

San Jose State University
Department of Economics

Dr. Tom Means
Spring 2020

Economics 133 Public Choice Economics

Office: 138DMH

Phone: 924-5414(office) 924-5400(dept.)

Email: tom.means@sjsu.edu

Faculty

Webpage: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/tom.means/>

Office

Hours: MW 12:00– 1:15pm, and by appointment

Add/

Drops: You are responsible for all University and Department guidelines regarding the adding and dropping of a class. Please consult the SCHEDULE OF CLASSES.

Text:

Public Sector Economics: The Role of Government in the American Economy
Randall Holcombe, 6th ed., Pearson, 2006

Student

Learning

Objectives:

- 9 Learn the basic differences between private and public institutions
- 9 Learn basic approaches to government production.
- 9 Learn basics of collective/political decision making
- 9 Learn basics of rent seeking and special interest groups
- 9 Learn basic economic analysis of local government policies

Course

Info: This is an introductory upper division course in Public Choice Theory. The course will focus on political institutions, voting, rent seeking, special interests, legislative and judicial decision making, bureaucracy, and the provision of government services. Public Choice Theory approaches decision making similar to the approach of decision making

interest or purposeful behavior. A prerequisite for this course is a principles course in microeconomics. You must be able to apply basic economic tools to analyze policies promoted by government bureaucrats and special interest groups.

I served in local government for the city of Mountain View for over 15 years. I served two 4 year terms on the City Council (Mayor in 2008), six years as a Parks and Recreation Commissioner, and served on the Rental Housing Commission. As a result of my local government experience, Economics 133 will be based on public choice theory with special emphasis on local government.

Attendance in class is highly recommended since lecture material will go into more depth than the text. Lecture material will also be emphasized on the exams and some lecture material is not in the text. If you are having problems with the course material, please see me early on in the course. I might be able to help you achieve better results if I know of your problem soon enough.

This is a four unit course. This syllabus has learning objectives, rigor, class meeting times, and assignments commensurate with the expectation of 12 hours of work per week across 15 weeks in a semester. For reference, under a traditional three unit course, you were expected to complete 9 hours of work per week inclusive.

Disability: Any student with a disability requiring an accommodation should make this need known to the instructor during the first class period. Every student should:

05/04(M) Property Taxes (15)
05/06(W) Proposition 13

05/11(M) The Budgeting Process (17)
05/13(M) Local Government Budgeting Review

05/13(W) Final Exam 12:15-2:30 pm