# AP/ADMS/PPAS 3524 3.0 M

**Public Sector Budget Process**

**Course Outline – Winter 2020**

**Date:** Mondays – 4:00-7:00pm

**Location:** Accolade West 106

## Office hours: 3:00pm-4:00pm Mondays, or by appointment

## Course website: Moodle

## Course Instructors:

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| **Professor Najva Amin**  Email: [Moham258@yorku.ca](mailto:Moham258@yorku.ca) | **Professor Steven Del Duca**  Email: [Delduca7@yorku.ca](mailto:Delduca7@yorku.ca) |

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

## This course examines the key issues and context of the budget process and the increasing importance of oversight, transparency and accountability in the public sector in Canada. It assesses current approaches to budget policy, fiscal management and accountability frameworks. Prerequisites: AP/ECON 1000 3.00, AP/ECON 1010 3.00, AP/ADMS 1500 3.00 or AP/ADMS 2500 3.00. Course credit exclusions: None.

This course is aimed at non-financial majors who nevertheless should possess basic principles and knowledge of financial matters given the continued trend of scarce fiscal resources in the public sector. It examines the key issues and context of the public sector budget process and the increasing importance of oversight, transparency and accountability in the public sector. All phases of the budget cycle are examined: from fiscal forecasting, to tax and expenditure policy formulation, budget development, planning and program design, performance measurement, evaluation and reporting.

A variety of topics will be addressed including:

* The budget cycle and processes
* Public sector accounting principles
* The increased profile of budget consultations
* The increased influence of the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer
* Budgetary implications of changing demographics and intergenerational equity
* The increased role and importance of government accountability and performance management

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

* Critically assess current approaches to budget policy, fiscal management, and accountability frameworks in the public sector.
* Identify and critically assess the implications of public sector budget issues and alternative policy approaches.
* Prepare briefing notes to the Minister of Finance, presenting, supporting and defending budget policy positions/decisions.

## Required Text:

*Graham, Andrew. 2019. Canadian Public-Sector Financial Management, 3rd Edition, McGill-Queen’s University Press.*

Budget, Printed Estimates and Public Accounts material from various online government sources will also be used. Students are also expected to keep appraised of current events, particularly those that involve major public policy issues (e.g. health care, pensions, crime, transit) and financial matters (e.g. the economy, taxes, Bank of Canada).

**Lectures**

Each lecture will consist of a formal presentation, outlining key lessons and learning outcomes for each of the weeks and themes. In the lecture, we will raise your awareness of the application of the material from the assigned readings, present the best information we have based on leading research, and will highlight best practices and practical realities that have emerged. The lectures will not replace the necessity to have completed your readings assigned for each week, rather, they will draw out key lessons and focus on their application. Each week lecture slides will be posted on the course website. There will also be a number of guest lecturers who are key players in the system of budgeting and finance in Canada. It is very important that you attend all of the lectures.

***Note:*** If you have a documented disability at York that you wish to have accommodated in this course, please see us immediately.

**Evaluation:**

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| **Assignment** | **Value** | **Due date** |
| Ministerial Budget Briefing Note  (Individual) | 10% | Week 4 |
| Treasury Board Submission  (Individual) | 10% | Week 8 |
| Mock Program Review, Renewal & Transformation (PRRT) Proposal  (Group Assignment)  Outline  Presentation  Deck | 5%  20%  15% | Week 5  Week 10 or 11  Week 10 or 11 |
| Mid-Term Test | 10% | **Week 7** |
| Class Participation | 10% | **Throughout each class**  *Informal feedback will be provided regularly, but a formal mid-term grade will be provide so students can track their progress* |
| Final Term Test | 20% | **March 30** |
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## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be required to submit two individual written assignments. All written assignments must be typed using a 12 point font with 1 inch margins, single spaced. Papers must conform to the page limits specified (we stop reading when the limit is reached). Papers must be properly cited and include a bibliography using APA citation standard. Papers will be marked for proper spelling, punctuation and grammar (this is key to briefing the Minister).

**Assignments should be submitted in hard copy, and are due at the beginning of class.**

**NOTE: Assignments will lose 10% for each day they are late (e.g. a paper submitted two days late could only receive a maximum grade of 80%).**

## PRESENTATIONS:

For group assignments, students will be assigned to teams of 4-6 (depending upon class size). All students within a group will share their respective mark. **You are responsible for coordinating your group’s activities and we will not mediate any disputes.**

Groups will be assessed based upon the quality of information presented (e.g. description, analysis), plus their professionalism, creativity and originality. You may use whatever media or format you wish. Please provide a hard copy of your PowerPoint slides or handouts before your presentation. All group members must be in class to present and all are expected to have been involved in its preparation. **Complaints from other group members about ‘free riders’ may involve penalties to their participation mark.**

## GRADING/ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be evaluated through a combination of individual and group, written and oral presentation assignments. Each of these assignments is intended to provide students with practical knowledge and experience for various phases/components of the budget process.

## Ministerial briefing note (individual Assignment)

## You are required to prepare two notes of 2 pages each (single spaced) on various public policy issues as part of a briefing package for the Minister of Finance for upcoming Treasury Board budget review meetings. You will be provided with a proposed format and a sample list of possible issues to choose from. These briefings are to be individually written and submitted, although you may discuss these issues with others in the class. You will be given the opportunity to get feedback on your first briefing note assignment, before you are required to submit the second assignment (week 8).

## Mock PRRT Proposal (Group Assignment)

Students are asked to select an Ontario Ministry (from a list provided by us) and engage in a simulation whereby the group acts as a member of the Ontario Treasury Board, and each group is required to present to their colleagues a proposal for a 12% in-year budget reduction. In addition to indicating how they propose to find the savings, “ministers” must discuss the politics of their proposed budget cuts and convince the Treasury Board that their plan is politically feasible.

In week 10/11 students present their plan to their Treasury Board colleagues (approx. 15 minutes). Each presentation should be supported by a “Deck” (Powerpoint) 10 pages in length. Students will be evaluated on both their presentation and handout. Following each presentation, students and the instructors will play the role of Members serving on the Treasury Board and will ask questions of the presenting groups. *Two components must be present: where the cuts will be made (i.e. what programs/spending will be affected and how) as well as the politics of the choices of spending cuts, and how the decision will be presented/justified to the public. More detail on the assignment will be provided by the instructors.*

In advance of the Week 10/11 presentations, students must submit an outline in week 5 providing a written submission explaining the position of your ministry. A template and other information will be shared in class.

## Participation (Individual)

A record of attendance will be kept for every week. If you have to miss a class, it is expected that you will give notice to the course director as early as possible. Passive attendance will not be assessed positively. As leaders you will be required to be an effective contributor to group discussions and meetings. Class discussions serve as an excellent means to practice this important skill. While assessing your class participation, we will not merely judge you on how often you participate, but how your answers/questions lead to improved learning among your classmates.

For class discussions, we will ask questions that require you to describe something (e.g. a finding from your readings, your experiences in the exercises), define concepts, argue for and against a hypothesis, or critically analyze the readings and relate them to your experiences. We will evaluate your contributions every class based on clearly defined expectations, which will be shared with students at the start of the course (Rubric attached).

Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. Some assignments require students to work in teams. Your work in relation to team assignments may also be taken into consideration when calculating your participation grade. When working as a team, students are reminded of the following expectations with respect to their behavior and contributions to the project: Each team member is expected to:

* Treat other members with courtesy and respect;
* Establish a positive and productive team dynamic;
* Contribute substantially to the group simulation; and,
* Ensure familiarity with the entire contents of the simulation.

**Midterm and final term tests:**

These tests will be essay style/ short answer tests. Tests will cover key components of the budget process discussed in class. Additional details to be provided in class.

**See weekly schedule of classes, readings, etc. on next page please**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Lectures**  *Topics/Readings/Assignments/Due Dates* |
| 1 | Jan. 6 | **Introduction**   * Review of the objectives of the course * Review of time table and expectations * Presentation by instructors   **Financial Management in the Public Sector**  *Required readings:*   * Chapter 1 |
| 2 | Jan. 13 | **Public Sector Accounting Principles**  **Accrual Accounting**  *Required readings:*   * Chapter 2 and 4 |
| 3 | Jan. 20 | **The Budget Process**  **Group dynamics, conflict resolution and team work**  *Required readings:*   * Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8 |
| 4 | Jan. 27 | Managerial Control  Required readings:   * Chapter 9   Assignment Due: Briefing Note |
| 5 | Feb. 3 | In-Year Budget Management  Required readings: Chapter 10  PRRT Outline Due |
| 6 | Feb. 10 | **Accountability and Reporting**  *Required readings:*   * Chapter 11 |
|  | Feb. 17 | **Reading Week – No Classes** |
| 7 | Feb. 24 | **Mid-Term Test – in class** |
| 8 | March 2 | **Financial Strategies – The Budget Games People Play**  *Required readings:*   * Appendix 1 page 207-212 and material provided by instructors   Assignment Due: Treasury Board Submission |
| 9 | March 9 | **Performance Measurement**  *Required readings:*   * Material provided on course Moodle site |
| 10 | March 16 | **PRRT Presentations**  **Team Presentations – Part 1** |
| 11 | March 23 | **PRRT Presentations**  **Team Presentations – Part 2** |
| 12 | March 30 | **Final Term Test** |

**Add/Drop Deadlines**

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|  | **Winter Term 2020 (W)** |
| Last date to add a course **without permission** of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines) | Jan. 19 |
| Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines) | Feb. 3 |
| Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines) | March 13 |
| **Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a notation of “W” on transcript – see note below)** | **March 14 - April 5** |

***\*\*Policy and Guidelines on Withdrawn from Course:***

<http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/withdrawn-from-course-w-policy-and-guidelines/>

**Participation Rubric – Expectations**

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| **Activity/Expectation** | **Point Value per half term** (weeks 1-6 and 7-12) |
| * Sporadic attendance/not punctual * Passive attendance most of the time | 1 |
| * Good attendance/punctual * Awake/attentive most of the time | 2 |
| * Above, plus: * Regularly participates – demonstrating a contribution to the discussion * Does not necessarily demonstrate a preparedness or command of the reading * Perhaps a cursory understanding of the topic | 3 |
| * Above, plus: * Regularly and clearly prepared by reading the material * Actively seeking to be engaged in the discussion * Does not over participate or dominate the conversation * Respectful of other opinions * Does not participate just for the sake of participating, but to make a contribution to the collective understanding of the issue/topic | 4 |
| * Above, plus: * Fully engaged at a superior level * Not only demonstrated a command of the material, but brings reflections/thoughts to the conversation * Takes a leadership role in the presentation of ideas * Contribution is thoughtful, does not take the classroom discussion off track * Brings questions to class that are provocative * Successfully brings in personal/work experiences that enhance/enrich the discussion | 5 |