SYLLABUS
E10.2902: Financing Schools: Equity and Adequacy in Public Education, 30 hours, 3 pts.

SPRING 2007

Professor: Sean P. Corcoran
Email: sean.corcoran@nyu.edu
Homepage: http://homepages.nyu.edu/~sc129/index.html

Office: 779 Pless Hall (Institute for Education and Social Policy)
Phone: (212) 992-9468
FAX: (212) 995-4564

Lecture: 30 hours, 3 pts.

Office hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the concepts, structure, practices, evolution, and economics of elementary and secondary school finance in the United States. A particular focus of the course will be on the wave of state legislative and court-ordered school finance reforms since California’s Serrano v. Priest (1971) that have sought to promote equity and/or adequacy in school spending. Students will learn how equity and adequacy are measured or estimated, how school finance formulae are engineered to achieve these goals, and how finance reforms in practice have affected the level and distribution of education spending, student achievement, and other educational outcomes. Part of the course will be devoted to case studies of individual state school finance systems or reforms, with a particular focus on New York and its Campaign for Fiscal Equity. Other topics include: the link between school finance and accountability, school-level resource allocation, facilities financing, and international differences in school funding practices.

PREREQUISITES

A prior introductory course in statistics, econometrics, or quantitative methods is recommended. An undergraduate or graduate course in microeconomics would be beneficial, but is not required (I will assume you have no training whatsoever in economics). If you are concerned about your preparation for this course, please see Prof. Corcoran at the beginning of the semester.

TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

Required Texts


Optional Text

Additional readings will be assigned from book chapters or journal articles from a variety of sources (a tentative reading list follows). Most if not all of the journal articles are available for download through the NYU Library e-journal portal, provided you are connected via a campus computer or are logged in with your NYU NetID, at: http://library.nyu.edu/collections/find_ejournals.html. In most cases I will provide copies of readings, or direct links to the article source, on Blackboard.

The bulk of our class discussion will focus on the assigned readings, so please prepare for each meeting by reading the assigned articles before class.
Your grade for this course will be determined as follows: three problem sets (10% each for a total of 30%), a written case study of a state school finance system or reform (20%), an in-class midterm (25%) and final exam (25%). You must submit all problem sets and the case study.

The problem sets are designed to give you practice with the analytical tools introduced in class, and thus will be assigned early in the semester. Many concepts will be introduced in the first half of the course that are key to your success in the remainder of the course.

The written case study will be due in class on March xx. You will be asked to spend 5-10 minutes during that class to formally present your case study to the class for discussion.

All materials pertaining to this course (lecture notes, readings, problem sets, handouts, etc) will be made available via Blackboard, which can be accessed through NYUHome (home.nyu.edu). Enrollment in the course should automatically give you access to the Blackboard site for the class. Check in with Blackboard frequently for new announcements, lecture notes, readings, and the like.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January xx</th>
<th>Lecture 1: Overview of School Finance in the United States / School Finance Litigation: From Equity to Adequacy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Lecture 2: Concepts and Measurement of Equity and Adequacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lecture 3: The Structure of School Finance Formulae</td>
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<td>Lecture 4: Public Choice and Local Demand for School Spending</td>
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<td>Lecture 5: The Incentive Effects of School Finance Formulae</td>
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<td>Lecture 6: School Finance Reform—Effects on Spending, Student Achievement, and School District Behavior</td>
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<td>March 12 – 16</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
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<td>Lecture 7: School Finance Reform—Case Studies</td>
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<td>Lecture 8: School Finance in New York</td>
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<td>Lecture 9: What is an Adequate Level of Resources? Cost Studies and Alternative Approaches</td>
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<td>Lecture 10: The Link Between Funding and Accountability</td>
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<td>Lecture 11: Resource Allocation at the District, School and Classroom Levels</td>
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<td>Lecture 12: School Finance—An International Perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Lecture 13: Financing Educational Facilities</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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READING LIST
**Subject to Change**
(*) = required, all others are recommended readings that will be discussed in the lectures

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**Lecture 1**
Introduction to School Finance in the United States
School Finance Litigation: From Equity to Adequacy

(*) Odden and Picus, chapters 1-2.


Yinger, chapter 2. (“Financing a Constitutional Education: View from the Bench,” by Anna Lukemeyer).

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**Lecture 2**
Concepts and Measurement of School Finance Equity and Adequacy

(*) Odden and Picus, chapter 3.


### Lecture 3
**The Structure of School Finance Formulae**

(*) Odden and Picus, chapters 4-6.

(*) Yinger, chapter 1. (“State Aid and the Pursuit of Educational Equity: An Overview,” by John Yinger).


Yinger, Appendices A – B.

### Lecture 4
**Public Choice and Local Demand for School Spending**


### Lecture 5
**The Incentive Effects of School Finance Formulae**


**Lecture 6**

**School Finance Reform—Effects on Spending, Student Achievement, and District Behavior**


**Midterm Examination**

**Lecture 7**

**School Finance Reform—Case Studies**

*A list will be provided of additional references*

(*) Odden and Picus, chapter 7.

To be divided among the class for discussion:

(*) Yinger, chapter 5. Kansas (Duncombe and Johnston).
(*) Yinger, chapter 6. Kentucky (Flanagan and Murray).
(*) Yinger, chapter 7. Michigan (Cullen and Loeb).
(*) Yinger, chapter 8. Texas (Imazeki and Reschovsky).
Lecture 8
School Finance in New York and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity


(*) New York State Education Department (2000) State Aid to Schools: A Primer.


Lecture 9
What is an Adequate Level of Resources? Cost Studies and Alternative Approaches


Lecture 10
The Link Between Funding and Accountability


Lecture 11
Resource Allocation at the District, School and Classroom Levels

(*) Odden and Picus, chapter 9-10.


Lecture 12
School Finance—An International Perspective

TBD.
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<tr>
<th>(Last Class Meeting)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 13</td>
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<td>Financing Educational Facilities</td>
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(*) Odden and Picus, chapter 11.

Yinger, Appendix C.