

ECO 5533

Randall Holcombe

Public Choice

Spring 2018

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday 2:00 - 3:00, or by appointment.
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COURSE OBJECTIVES: (1) To see how economic theory can be used to understand the way that the government makes decisions and allocates resources. (2) To become familiar enough with a body of literature that it can be used as a foundation for original scholarly research. (3) To work on effectively organizing and developing original ideas, and presenting them in writing.

GRADING: Final grades will be based on seven short papers and a take-home final examination. Each paper will be worth ten percent of the final grade and the final examination will be worth thirty percent.

PAPERS: Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and should be brief developments of original ideas on the assigned topics. Papers are not meant to be quizzes or overviews of an entire area, but rather, your original ideas, developing a theme related to the assigned topic. Ideally, these ideas could be developed into a research paper suitable for publication in an academic journal. The purpose of the paper assignments is, first, to provide an incentive to give thoughtful attention to the topic, and second, to give you practice in developing and presenting your ideas in written form.

PAPER TOPICS AND DUE DATES:

Jan 25: Government Failure
Feb 8: Economic Models of Voting.
Feb 22: Stability in Government.
Mar 8: The Political Marketplace.
Mar 22: Constitutional Rules.
Apr 5: Taxation in Theory and in Practice.
Apr 19 Political Institutions and Prosperity.

HONOR CODE: You are expected to write your own papers and write your own final examination. You may discuss the paper topics and the final examination questions with your classmates, and may share resources such as books and articles.

READING LIST: The reading list is intended as a guide to some relevant literature. You are not expected to read everything on the list. I will discuss assigned and recommended readings with you in class.

DISABLED STUDENTS: Students with disabilities requesting academic accommodations should register with the Student Disability Resource Center, and provide a letter from SDRC indicating what accommodations are requested.