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

Teaching Assistant
Youngsung Kim, ykim22@albany.edu
Office hours: Saturday, 1:00 -3:00 p.m. at the downtown campus library.

Preface
The purpose of this course is to develop your knowledge and skills in the management of public financial resources. The readings, video content, 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 the 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

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 end up with 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

Blackboard Quiz – Prep Assessment #1 (5 percentage points)
Prior to every instructional class period (i.e., not before the mid-term or spring break), you should take the weekly “basic quiz” to demonstrate a minimal level of conceptual understanding. These tests can be completed multiple times and the best score will be recorded.

In-Class Performance - Prep Assessment #2 (15 percentage points)
You will complete a preparation assessment at the beginning of every instructional class period. The types of questions will look very similar to the “Practice Questions” in the Finkler text (see course schedule below). These will take approximately 30 minutes at the start of class. I will drop your two lowest assessment scores. There is no provision for make-up assessments.

Projects (30 percentage points – 15 points x 2 projects)
You will demonstrate your ability to perform and communicate the skills and abilities that you will learn in this class through the completion of two projects. See Blackboard for instructions.
Project 1: Financial Condition Analysis (Due 3/31)
Project 2: Budgeting and Cost Analysis (Due 5/11)

Mid-term and Final exams (50 percentage points – 25 points x 2 tests)
The mid-term covers material through 3/8. The final exam is scheduled during the regularly class time on finals week. Final exam covers material from 3/29 to 5/10. Students are allowed to bring a single-sided letter-sized page of notes into the exams. Students should also bring their financial calculator.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E&lt;60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (i.e., you need to get e-mail that is sent to you through Blackboard)

Tips for Success

- Don’t try to get through this class on your own. You should team up with classmates to prepare for class and for the exam. You will learn a lot by discussing the concepts with your peers.
- Be fully prepared for class.
- Don’t wait until Monday afternoon to prepare for class. You will do much better in this class if you engage the content for shorter time periods every day than if you binge on the material once a week and then ignore it the rest of the week.
- Think of this class as introducing you to a set of tools that can be used in many ways. I am not able to show you every use for a hammer (it’s a metaphor people) but you will benefit from thinking creatively about these tools and learn how to apply them in order to solve the problems that are unique to your situation.
- When you watch the course videos, don’t engage them like they are cat videos; there is some pithy stuff in each one and you will miss most of the content if you passively consume the content. Click pause often. Take notes. Follow along. Read the text. Search for more information on the internet.
- Work a little on the class projects and study a little for the final exam every week.
Course Schedule

1/25 Review Course Expectations and Resources
   Introduction to Financial Information

EVERY WEEK PRIOR TO CLASS
a. Read assigned chapter in the Finkler text
b. Watch the class preparation material posted to Blackboard
c. Attempt to solve the practice questions in the Finkler text on your own
d. Review answers to the practice questions (posted the Monday before class)
e. Visit the instructor during office hours for help with concepts (as needed)
f. Solve Blackboard quiz questions (by Tuesday before class)

2/1 Stock & Flow Statements I (Accrual-based Accounting)
   • Read Finkler – Chapters 9 & 10 (including Appendixes)
   • Practice Questions: 9-23, 10-14

2/8 Stock & Flow Statements II (Accrual-based Accounting)
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 9 & 10 (including Appendixes)
   • Practice Questions: 9-24, 9-25, 10-15 and 10-16

2/15 Putting Together Basic Financial Statements
   • Read Finkler – Chapters 9-10 (including Appendixes)
   • Practice Questions: 9-26, 10-17

2/22 Nonprofit Accounting
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 11 (including Appendixes)
   • Practice Questions: 11-18

3/1 Modified Accrual and State and Local Government Accounting
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 12 & 13 (including Appendixes)
   • Practice Questions: 12-4, 12-5, 13-8

3/8 Financial Statements & Condition
   • Read Analysis Cheat Sheet (Bb)
   • Skim Finkler – Chapter 14 & 15
   • Practice Questions: 14-11

3/15 Spring Break

3/22 Mid-Term Exam

3/29 Planning & the Budget
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 2, 3
   • Practice Questions: 2-17, 2-21, 2-26, 3-24

4/5 Budget decisions & the cost of public services
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 4
   • Practice Questions: 4-23, 4-34, 4-43, Meals on Wheels (Questions 1 & 2 – see Bb)

4/12 Capital Budgeting I – TVM Basics – ONLINE (NO IN-CLASS PREP ASSESSMENTS)
   • Read Finkler – Chapter 5
   • Practice Questions: 5-11, 5-21, 5-35, 5-36
4/19 Capital Budgeting I – TVM Basics
• Read Finkler – Chapter 5
• Practice Questions: 5-11, 5-21, 5-35, 5-36

4/26 Capital Budgeting II – Costing Capital Assets
• Read Finkler – Chapters 5 & 6
• Practice Questions: 5-22, 5-30, 5-34, 5-37, 5-38, 6-15

5/3 Capital Budgeting III – Long-term Debt
• Read Finkler – Chapter 6
• Practice Questions: 6-13, 6-18, 6-19

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

5/17 Final Exam

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
BA 120, 1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222
(518) 442-5490 (voice)
Director: cmalloch@albany.edu
http://www.albany.edu/disability/

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 schedule (i.e., snow days). I will provide advanced notice of any changes.