

PUAD 662 NATIONAL BUDGETING PROCESS

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, SCHAR SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT

Fall 2025: August 25 – December 9, 2025

Monday, 1:30-4:10 pm

Room Arlington: Van Metre Hall 466

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Pavord

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Course Objectives: This course will enable students to:

- understand the constitutional, political and economic context in which the budget of the United States is formulated, appropriated, and executed,
- understand the roles of the principal institutions that participate in the Federal budget process,
- describe the actions taken during each phase of the federal budget process,
- understand the debate over reforming the Federal budget process,
- know where to find authoritative guidance for budget processes, terms, and concepts,
- demonstrate in a job interview for a public policy position that they understand how the Federal budget process impacts public policy, and
- demonstrate in a job interview that they have the knowledge about the Federal Budget process required to succeed as a budget analyst.

Grading:

- ***Budget Memos (40 points-20 for each memo).*** Budget memo topics are listed below for selected weeks. Specific instructions for each memo will be distributed in class. Students are required to complete at least two memos of their choice during the semester. Students may choose to complete more than two memos in which case their grade will be based on the two highest graded memos. If a student is unhappy with a grade for a memo, they can simply drop that grade by doing another memo. The length of the memos will be 3-5 pages, single space, 12-point font. Students may request extensions for due dates. Requests will be approved.
- ***Student Discussion Question Presentation (20 points, 10 for each presentation).*** The syllabus lists discussion questions for each week. Each week at least two students will make presentations, one on each side of the issue. Students will also submit a “talking point” memo with at least five bullet points. The memo is due at the beginning of the class during which the presentation will be made. It may be submitted by email or by paper. A bullet point is a one or two sentence statement that provides support for the argument that the student is presenting. Students will receive up to 5 points for each presentation, one point for each acceptable talking point.
- ***Final Policy Memo (40 points).*** Students will submit a policy memo in which they present their ideas for reforming the Federal budget process. Detailed instructions for the final memo will be provided at a later date.

Grading Scale:

- *A+: 101 or more points*
- *A: 93-100 points*
- *A-: 90-92 points*
- *B+: 88-89 points*
- *B: 83-87 points*
- *B-: 80-82 points*
- *C+: 78-79 points*
- *C: 73-77 points*
- *C-: 70-72 points*
- *D: 60-69 points*
- *F: 0-59 points*

Class Absences: I understand that work, family, or other issues may cause you to miss class. You do not need to ask permission to be excused from class. I do appreciate an email notifying me that you will miss class. If you need additional accommodation beyond this, please contact me. I will work with you.

Due Dates: If you have issues meeting due dates for memo assignments, please contact me. I will work with you to find a due date that meets your needs. Please understand that I have very limited flexibility to adjust the due date for the final due to the requirement to submit grades.

Meeting with students: I am available to meet with students at a mutually convenient time, either in person or virtually. Do not feel that asking for a meeting is somehow imposing on my time. I enjoy talking to students about the Federal budget, so feel free to contact me to arrange a meeting.

Assigned Readings: I have chosen assigned readings to help you prepare for each week's lecture. You will learn more from lectures if you do the assigned reading prior to class. Many of the readings are CRS reports which include useful summaries. Most reading materials are available from the GMU library. I encourage you to purchase two books:

Stephanie Kelton, *The Deficit Myth*, (New York: Hachette, 2020)

Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much is Enough?*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2005)

Used copies are available from online book sellers.

Academic Standards

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. [The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures here.](#) Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct** (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the "Complainant") will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential employees in [Student Support & Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), Counseling and [Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).