from 4-5pm (in person) or by appointments (remote)

Course Overview and Objectives:

This PhD level seminar will introduce students to theories and empirical research on the subject of government administration, intergovernmental fiscal relations, and financial management of state and local governments. This is a very broad area of research with theoretical bases in the fields of public administration, management, finance, and political science. Within public administration and finance, this subject encompasses a wide range of topics with diverse but overlapping emphases in the following areas: 1) technical & task oriented (e.g. reporting, accounting); 2) management (e.g. budgeting and financial planning,); 3) governance (e.g. institutions, accountability, politics and process) 4) finance (e.g. taxation and spending, debt, fiscal federalism). This course will focus on management areas of the subject with particular attention to spheres of overlap with the finance area.  

This is a doctoral seminar with the central aim of acquainting students with the primary research questions and foci in many of the areas of the subject matter. Students will examine these issues according to different theoretical approaches relevant to public administration, and from both descriptive (how do we manage finances and what explains actual practices and outcomes) and normative contexts (how should we manage public finances).

The normative context is somewhat unique to public administration relative to other fields, although economics often assesses outcomes according to normative criteria such as equity or efficiency. The primary unit of analysis (and application) of class material will be local governments, but state and federal governments also are examined. Students will come to appreciate both the insights and limitations of the different theoretical approaches, they will see how these perspectives are applied in empirical research, and they will explore the implications of theory and research to the understanding and practice of financial management and fiscal policy making. Students also will think about how to apply these theories and knowledge to their own research interests, and how to build on existing empirical research to generate publishable research in the field of public and financial management.
This class is designated for students in the public/urban/financial management specialization and is meant to help prepare you for the Ph.D. comprehensive exam in the area and to strengthen the research and teaching trainings in the doctoral program. However, you should keep in mind that the topics covered here are not exhaustive of all those represented in the area or on which students are likely to be tested. The instructor realizes this is a very ambitious reading list, but it is also meant to be a list of important works and classic research in some areas covered here.

By the end of the course students should accomplish the following:

- Have an understanding of the parameters and boundaries of the examination field.
- Be able to read empirical research critically and identify the main research design components.
- Have an understanding of the primary knowledge claims, research questions, and areas of theoretical uncertainty in the different bodies of research examined in the course.
- Be able to compose and write logical and meaningful arguments about an area or issue of knowledge and research from a set of literature in a short space and time frame.

*Perquisite:* PADM 6010 and PADM 6015.

**Required Reading Materials:**

Students are responsible for locating journal articles using library resources. It is an important practice to find the journals and journal articles that might be relevant to your research interests or future dissertation and/or other research projects. If you need help from the UNT librarian to locate articles or books. Students can contact Jennifer Rowe via Jennifer.Rowe@unt.edu.

**Course Expectations, Requirements and Grading:**

Students should be familiar with public administration history and public organization theory before taking this seminar. The class session will be interactive, and delivery will comprise of individual presentations and class discussion. Each student will be expected to take responsibility for leading class discussions on selected topics and completing scholarly writing.

Creating an active learning environment is an important goal for this class. Students will be expected to actively participate in the discussion. Such expectation is based on the belief that you will learn more effectively by managing your own tasks and organizing your own thoughts. Your active participation thus will make the class interesting and beneficial to everyone as we learn from each other.

Moreover, reading, writing, and reviewing journal articles is an essential component of academic life. Thus, students will be expected to find and do all the readings and come prepared to class to discuss the issues that will be covered in the seminar papers and reading materials that are critical for understanding reported empirical research and explaining and discussing research to peers and readers.
This PhD level seminar has the following academic assignments:

1. **Exams (25%)**: There is a final exam for this course. Essay questions and formats will be similar to PhD comprehensive exams. More details will be provided in the review session.

2. **Research Presentations and Discussion (20%)**: Each student will present 2 journal articles. Your presentation should take no more than 15 minutes and should not be read, by assuming this is a conference presentation. The presentation should explain why the research is important theoretically and what it contributes to our understanding of the events it is studying. You presentation should also identify the 7 items below that are critical for understanding empirical research and comment on the clarity, relevance, and limitations of these items. In fact, all students should learn to identify the items below for each empirical research article they read in the future. During/After the presentation, 2 discussion questions should be prepared for class discussion.

   a) Research question (s), contributions
   b) Unit of analysis
   c) Dependent variables, independent variables
   d) Research design
   e) Population and sample
   f) Statistical methodology and data
   g) Research findings, implications, and limitation

3. **Seminar Papers (50%)**: PhD Students will be required to complete 5 short seminar papers (no more than 8 pages, reference included). Each paper should address 1 theoretical issue and 1 empirical issue by focusing on the following:

   a) What do we know from this body of theoretical or empirical literature and research about the phenomena being examined (e.g. what do we know about government responses to fiscal stress and budgeting reform)? Be specific about the phenomena and explain clearly why this is an important topic to be examined.
   
   b) What don’t we know about these phenomena that we should know (according to theory and / or informed judgement of professionals)? Or any weaknesses/criticism you have?
   
   c) Based on #1 and #2, what questions or issues should future research focus on in order to answer these unanswered questions? In other words, what research questions would be most “productive” for knowledge in the field based on your answers to questions #1 and #2?

Essays do not need to tackle the complete body of research or all topics we discuss in class. Rather, your answers can focus on one or two subsets of related research within the material covered each week. An acceptable essay must go beyond mere description of factual information, and will integrate research findings and arguments from various sources and perspectives, including class discussion and your own assessments. In other words, do not just
list descriptive or factual information on the topic. In addition to the reading materials in the course, students can include additional journal articles or books in the essay.

Your essay will be graded based on the quality of the analysis and assessments, the clarity of concepts and arguments, the organization and presentation of the essays and adequate usage of existing literature, the coherence of the essay, the grammar and spelling. Double-spaced, 12-point font, typewritten pages with New Times Roman.

4. Class Attendance and Participation (5%): Given that PhD course is a discussion-centered and small group-based seminar, class attendance and participation into class discussion is important. Most of the students are active learners and learn best when they can actively engage and discuss the material. The more you participate, the more engaging and interesting the class will be. Your opinions and experiences matter so please share with the class. However, students who have more than 2 consecutive absences without any legitimate reasons or clear communications with the instructors will receive message from the UNT Eagle Alert. Consecutive absence without communications will affect the students’ final grade.

Final grades are based on total percent received in the course, which is the same as a weighted average if all assignments were grades on a scale of 0 - 100. Please note that I do not give letter grades on individual assignments or exams. I give a numerical score for each course element during the semester and assign letter grades based on a weighted sum of the numerical scores. I also reserve the right to base final grades on a “curve” rather than use the standard scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted numerical score of</th>
<th>Letter grade in the course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90.00% or above</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.00 % to 89.99%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>70.00 % to 79.99 %</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>60.00 % to 69.99 %</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 59.99 %</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Policies

Class Participation and Attendance Requirement

All classroom instruction will return to pre-COVID activities. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the class. This is an in-person class, so that Zoom recording is not provided.

If you are absent from the class or will miss a class, please ensure that you communicate with the instructor clearly before the class or as soon as possible (email is preferred).

Incompletes, Late Homework, and Extra Work

In most cases, the instructor does not allow students to do extra work (i.e., an additional paper) to improve their grade in the course. Late homework will be penalized unless the student has a legitimate excuse or crisis causing the delay in completing work (i.e., illness, family death). Also, I will only grant
incompletes or extension to students who have legitimate excuses or crises and who make requests prior to the end of the course.

Where an extension is not granted or work is submitted late without a request being made **before the deadline**, points will be deducted as follows:
- Up to 24 hours late, loss of 1% of the graded score
- Over 24 hours late and up to 2 days late, loss of 5% of the graded score
- Over 3 days late and up to 7 days late, loss of 10% of the graded score
- Over 7 days late and up to 14 days late, loss of 20% of the graded score
- After 14 days, the assignment will not be accepted for marking and you will be recorded as having failed to submit the item of assessment.

**Canvas**

Canvas is a primary source of teaching and reading materials, and means of communication between you and the instructor for this course. The URL for our Canvas log in page is: [https://unt.instructure.com/](https://unt.instructure.com/).

You will find the course syllabus, reading materials, exams, assignments on the Canvas site. You will submit project assignment, and other due assignments to the Canvas.

More importantly, students are expected to check Canvas and their UNT emails frequently for course announcements, course materials, and assignment feedback as well as messages from the instructor. Plus, all new students should get a UNT computer account the first week of the class. If you need support or have any related questions, you can find information posted online here [https://clear.unt.edu/services/lms-support](https://clear.unt.edu/services/lms-support).

**Original Work and Plagiarism**

Unless explicitly assigned to work in groups, all students are expected to work independently. The assignments and exams should be the student’s own work. Working together where it is clearly indicated is entirely appropriate, but if you are preparing a written product that will be submitted for evaluation, that product is expected to be the result of your work alone. Where questionable situations arise, always ask the instructor for clarification.

Students must cite their sources where relevant, and plagiarism will be not tolerated and will be penalized severely at UNT. You could also find information from the following website that defines academic dishonesty and available penalties: [https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf)

**The Learning Environment**

The instructor is strongly committed to maintaining a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Please respect your instructor and your fellow students. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such an environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

**Department Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

The Department of Public Administration believes in the fundamental principles of life, liberty, equality, equity, and in doing good to all people as we serve our students and the public interest.
- We believe in the importance of diversity and inclusion
- We believe in fairness and equity for all faculty and students in and out of class
- We believe in mutual respect and civility for all students and faculty
- We believe that faculty and students have a right to a redress of grievances
- We believe that students and faculty should be actively engaged in good works

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.deanofstudents.unt.edu

Policy on Cell Phone and Laptop in the Classroom

The classroom setting at an institution of higher learning is intended to serve as a venue that permits the transfer of knowledge and facilitates the sharing of ideas. As such, it is imperative that any distractions from these stated objectives be avoided and kept to a minimum. Potential disruptions include modern electronic devices such as laptop computers and cell phones.

Students are allowed to take notes on personal laptop computers and computers in the classroom to enhance the learning process, but they should not activate their internet browsers during class or use computers for non-academic purposes (as this diverts attention from the lecture/discussion for both the student using it and others nearby). Students should also avoid using cell phones to search the Internet or text while class is in session. Please silence your phones. Exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of the faculty only and may occur if searching the Internet is necessary to find additional information or facts related to the subject being covered on that particular day.

Participation by Students with Disabilities

The Department of Public Administration, in cooperation with the Office of Disability Access (ODA), complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should log into Accessible Information Management (or AIM), which is an online system where students can log in and access ODA services using their UNT log in credentials. It is the student’s responsibility to request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE, and then ODA will email your LOAs to your instructor.

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)

SPOT is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Once the SPOT becomes available via your my.unt.edu portal, please complete the survey as it will help in every effort to improve the instructor’s teaching skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>08/29</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>CV due by 09/09</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>09/05</td>
<td>Labor Day, University Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>09/12</td>
<td>Fiscal Health Indicators and Financial Condition Concepts</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>09/19</td>
<td>Research on Measures, Criticism, and Financial Reports</td>
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<td>Norma</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>09/26</td>
<td>Cut Back Management Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>John</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/03</td>
<td>Fiscal Crisis Research</td>
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<td>Ojonugwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Fiscal Rules, Tax and Expenditure Limitations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edmund</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>Fiscal Slack, Rainey Day Fund and Stabilizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeanne</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Revenue Volatility and Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edmund</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Fiscal Illusion and Complexity</td>
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<td>Ojonugwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Fiscal Decentralization and Fragmentation, Competition</td>
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<td>Norma</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>Budgeting and Organization Theories</td>
<td>Essay 4 due by 11/18</td>
<td>John</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Budgeting and Bureaucracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/05</td>
<td>Exam Preparation</td>
<td>Essay 5 due by 12/02</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Note: CV and essays must be submitted to Canvas by 4 pm on the due day.
Detailed Course Outline

**WEEK 1: 8/29  Introduction to the Course**

No reading requirement for week 1

Highly Recommended Books for Students in the Public Financial Management Concentration


This is the book recommended for students who need to be familiar with the federal system of government in this country.


Required Reading (quick review of the field):


1. **MEASURING FINANCIAL CONDITION / FISCAL HEALTH AND POLICY**

**WEEK 3: 9/12  Fiscal Health Indicators and Financial Condition Concepts**


*Students need to learn how to read comprehensive annual financial reports for state and local governments.

NOTE: Articles with @ can be used for research presentations.

WEEK 4: 9/19 Fiscal Solvency, Research and Criticism


Seminar Paper #1 on material covered in weeks 3 - 4. DUE 9/30 (Friday)

2. CUT BACK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO FISCAL STRESS

WEEK 5: 9/26 Cut Back Management Theory and Fiscal Stress


WEEK 6: 10/3  Fiscal Crisis and Threats


*Students will learn how to collect fiscal responses data for state and local governments.

Seminar Paper #2 on material covered in weeks 5 - 6. DUE 10/14 (Friday)

3. FISCAL RULES, STRUCTURE AND FISCAL ILLUSION

WEEK 7: 10/10  Fiscal Rules and TELs


WEEK 8: 10/17 Fiscal Stabilization, Slack, and Rainey Day Fund

STATE LEVEL


LOCAL LEVEL


*Students will learn how to find rainy day fund data at the state level and how to calculate fiscal slack data for local governments.

WEEK 9: 10/24 Revenue Volatility and Fiscal Structure


REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION


*Students will learn how to measure and calculate revenue diversification.*

**WEEK 10 : 10/31 Fiscal Illusion, Complexity and Information**


**FISCAL ILLUSION**


**SEMINAR PAPER #3 on material covered in weeks 7-10. DUE ON 11/04 (Friday)**
4. FISCAL FEDERALISM AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MANAGEMENT

WEEK 11: 11/07. FISCAL FEDERALISM THEORY


FLYPAPER AND GRANTS


*Students need to understand the flypaper effect and its equation.

WEEK 12: 11/14 FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION- CENTRALIZATION


EMPIRICAL RESEARCH- Reviews


EMPIRICAL RESEARCH


*Students need to understand total, horizontal and vertical dimensions of decentralization and fragmentation.

SEMINAR PAPER #4 on material covered in weeks 11-12. DUE ON 11/18 (Friday).

5. BUDGETING AND THEORY

WEEK 13: 11/21 BUDGETING


PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM

National Level


State and Local Level


**WEEK 14: 11/28. BUDGETING AND BUREAUCRACY**


PC/PA/TC MODELS AND RESEARCH: The Contract and Principal-Agent


SEMINAR PAPER #5 on material covered in weeks 13 – 14. DUE 12/02 (Friday)