Instructor
David Matkin, 306 Milne, (518) 442-5279, dmatkin@albany.edu
Office hours: Wednesday, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and by appointment

Teaching Assistant
Terence Meehan, tmeehan@albany.edu
Discussion Sessions: Fridays 5:00 – 6:30 pm in Husted 208

Preface:
The purpose of this course is to develop your knowledge and skills in the management of public financial resources. The readings, weekly topics of study, and course assignments were selected to broaden your understanding of public financial management and to make you a better public administrator. You may not “connect” with each topic, but if you engage yourself in this course, you will increase your ability to achieve policy objectives, overcome administrative challenges, and manage public organizations.

Student Competencies:
- Plan and manage projects, both individually and in teams, to meet organizational goals
- Evaluate whether public, private, non-profit, or multi-sector approaches can achieve policy goals
- Analyze information to define and evaluate problems
- Identify potential solutions to problems
- Communicate recommendations in a professional manner
- Present information, in writing and verbally, that is concise, accurate, clear, and informed by evidence

Required Materials:
2. Financial Calculator (I recommend a Texas Instruments BAII-plus). Calculator programs (apps) on smartphones or other wireless enabled devices are not permitted during exams.
3. Various articles, chapters, original documents, and case studies that are accessible on the course’s Blackboard website (cited below as Bb).

Suggested Materials:

Prerequisites:
PAD 504 is a pre- or co-requisite for this course. With the instructor’s permission, non-MPA students may take the course if they can demonstrate sufficient spreadsheet proficiency to complete assignments.

Technical Skills Required:
While financial management is about much more than numbers, this class introduces you to several quantitative techniques that are essential in public management. Most of the calculations in this class can be completed with a pencil and napkin, but Excel and financial calculators greatly simplify the steps. Even if you don’t have a career in financial management, sharpening your Excel skills is likely to enhance your value in the workplace. You don’t, after all, want to be in a situation where you have to justify your napkin calculations to your boss. If they’re brilliant, you’ll be a legend; but, if they’re even average, you won’t be trusted with adult scissors.
**Workload Expectations:**
I have a professional obligation to you and to the public that you will serve to ensure that you develop a minimal competence in financial management concepts and skills by the end of this course. Depending on your background in financial management and on the demands of the week, you should expect to engage in five to ten hours of out-of-class study each week. If you do not read the text closely, prepare for and attend class, and complete the assigned work, you will struggle in this class.

**Evaluation:**

*Class Participation (5 percentage points)*
Full credit looks like: punctual and regular attendance; insightful and civil participation in class discussions; fully prepared for class; the class is better because you enrolled; and, an unfettered exuberance toward learning.

*Homework (20 percentage points)*
Each homework assignment is graded to ensure a good-faith effort to complete the questions. Each assignment is worth 2 percentage points of your final grade (with a maximum of 20 percentage points). Homework will be submitted no later than the beginning of the class period when it is due. Homework submissions should be professionally presented on letter-sized paper. Multiple paged submissions must be stapled. Homework should be typed written using Word, Pages, LaTeX, or another word processing program. Excel calculations should be properly formatted and pasted into the word processing program. Homework that is difficult to grade will be significantly discounted. You should bring an extra copy of your homework to class (hard copy or electronic) so you can follow along in class. If you cannot attend class, you are responsible to deliver your completed homework to Dr. Matkin prior to class time. Late submissions will not be accepted.

*Case Project (25 percentage points)*
You will demonstrate your ability to perform many of the skills and abilities that you will learn in this class. This project requires you to take on the role of a management analyst in a county government. The city is considering adopting a new program and needs you to evaluate the feasibility. Instructions for the project will be available on Blackboard. Due December 10th.

*Exams (Two exams, each worth 25 percentage points)*
There are two exams. The first exam is on October 15th and covers the concepts and techniques in the first five classes of the semester (e.g., property taxes, budget process and structure, cash management, cost analysis, evaluate break-even quantities, and calculate capital costs). The second exam is on December 17th and covers the concepts and techniques in the second "half" of class (e.g., recognize how transactions affect financial statements, evaluate financial conditions of public organizations). Students will be allowed to bring a single-sided letter-sized page of notes into the exams.

**Grading Scale:**  
A = 93-100%  
B+ = 87-89.99%  
C+ = 77-79.99%  
B+ = 67-69.99%  
A- = 90-92.99%  
B = 83-86.99%  
C = 73-76.99%  
B- = 60-62.99%  
A- = 90-92.99%  
B = 83-86.99%  
C = 73-76.99%  
B- = 60-62.99%  
E<60%  

**Additional Expectations:**  
- Read and follow the syllabus. You are responsible to meet the course requirements  
- Ensure that you can communicate through the UAlbany e-mail system (e.g., Blackboard)

**Course Schedule:**  
8/27  
Introduction & Financing public organizations  
- Case Study – Theater Budget Case

9/3  
Planning & the Budget  
- Read Finkler – Chapter 2, 3  
- Homework Due: 2-17, 2-21, 2-26, 3-24
9/10  Budget decisions & the cost of public services
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 4
   • Homework Due: 4-24, 4-35, 4-44, Meals on Wheels (Questions 1 & 2—see Chapter 9)

9/17  Capital Budgeting I
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 5
   • Homework Due: 5-11, 5-19, 5-20, 5-28, 5-32 to 5-36

9/24  Capital Budgeting II
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 6
   • Homework Due: 6-13, 6-15, 6-19

10/1  Media Resources in Public Financial Management
   • Blackboard links

10/8  Budget Implementation and Variance Analysis
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 7 & 8
   • Homework Due: 7-29, 8-27, 8-28, and Meals on Wheels (Questions 3, 4 and 5)

10/15 Exam #1

10/22 Stock Statements (Accrual-based Accounting)
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 10 (including Appendixes)
   • Homework Due: 10-23 to 10-24

10/29 Flow Statements (Accrual-based Accounting)
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 11 (including Appendixes)
   • Homework Due: 11-14 and 11-15

11/5  Putting Together Basic Financial Statements
   • Read Finkler – Chapters 10-11 (including Appendixes)
   • Homework Due: 10-25, 11-16

11/12 Nonprofit Accounting
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 12 (including Appendixes)
   • Homework Due: 12-18

11/19 Modified Accrual and State and Local Government Accounting
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 13 & 14 (including Appendixes)
   • Homework Due: 13-4, 13-5, 14-8

11/26 No Class

12/3  Financial Statements & Condition
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 15 & 16
   • Homework Due: 15-11

12/10 Submit Case Project

12/17 Exam #2
Class Policies:

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:
(1) contact the Disability Resource Center; and
(2) provide the instructor with documentation indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to University at Albany students with disabilities, contact the:
Disability Resource Center, University at Albany, State University of New York
Campus Center 137, 1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222
(518) 442-5490 (voice)
Director: nbelowich@uamail.albany.edu
http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml

**Academic Honor Policy**
The University at Albany’s graduate bulletin provides a detailed description of the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Standards of Academic Integrity and for living up to those expectations. That information can be found at:
http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#standards_integrity

**Class Room Distractions**
From my perspective each student has a responsibility for the quality of this class; if you don’t add anything to the course, that is one thing (shame on you), but if you are a distraction and detract from the course, your actions will have a significant and negative affect on your grade. In severe cases, which I don’t expect to see in a graduate course, I reserve the right to remove a disruptive student and/or object (think electronic devices) from our class.

**Syllabus Changes**
I don’t foresee making any changes to this syllabus—it is what it is; however, events may come up that make it necessary to tweak the syllabus. I will provide advanced notice of any changes.