

Financial Decision Analysis in the Public and Non-Profit Sectors

Spring 2023

Schedule: Tuesday 6:00 PM – 8:50

Location: In Person SEM 2 A2107 (computer lab)

Faculty: Spencer Brien, Ph.D., spencer.brien@evergreen.edu

MPA Mission Statement: Our students, faculty, and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We think critically and creatively; communicate effectively; work collaboratively; embrace diversity; we value fairness and equity; advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; and imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities. “Be the Change.”

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce the techniques of financial condition analysis for public organizations. It will cover the topics necessary for students to be informed consumers of governmental financial statements. It will also help students apply the information in financial systems to managerial decisions.

Required Text:

Finkler, Steven A., Robert M. Purtell, Thad D. Calabrese, and Daniel Smith Financial Management for Public, Health, and Not-For-Profit Organizations. CQ Press, 2023. 7th Edition

Recommended Text:

Miller, Jane E. The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, Illinois, 2004.

Objectives:

Students taking this course will be expected to:

1. Be able to read and interpret governmental activity statements, cash flow statements, and balance sheets.
2. Calculate and interpret the appropriate ratios in a financial condition analysis of a governmental organization.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of accounting, reporting, and auditing functions of the public and non-profit sectors.
4. Be able to apply financial management concepts to resource management decisions.

Coursework:

Credit for this course is largely based on demonstrating the course learning objectives through a financial condition analysis project. Additionally, students will submit several applied problem sets to demonstrate the technical skills needed to complete the final project.

The MPA program's policy on course credit for elective classes is listed here: <https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/credit-policies> .

Evaluation Criteria

All coursework is evaluated on four criteria:

1. Demonstrates conceptual accuracy
2. Demonstrates application and/or synthesis of the content
3. Supports arguments or assessments with appropriate sources
4. Demonstrates clear communication

The specific instructions for each assignment provide specific details on how these criteria are applied. For each criterion, the submitted work is assessed on whether it “Fully Demonstrates”, “Significantly Demonstrates”, “Partially Demonstrates”, or “Does not Demonstrate” the relevant standard.

I highly recommend use of Zotero or some other citation management software to make citation easier. Also students are recommended to become familiar with Google Scholar to quickly find reference information.

[APA Style <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant. You can contact our writing support at: EvergreenWritingAssistant@gmail.com ; 360-867-6820 ; LAB I, Room 3016. Also, a guide to student writing at Evergreen can be accessed through the campus Writing Center: <https://inkwellpublication.wordpress.com/>

Presentation

Students will prepare and deliver individual or group presentations of a segment of their financial condition analysis. This will be delivered on the last day of class.

Calendar

The course calendar is displayed through the Canvas module system. The assigned readings and exercises for each module are presented there. Due dates for assignments are also presented in the module system and the individual assignment pages.

Protocols

We will start class punctually and return to class promptly after breaks.

Zoom : Our class sessions will be recorded and made available through Canvas. I'll send out a weekly announcement with the link to the recording and the Zoom password to access the recording.

Attendance: I have a liberal attitude regarding class attendance – I know there are times when work or family commitments conflict with school and I trust you will use your best judgment to decide where you should be. There are no additional requirements if you miss a class, but you are expected to know the material. **If you know you're going to have trouble meeting a deadline then let me know ahead of time to work out a new deadline for your work. No late work will be accepted without prior approval.**

Respect: Taxes and fiscal policy affect all areas of public and private lives. As we discuss these topics, it is essential to the learning environment that we have a respectful and inclusive environment so that we can learn together through discussion and even debate.

Collaborative Course Agreement: On the first day of class we will spend some time cooperatively setting some rules for class discussions. We will then post these to Canvas.

Class Prep: I can expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the day's material. Graduate school is primarily self-taught, so you need to do the readings and other assignments before class and bring to our discussions your questions and ideas. Some classes have a lot of reading and you will not always have a lot of time so use the learning objectives to guide your attention – it is much better to read prudently than thoroughly.

Grading Turnaround: You can expect me to return graded assignments, with feedback, a week after they are submitted. You can expect me to be available by appointment to assist you in understanding the material.

Class Environment: Class time will be part lecture, part discussion, and part active workshop. We will spend part of each class doing technical exercise that will largely complete the technical exercise portion of the coursework. You can expect me to "cold call" on you from time to time. We will begin each class with 5-10 minutes of discussion about current events that relate to the course objectives. As you watch or read the news, try to interpret the reports through the lens of what we are covering. Please bring questions and contributions to class about what you observe.

Credit: Students will receive 4 graduate credits if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Student performance in the class will be evaluated based upon the way that submitted work demonstrates mastery of the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, and assignment performance. Partial credit for the course may be assessed if any work is missing or submitted work does not demonstrate all learning objectives.

Academic Honesty: Any reference to the work of others in assignments, exams and all other course work should be properly cited and it should be clear how you are using external sources. Violation of this standard will result in significant consequences. These include: loss of all credit for the assignment or exam, receiving a failing grade in the course, formal academic discipline proceedings.

Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information. Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter

Evaluation: Student's self-evaluation and evaluation of faculty are required for credit. Student-faculty end-of-quarter evaluation conferences are optional and are available at the student's request.

Multiculturalism & Diversity: Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences.

Mandatory Reporter: The Evergreen State College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and retaliation. We are committed to your well-being and safety, and we're open to discuss any concerns you may have. Please know that we are Responsible Employees, meaning that we are legally obligated to share information with the College's Title IX Coordinator in certain situations that help ensure a student's safety and care is being addressed. Although we have to notify the Title IX Coordinator, it will be up to you to control how your case is handled, including whether to pursue a formal complaint or legal action or not. The goal is to make sure you are aware of a range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you are seeking confidential support, please feel free to contact the following confidential resources: Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (360.867.5221, jonese@evergreen.edu) Student Wellness Services (360.867.6200)

Trauma Informed Pedagogy Statement: While faculty and students experience traumatic events throughout their lives, the global pandemic and endemic racism have created ongoing, overarching traumatic events, heightened by each person's individual experiences. The result can be "a cognitive burden comparable to a full-time job." How can we help our students learn as they (and we) manage this added cognitive load? We can name it and not shame it. Embracing self-care and trauma informed practices is held at the center of our teaching and learning environment. Please reach out to faculty and access the college and/or community resources available to you: <https://www.evergreen.edu/covid19/well-being-and-academicsduring-covid-19> plus <https://www.evergreen.edu/currentstudent/student-resources>

Technology Use & Learning Styles: We all have different ways of learning. Faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, we are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading e-mail, playing with cell phones are not appropriate. Consult your faculty to discuss technology use and learning style options. Reasonable Accommodations will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students with Disabilities Policy.

Conduct & Conflict Resolution: Please refer to the MPA Student Handbook: <https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/studenthandbook/conflictresolution> Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards. We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy. We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process: <http://www.evergreen.edu/studentaffairs/student-conduct> We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC

Guest policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with approval from course faculty in advance of each requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Prospective students may visit one class meeting of first year Core without advance faculty approval, but must notify faculty that they are present prior to the beginning of class. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this handbook. Per faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated in any way including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 360-867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to the start of class.

Communicating: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

Use of Student Work Posted to Canvas: Students post their work to an online learning platform known as "canvas". Our class canvas site is accessible to faculty and students registered for this course only. The work students post on canvas is their private intellectual property and may not be used or distributed without their expressed consent. Some work may also be owned by governments, organizations, or communities. Their informed and voluntary consent would also need to be obtained for use and appropriate cultural protocols would also need to be followed.

Audio or Video Recording: No audio or video recording may occur during class without the informed and voluntary consent of the students and faculty involved