

For the past several years I have fulfilled my contractual teaching obligations at the School of Public Policy and Management, Heinz College, Carnegie Mellon University, by teaching public finance in the fall, and public expenditure analysis in the spring along with various project courses dealing with such things as how to finance infrastructure more effectively, and the relationship between the covid pandemic, labor market outcomes, and school district tax bases. Each is a full semester or 12 unit course. Students are typically professional masters students at the Heinz School of Public Policy and Management who are interested in pursuing public sector careers. Carnegie Mellon undergraduates and doctoral students have on occasion also taken these courses. The public finance and public expenditure courses are now formally cross-listed to enable undergraduate enrollment from Carnegie Mellon's undergraduate colleges.

Additionally, I have periodically taught principles of economics, governmental and school accounting, state and local finance, macro-economics, and education finance and policy, as well as supervised independent studies on a variety of topics, and supervised doctoral dissertations on a mutually interested basis with doctoral students.

My general approach to educating professional masters students is to combine the pertinent theory of the course domain along with an explanation of relevant institutions/laws at the international, national, regional and local levels, as well as personal anecdotes based on my own public policy experiences at the federal, state, and local levels. Each course requires at least 5 individual and group problem sets which are designed to require students to combine theory to analyze real world problems through the manipulation and statistical analysis of significant administrative data with SAS and/or Stata and/or Excel. Tutorials on SAS and Stata are offered to provide basic tools. Extra credit problem sets are typically offered to enable students to do better in the course.

Courses are taught in a lecture-discussion format in English with considerable emphasis on student role-playing to address and solve real problems. Students are expected to at least read daily the front page of the Wall Street Journal to keep track of political/economic/international relations events that can be analyzed through the lens of the course they are taking. The explanation of complex financial transaction is effected through the use of "Strauss Bucks" which currently is denominated in \$100 Trillion currency notes. Course management is accomplished through the continued use of Canvas.

A course grade is based on problem set performance, performance on one or two mid-term short essay examinations and an short-essay final, and class participation. Attendance is mandatory, non-attendance results in significant grade penalties, and unusually clear rules for student classroom conduct are proscribed in the detailed course syllabus. For example, disruptive students are typically removed from the classroom. Project courses I teach typically involve advisory panel members from the world of practice as well as recognized academicians with relevant expertise.

The interplay between policy analysis contained in my various courses and how laws gets changed is explained in **First Matters** below.

First Matters

Professor Robert Strauss' 3 Step Approach

to Educating CMU Students about Public Policy Analysis and Public Financial *Analysis*

Public Policy Analysis Means being able to figure out:

Step 1: The Setting: Understanding Agents and the Agreed Upon Rules governing them:

- a. Private (people, private organizations) and Public Sector Agents (governments)
- b. Agents Rights and Responsibilities under Current Law
- c. Effects of b. on their behavior and well being

Step 2: The Politics: Understanding How Current Law Gets Changed

Step 3: Positive and Normative Models: Predicting the Effects of Changing Current Law on Agents

Public Financial Analysis Means:

Understanding, via Steps 1,2, and 3, the nature and purpose of the modern public sector whose sometimes-conflicting objectives include:

- a. Financing agreed upon public goods and services for national defense, domestic safety, education, health, property rights, and other purposes by non-voluntary contributions (taxes, fees) transformed into public spending
- b. Allocation of financing and spending authority and responsibilities among national, regional, and local governments
- c. Correcting market imperfections, externalities with minimum economic distortions
- d. Accomplishing agreed upon distributional objectives among people and cohorts
- e. Stabilizing the aggregate economy to achieve agreed upon unemployment, inflation, and economic growth objectives