

**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

PPPA 6048 -- Financing State and Local Government

Spring 2025

Wednesday Evenings 6:10-8:00 PM

Location: 1776 G Street, NW

Classroom: Room C-112

Instructor:

Keith J. Richardson

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OBJECTIVE

The goal of this class is to inform students of the importance of state and local public budgeting and finance and to provide a generalists' knowledge of the critical aspects of the subject. At the conclusion of the course, students will understand the important concepts of state and local public finance; be able to identify policy issues presented by subnational taxes; and analyze the politics and economics of financing state and local governments.

REQUIRED TEXT/READINGS/RESOURCES

Brunori, *State Tax Policy: a primer* 5th edition (2022) (**Brunori S on syllabus**) and Brunori, *Local Tax Policy: a primer* (2022) (**Brunori L on syllabus**); supplemental readings will be assigned throughout the term. Students should be familiar with the following resources: *State Tax Notes*, *Journal of State Taxation*, and *Journal of Multistate Taxation and Incentive*.

Where appropriate and relevant, you should find the US Census numbers for the particular tax or revenue source being discussed. You can find that information at: <http://www.census.gov/govs/>. You are expected to review the national data for each revenue source discussed!

GRADING

Class Attendance and Participation – 20% of Grade

All students will be expected to attend all classes schedule and have completed all required readings in advance of each class, which are listed below. Each student will participate in group breakout discussions during class and will be expected to lead discussions.

2-4 Short Application Assignments – 30%

Students will have to prepare written assignments after guest speakers on the topics they may address in class. There may be an assignment based on specific readings and discussions. These written assignments will be 1,000 words each.

Final Research Paper - 50%

Students will be required to complete a 10-page final research paper. State and local public finance is a field that has long been neglected by academics and there are ample opportunities to conduct original research. Students write some of the best academic papers in the field. Those students often become instant experts in a particular field of state and local finance. You will have to clear a topic with me in advance by the end of class on **March 19th**.

The final paper will be due Thursday May 1st by 6:00 PM

SCHEDULE	PPPA 6048 - Financing State and Local Government
Class 1, Jan. 15	INTRODUCTION -- Why State and Local Taxes Matter Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 1; Brunori L, Chapter 1.
Class 2, Jan. 22	STATE TAX POLICY, FEDERALISM, POLITICS, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Readings: Brunori S, Chapters 2-4; Brunori, Principles of Tax Policy and Targeted Tax Incentives, 1997, 97 STN 111-27.
Class 3, Jan. 29	LOCAL TAX POLICY, FEDERALISM, POLICTICS, AND LIMITS Readings: Brunori L, Chapters 2 and 3; Tiebout, C. (1956), "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures", <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 64 (5): 416–424.
Class 4, Feb. 5	STATE AND LOCAL SALES TAXATION Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 5; Brunori L, Chapter 6. Mazerov, Why Tax Services? 2009 STT 161-2.
Class 5, Feb. 12	CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS - COMMERCE CLAUSE Readings: Supplemental readings will be assigned. Read BACCHUS IMPORTS, LTD., v. DIAS, 468 U.S. 263 (1984) <i>Complete Auto Transit, Inc. v. Brady</i> , 430 U.S. 274 (1977) (both available on the Internet)

- Class 6, Feb. 19 **STATE AND LOCAL INCOME TAXES**
Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 6; Brunori L, Chapter 7; Henchman, Local Income Taxes, Tax Foundation Fiscal Fact 280, <http://taxfoundation.org/research/show/27575.html>
- Class 7, Feb. 26 **STATE AND LOCAL BUSINESS TAXES**
Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 7; Brunori Chapter 7, E&Y/COST Report on Business Taxation (available online); Citizens for Tax Justice, Corporate Tax Dodging in the Fifty States (http://ctj.org/ctjreports/2011/12/corporate_tax_dodging_in_the_fifty_states_2008-2010.php)
- Class 8, Mar. 5 **STATE AND LOCAL BUSINESS TAXES (CONT'D)**
Gross Receipts Taxes, Pass-through entities, Local limitations U8
- Class 9, Mar. 19 **OTHER STATE AND LOCAL TAXES - ESTATE, EXCISE, ETC.**
Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 8. Brunori, Smoke 'Em if You Got 'Em, States April 11, 2011, 2011 STT 69-6, Brunori, Who's to Blame for Corporate Tax Incentives?, June 6, 2011, 2011 STT 108-3
- Class 10, Mar. 26 **STATE AND LOCAL NON-TAX REVENUE**
Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 9; Brunori L, Chapter 8.
- Class 11, Apr. 2 **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AID**
Readings: Brunori S, Chapter 9; Brunori L, Chapter 8.
- Class 12, Apr. 9 **THE PROPERTY TAX**
Readings: Brunori L, Chapters 4 and 5. Tax Foundation Report on Property Tax Burdens (**Tax Foundation Fiscal Fact No. 269**) <http://taxfoundation.org/research/show/27282.html>
- Class 13, Apr. 16 **THE PROPERTY TAX CONT'D**
Readings: Brunori L, Chapters 4 and 5, supplemental readings will be assigned
- Class 14, Apr. 23 **STATE BUDGET POLITICS**
Brunori, Tax Advice for Conservatives, 12-12-2011, Brunori, Tax Advice for Liberals, 1-24-2011, 2011 STT 15-5, Brunori, The Real Problem in State Finance. 2010 STT 196-4.

May 1

Due date for research papers. Exams and papers should be emailed to the instructor at the above address.

University policies

Academic Integrity Code

Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the [Code of Academic Integrity](#). If you have any questions about whether particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact Conflict Education and Student Accountability (CESA), formerly known as Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR), to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University and may include a transcript notation. For more information, refer to the CESA website at students.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity or contact CESA by email cesa@gwu.edu or phone 202-994-6757.

University policy on observance of religious holidays

Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to

discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

Academic support

Academic Commons

[Academic Commons](#) is the central location for academic support resources for GW students. To schedule a peer tutoring session for a variety of courses visit go.gwu.edu/tutoring. Visit academiccommons.gwu.edu for study skills tips, finding help with research, and connecting with other campus resources. For questions email academiccommons@gwu.edu.

GW Writing Center

GW Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at gwu.mywconline.

Support for students in and outside the classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Student Health Center 202-994-5300, 24/7

The Student Health Center (SHC) offers [medical](#), [counseling/psychological](#), and [psychiatric](#) services to GW students. More information about the SHC is available at healthcenter.gwu.edu. Students experiencing a medical or mental health emergency on campus should contact GW Emergency Services at 202-994-6111, or off campus at 911.

GW Campus Emergency Information

GW Emergency Services: 202-994-6111

For situation-specific instructions, refer to [GW's Emergency Procedures guide](#).

GW Alert

GW Alert is an emergency notification system that sends alerts to the GW community. GW requests students, faculty, and staff maintain current contact information by logging on to alert.gwu.edu. Alerts are sent via email, text, social media, and other means, including the Guardian app. The Guardian app is a safety app that allows you to communicate quickly with GW Emergency Services, 911, and other resources. Learn more at safety.gwu.edu.

Protective Actions

GW prescribes four protective actions that can be issued by university officials depending on the type of emergency. All GW community members are expected to follow directions according to the specified protective action. The protective actions are Shelter, Evacuate, Secure, and Lockdown (details below). Learn more at safety.gwu.edu/gw-standard-emergency-statuses.

Shelter

- Protection from a specific hazard
- The hazard could be a tornado, earthquake, hazardous material spill, or other environmental emergency.
- Specific safety guidance will be shared on a case-by-case basis.

Action:

- Follow safety guidance for the hazard.

Evacuate

- Need to move people from one location to another.
- Students and staff should be prepared to follow specific instructions given by first responders and University officials.

Action:

- Evacuate to a designated location.
- Leave belongings behind.
- Follow additional instructions from first responders.

Secure

- Threat or hazard outside of buildings or around campus.
- Increased security, secured building perimeter, increased situational awareness, and restricted access to entry doors.

Action:

- Go inside and stay inside.
- Activities inside may continue.

Lockdown

- Threat or hazard with the potential to impact individuals inside buildings.
- Room-based protocol that requires locking interior doors, turning off lights, and staying out of sight of corridor window.

Action:

- Locks, lights, out of sight
- Consider Run, Hide, Fight

- **Classroom emergency lockdown buttons**

Some classrooms have been equipped with classroom emergency lockdown buttons. If the button is pushed, GWorld Card access to the room will be disabled, and GW Dispatch will be alerted. The door must be manually closed if it is not closed when the button is pushed. Anyone in the classroom will be able to exit, but no one will be able to get in.