





Economics (ECON) 380

Public Finance/Expenditure (Revision 3)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online 

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Applied Studies (Business and Administrative Studies) or Social Science. ECON 380 can be used to fulfill the Applied Studies (Business and Administrative Studies) area of study by credential students only.

Prerequisites:

ECON 247 or equivalent

Precluded:

None

Challenge:

ECON 380 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty:

Faculty of Business 


Overview

This course discusses the basic economics tools required to evaluate government policies for expenditures on health care, public pensions, Employment Insurance, education, and social welfare programs. The course has been divided into two parts. The first part (units 1–3; lessons 1–8) addresses the common causes of market failure as well as the ways in which government can intervene to correct such failures. Emphasis is placed on the theory of public choice, cost-benefit analysis, externalities, and income distribution. The second part of the course (units 4–5; lessons 9–13) addresses how the tools discussed in the first part can be applied to evaluate social insurance and social welfare policies.

Outline

- Unit 1: The Meaning of Public Finance
- Unit 2: Market Failure and Income Redistribution Implications of Public Policy
- Unit 3: Political Economy
- Unit 4: Social Insurance Program Expenditures (Health Care, Employment Insurance, and Public Pensions)
- Unit 5: Social Welfare and Education Programs


Evaluation

Your final grade in *ECON 380* will be based on three quizzes, two written assignments, an essay assignment with online discussion activities, and the Final Examination. To receive credit for this course, you must achieve an overall course grade of 50 percent. In addition, you must achieve a grade of at least a **D (50 percent)**  on the Final Examination.

Completing the quizzes, assignments, and online discussion is not required in order to pass the course. However, these activities have been designed to help you prepare for the examination. Students who choose not to complete the assignments often experience difficulties with the examination. Keep in mind that if you fail to participate in the online discussion or submit an assignment or quiz before your contract date, you will receive a grade of nil for that activity.

The following table summarizes the weight that will be applied to each assessment activity in determining your final grade.

Activity	Weight
Quiz 1	5%
Quiz 2	5%
Quiz 3	5%
Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3 Online Discussion	10%
Final Exam	55%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#)  section of the Calendar.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Rosen, H. S., Wen, J-F., & Snoddon, T. (2016). *Public finance in Canada* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill Ryerson. ISBN: 9781259030772

Other Resources

All other learning resources will be available online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the *ECON 380* challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least D (50 percent) on the examination.



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › **Academic advising** [↗](#)
- › **Program planning** [↗](#)
- › **Request assistance** [↗](#)
- › **Support services at AU** [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Updated September 9, 2025

View **previous revision** 
