Instructor: Yu (Kelly) Shi, Ph.D.
Email: yu.shi@unt.edu
Zoom link: https://unt.zoom.us/my/yushi
Office: Room 204N, Chilton Hall
Office hours: Virtual meetings by email appointment only

Course Statement and Goals

This PhD level seminar will introduce students to theories and empirical research on the subject of government financial administration. This is a very broad area of research with theoretical bases in the fields of public finance, political science, management, and accounting. Within public administration, 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, auditing); 2) management (e.g. budgeting and financial planning); 3) governance (e.g. institutions, accountability, politics and process) 4) finance (e.g. taxation and spending, economic development, debt, fiscal federalism). This course will focus on budgeting and management areas of the subject with particular attention to spheres of overlap with the finance area.

This is a readings course 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 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 financial management.

This class is designated for student in the 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 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. I realize this is
a very ambitious reading list, but it is also meant to be a comprehensive bibliography 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.

Course Requirements

There are no prerequisites for this course, but students should be familiar with microeconomic theory, fundamental organizational theories, governing and financial structures of governments in the US, and the practical aspects of budgeting and financial management (e.g. how a budget is constructed and governmental fund structure).

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 the following items that are critical for understanding reported empirical research and explaining and presenting research to readers. If you need help from the UNT librarian to locate articles or books. You can contact Jennifer Rowe via Jennifer.Rowe@unt.edu.

All assignments must be sent to the instructor’s email (yu.shi@unt.edu) by 9pm on the due day.

PhD seminar papers (60%): PhD Students will be required to complete 4 short seminar papers (no more than 8 pages) that address three issues from a designated body of literature. These issues are:

1) What do we know from this from this body of literature and research about the phenomena being examined (e.g. what do we know about government responses to fiscal stress and budgeting reform)?
2) What don’t we know about these phenomena that we should know (according to theory and / or informed judgement of professionals)?
3) 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?

Your papers do not need to tackle the complete body of research or all topics we discuss in class. Rather, your answers can focus on one subset of related research within the material covered each week.

Presentations (40%): Each student will also be responsible for presenting four empirical research articles by using PPT slides throughout the semester. Your presentation video should take no more than 15 minutes and should not be read. Your presentation should explain why the research is important theoretically and what it contributes to our understanding of the events it is studying. Your presentation should also identify the six 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.

1) Research question (s)
2) Unit of analysis
3) Dependent variables
4) Research design
5) Population and sample
6) Statistical methodology and data

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.

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<th>Weighted numerical score of</th>
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<td>Less than 59.99 %</td>
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Course Technology & Skills

Minimum technology requirements when studying remotely:
- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Microsoft Office Software (CloudLab at UNT allows you to remote access to UNT’s physical computer labs and virtual labs over the internet)

Computer skills & digital literacy
- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs (e.g., excels)
- Using presentation and graphics programs

Technical assistance at UNT
Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

University Information Technology (UIT) Help Desk: UIT Student Help Desk site (https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk), Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
DETAIL COURSE OUTLINE AND READING

@ Article to be presented by students.

WEEK 1
INTRODUCTION TO COURSE
All of you should also be familiar with the federal system of government in this country. If not, you should purchase a good text on state and local government such as:

GOOD REVIEWS OF FIELD

WEEK 2
FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS
FEDERAL

STATE

LOCAL

LOCAL, HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:
Hendrick, Rebecca. Managing the Fiscal Metropolis, Chapters 5 & 6.

WEEKS 3 & 4
THEORETICAL BASIS.


REVIEWS AND SUMMARIES


EMPIRICAL RESEARCH


PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM-

National Level


State and Local Level


WEEKS 5&6: PC/PA/TC models are applied to other areas of research in financial management and subfields in public administration

PC/PA/TC MODELS AND RESEARCH: Niskanen and Strategic Position


PC/PA/TC MODELS AND RESEARCH: The Contract


WEEKS 7&8: GENERAL PERSPECTIVES


FEDERAL


STATE AND LOCAL


INTERNATIONAL


*PRESENTATION VIEDO #2 Due 10/12 (Monday)*

**SEMINAR PAPER #2 on material covered in weeks 5 -8. DUE 10/19 (Monday)**

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

WEEK 9: COMPLEXITY, INFORMATION, AND FISCAL ILLUSION


WEEK 10

BASIC CONCEPTS: Review of measurement in general and measurement specific to financial management practice and research


WEEK 11

MEASURES IN DETAIL: These indices and measures provide a basis for measuring concepts and variables in empirical research in the field.

Policy (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University): Chapter 1 (National Trends and Fiscal Health of Cities), Chapter 2 (Economic Health and Economic Structure), Chapter 3 (Revenue Raising Capacity), Chapter 4 (Public Service Costs and Standardized Expenditure Need), Chapter 5 (Standardized Fiscal Health).


*PRESENTATION VIEDO #3 Due 11/09 (Monday)*

**SEMINAR PAPER #3 on material covered in weeks 9-11. DUE 11/16 (Friday)**

**WEEK 12**


**WEEKS 13&15**

**EARLY RESEARCH:** please review


**CURRENT CONTEXT**


**LATER RESEARCH AND CURRENT FISCAL THREATS:** (much of this literature is descriptive and normative)


*PRESENTATION VIEDO #4 Due 11/23 (Monday)*

**SEMINAR PAPER #4 on material covered in weeks 12-15. DUE 12/07 (Friday)**
Course Expectations

General Policy
The instructor will not check the weekly attendance given that this course is a remote one. However, students are required to do required readings and submit assignments on time.

COVID-19 Impact on Attendance
It is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to submit assignments on time because you are ill due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Withdrawals
Students have the right to withdraw from courses. Please note the dates on the academic calendar regarding drop dates. The earlier you drop a course, the more refund that you will receive. I urge you to maintain your commitment to this course, however, if you decide to withdraw, please recognize that it is to your benefit to do so as early as possible.

Course Policies

Canvas
Canvas is a primary source of additional reading materials, and means of communication between you and the instructor for this course. You will use the same credentials to log in to Canvas as they did for Blackboard. The URL for our Canvas log in page is: https://unt.instructure.com/

You will find the course syllabus on the Canvas site. You will submit your assignments and presentation video to the Canvas. More importantly, students are expected to check Canvas and their UNT emails frequently for course announcements and materials. 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.

Original Work and Plagiarism
Unless explicitly assigned to work in groups, all students are expected to work independently. The project, exams, and exercises 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. Also, students must cite their sources where relevant, and plagiarism will be not tolerated and will be penalized severely at UNT. Please read MPA handbook for
more information. 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

Incompletes, late homework, and extra work
All extension requests need to be reviewed and approved by the instructor under the COVID-19. In most cases, I do not allow students do extra work (i.e. an additional paper) to improve their grade in the course. This is not fair to other students who are not given the same opportunity. 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. This is the late policy for this course: You will lose 5% of your total score if you submit within 24 hours after the deadline. You will lose 10% of your total score if you submit between 24 hours and 48 hours after the deadline. Your assignment will not be accepted beyond 48 hours of the deadline with no legitimate reasons.

University Policies

ADA Policy
UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first go to the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) website (https://disability.unt.edu/) to verify their eligibility and read information. You can request the letter of Accommodation online and ODA will mail your LOAs to the instructor. Students should use AIM Student Portal to complete this request process. Under COVID-19, ODA provides the following links to information about COVID-19 accommodations, https://disability.unt.edu/sites/default/files/Student%20Information%20-%20How%20To%20Make%20COVID%20Requests%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault
UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

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.