

The George Washington University
Graduate School of Political Management
Budgetary Politics and Process (PMGT 267)

Fall 2008

Thursdays, 6-8 pm

Hall of States: 444 North Capitol Street
(check the sign in the lobby each week for room assignment)

Adjunct Professor: Charles S. Konigsberg, J.D.

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Mobile Phone: 301-509-5688

Course Description:

The general purpose of this course is to help students understand the nuts and bolts of how Federal fiscal policy (spending and tax policy) is made. In order to achieve this understanding, the course will focus on: the congressional budget process; House and Senate procedure; the economic implications of Federal deficits; Federal tax policy; health policy; national security and international affairs programs; the future of Social Security; Federal “safety net” programs; education programs; energy, environment, and agriculture programs; law enforcement and transportation programs; and changes in fiscal policy necessary to secure our nation’s future. Course work will culminate in students preparing a “Memorandum to the Director of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs” explaining in detail how to secure enactment of the President-elect’s fiscal policies.

Required Readings:

1. *America's Priorities: How the U.S. Government Raises and Spends \$3,000,000,000,000 (Trillion) Per Year*, by Charles Konigsberg
2. *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2005*, by Alice Rivlin and Isabel Sawhill
3. *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2007*, by Alice Rivlin and Joseph Antos
4. *Senate Procedure and Practice*, by Martin Gold (Rowman and Littlefield, 2004)
5. *Running on Empty*, by Peter G. Peterson (2004)
6. Congressional Budget Office, *Budget Options* (February 2007) and the *Budget and Economic Outlook* (January 2008 and September 2008 Update)
7. Concord Coalition’s weekly *Washington Budget Report* (sign up www.concordcoalition.org).
8. Sign up for the McCain and Obama e-mail distributions on fiscal policy

Web Resources Students are Encouraged to Use

www.taxpolicycenter.org (Analysis of the 2008 presidential candidates' tax plans)
www.cbo.gov
www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2009/
www.washingtonbudgetreport.com (see the "budget links" and "archives")
www.govbudget.com
www.concordcoalition.org
www.cbpp.org

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on the following course requirements:

1. Attendance and active participation in all classes. This includes, in particular, by **5pm every Wednesday** emailing to Professor Konigsberg at least four questions pertaining to the readings and subject matter of each Thursday class session. (csk@washingtonbudgetreport.com).
2. Active participation in **October 30, 2008 in-class debate** on restoring fiscal responsibility.
3. Paper (no more than 20 pages double-spaced) in the form of a *Memorandum to the Director of White House Legislative Affairs* in the new Administration explaining in detail how to secure enactment of the new President's fiscal (tax and spending) policies. **Due date: December 4, 2008.**
4. Oral presentation on **December 4, 2008.**

About Professor Konigsberg

Charles S. Konigsberg is Chief Budget Counsel of The Concord Coalition, where he writes the *Concord Coalition Washington Budget Report*, an e-newsletter that analyzes developments on federal budget, appropriations, and tax issues. Mr. Konigsberg recently authored *America's Priorities: How the U.S. Government Raises and Spends \$3 Trillion Per Year* (Authorhouse: 2008).

Konigsberg began his bipartisan Senate career as Staff Attorney at the Senate Budget Committee. He then moved on to the Senate Rules Committee where he served as Chief Counsel on the Committee's Minority Staff. After the Rules Committee, he served as General Counsel to the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) at the Senate Finance Committee, where he managed the Committee's landmark half trillion-dollar deficit reduction legislation. Later, he served as Chief Health Counsel on the Finance Committee's Minority Staff. Mr. Konigsberg served nearly 5 years in President Bill Clinton's White House as an Assistant Director at the Office of Management and Budget.

Konigsberg recently developed *GovBudget.com*, a user-friendly portal to the Federal Budget. He has appeared on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, *Bloomberg Radio*, and *ABC Radio's Money Talk* as an expert on the Federal Budget and fiscal policy.

Course Syllabus

September 4: Overview of the Budget Process

Required reading:

Parts I and II of *America's Priorities*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

September 11: Do Deficits Matter? Comparing the McCain and Obama Fiscal Policies

Required reading:

Chapters 1, 2, and 6 of *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2005*

Chapter 3-5 of *America's Priorities*

Required for class discussion: prepare a side-by-side comparison of the McCain and Obama fiscal plans (please bring 6 copies to class)

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

September 18: Senate and House Procedure

Required reading:

Chapters 1-9 of *Senate Practice and Procedure* (by Martin Gold)

CRS reports on House procedure available at http://www.rules.house.gov/CRS_Rpt/index.html

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

September 25: Federal Revenues – Taxes and Tax Expenditures

Required reading:

Parts IV and V of *America's Priorities*

Chapter 5 in *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2005*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

October 2: National Security and International Affairs

Required reading:

Chapters 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, and 3-13 in *America's Priorities*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

October 9: No Class Due to Yom Kippur

October 16: Federal Health Care Policy

Required reading:

Chapter 3-6 in *America's Priorities*

Chapters 1 – 8 in *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2007: The Health Spending Challenge*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

October 23: Social Security and Safety Net Programs

Required reading:

Chapters 3-4, 3-7, and 3-8 in *America's Priorities*

Chapter 3 in *Restoring Fiscal Sanity – 2005*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

Select teams to debate competing views on Restoring Fiscal Responsibility

October 30: The Debate on Restoring Fiscal Responsibility

Required reading:

Taking Back Our Fiscal Future: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001155_fiscal_future.pdf

CBPP Response Document: <http://www.cbpp.org/7-9-08bud.pdf>

In class: debate competing views on restoring fiscal responsibility

November 6: Discussion of the Implications of the November 4 election on fiscal policy

I.O.U.S.A., the movie

Required reading: *Running on Empty*, by Peter G. Peterson (2004)

Following screening of the movie, be prepared to discuss in class the major implications of the November 4 election on fiscal policy

November 13: Energy, Environment, and Agriculture Programs

Required reading:

Chapters 3-11 and 3-12 in *America's Priorities*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

November 20: Law Enforcement and Transportation Programs

Required reading:

Chapters 3-9 and 3-10 in *America's Priorities*

Submit via email four questions regarding the required reading by 5pm Wednesday

November 27: Thanksgiving – No Class

December 4: Oral Presentations and Paper Due Date

Paper (no more than 20 pages double-spaced) in the form of a *Memorandum to the Director of White House Legislative Affairs* in the new Administration explaining in detail how to secure enactment of the new President's fiscal (tax and spending) policies.

Each student to give a 15 minute oral presentation summarizing their *Memorandum*