

**ECONOMICS 4999**  
**Public Choice Economics**  
**Spring 2009**

**Professor:** Billy Mertens  
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**Web:** <http://spot.colorado.edu/~mertens>  
**Office Hours:**

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Class participation and attendance    | 15% |
| Article critique and presentation (2) | 20% |
| Term paper                            | 24% |
| Presentation of term paper            | 12% |
| Exam 1                                | 17% |
| Quiz                                  | 6%  |
| Final exam                            | 6%  |

I adhere strictly to the University guidelines on Incompletes (“An IF is given only when students, *beyond their control*, have been unable to complete course requirements. A substantial amount of work must have been *satisfactorily completed* before approval for such a grade is completed.”). Bad grades, unsatisfactory performance, too many credit hours, work conflicts, etc. are not reasons for an incomplete.

### **Article Presentations and Class Participation:**

For the first few weeks, I will lecture and present papers, but after that you will divide into small groups for the presentation of one paper each class. Your group will present two papers over several weeks of class. By working in groups and by noticing the grading rules (which we will discuss on the first day of class) for the group presentations, you may gain extra insight into the theory of collective action and how well-made constitutional rules (or in this case, course rules) can increase social welfare. The groups presenting a paper will have studied them in great detail, but I expect the rest of the class to have read all of the papers and be ready to discuss them – your participation grade will depend on this.

### **Term Papers and Presentations:**

Each student will be required to choose a topic and examine it in a public choice setting. This leaves open a broad range of subject matter from which to choose, so you must submit a first-choice topic to me by January 30<sup>th</sup> and you must have an approved topic by February 9<sup>th</sup>. Your paper must emphasize the public choice aspects of the situation you are analyzing, and should most importantly be an analytical (NOT narrative) study. No paper should be longer than 20 pages (double spaced). Feel free to meet with me on a regular basis to discuss your paper. In addition to writing the paper, you will also be asked to present your topic to the class. This should help you with your analysis, and you will have from 2 to 3 weeks after your presentation to polish your paper before turning it in.

Plagiarism is an academic offense and any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be sanctioned. If you are unsure or uncertain about what constitutes either cheating or plagiarism, please consult me or the University of Colorado Catalog. To insure a level playing field on this front, all papers will be submitted to turnitin.com.

### **Exams and quizzes:**

There will be one exam and two quizzes. Tests will consist of short-answer questions and some longer problems. The exams will not be cumulative, but the material does build on itself so it is important to understand all of the concepts as we go. **Exams will be given in class on the days listed. Do NOT miss an exam. There will be NO makeup exams, and NO EXAMS WILL BE DROPPED!!**

### **Exam Schedule:**

Exam I: Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

Quiz 1: Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Final exam (quiz 2): Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm in ECON 13).

If you have three or more final exams scheduled on the same day, you are entitled to arrange an alternative exam time for the **last** exam or exams scheduled on that day. To qualify for rescheduling final exam times, you must provide evidence that you have three or more exams on the same day, and arrangements must be made with your instructor no later than the end of the sixth week of the semester (Friday, February 20, 2009).

If you do have 3 or more finals on one day, then you should be sure to talk to your professor for the **last** final scheduled on that day **before** 02/20/09 – I will not allow you to switch the final for this class just because you were late in notifying your other professor.

### **Grading Scale:**

| <u>Your score</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 92% to 100%       | A            |
| 90% to 91%        | A-           |
| 88% to 89%        | B+           |
| 82% to 87%        | B            |
| 80% to 81%        | B-           |
| 78% to 79%        | C+           |
| 72% to 77%        | C            |
| 70% to 71%        | C-           |
| 68% to 69%        | D+           |
| 62% to 67%        | D            |
| 60% to 61%        | D-           |
| Below 59.5%       | F            |

### **Additional Notes:**

#### *Honor Code*

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>

#### *Disabilities*

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the instructor from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services

determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322,  
or  
<http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

#### *Religious holidays*

A comprehensive calendar of the religious holidays most commonly observed by CU-Boulder students can be found at <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/> Review this list and the class syllabus. After reviewing the syllabus, please see the instructor if you believe that you need an accommodation for religious reasons. The instructor should be notified within the first two weeks of classes. Campus policy regarding religious observances states that faculty must make *reasonable* accommodation for them and in so doing, be careful not to inhibit or penalize those students who are exercising their rights to religious observance. For more information see [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

#### *Code of Behavior*

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

#### *Policy on Sexual Harassment*

The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention.