Economics 2450B: Public Economics
Dept. of Economics, Harvard University
Spring 2020

Professor Nathaniel Hendren
Teaching Fellow: Emma Harrington

Tuesday, 6-9pm (M-16, Littauer)

Course Description
The course will focus on a range of topics in public economics including welfare estimation of government policies, public goods, insurance markets, the optimal provision of social insurance, child-targeted policies, and place-based policies. The course will devote considerable attention to the development of an integrated theoretical toolkit for normative evaluation of those government policies.

Course Requirements
There are three sets of requirements for this course. First, the course will involve completion of three problem sets. Second, you will be asked to develop a research proposal and introductory analysis that either builds on an existing paper or is an independent topic. All projects must be approved by Prof. Hendren. So that you have sufficient time to focus on the exam, all projects will be due on April 21. Please submit your proposal in the form of a 3-5 page write-up that discusses the question of interest, proposed methodology, and any preliminary results. Finally, there will be a final exam during the registrar's allotted time during exam period.

The lecture plan for the course is below.

1. **Empirical Welfare Estimation** (Jan 28)

2. **Redistribution Concerns** (Feb 4)

3. **Commodity Taxes, Subsidies and Public Goods** (Feb 11)

4. **Human Capital and Education** (Feb 18)

5. **Child and Family-Targeted Policies** (Feb 25)

6. **Corporate Taxation** [Raj Lecturing] (March 3)

7. **Place-based policies** (March 10)

8. **Adverse Selection and Insurance Market Failures** (March 24)

9. **Optimal Social Insurance: UI** (March 31)

10. **Welfare Analysis of Health Insurance (I)** (April 7)

11. **Welfare Analysis of Health Insurance (II)** (April 14)

12. **Disability Insurance and Dynamic Social Insurance** (April 21)

13. **Behavioral Biases** (April 28)