

**FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PA 750 Public/Nonprofit Financial Management**

**CLASS SCHEDULE: WEDNESDAY, 7:00 P.M. - 9:50 P.M.**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”**  
**Ancient Chinese Proverb**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to financial management in the public, non-profit and health administration sectors. The course includes an overview of accounting principles, financial statements, cash and credit management, forecasting and other financial management functions. Students will be introduced to the jargon and the concepts of public financial management.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To introduce students to the fundamentals of financial management and some of the terminology used in public financial management.
- To provide students the opportunity to use financial management tools.
- To provide students with an adequate accounting background in order to understand and use financial management applications.
- To enable students to see the details of public financial management while being grounded in its general concepts.

**INSTRUCTOR**

James Nordin, D.P.A., is a retired Federal manager. He retired as the Western Regional Financial Management Director for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA in San Francisco. Prior to that, he served as the Regional Director of the Office of Fiscal Operations for the Office of Human Development Services (OHDS) in San Francisco. He was Grants Officer and Head Start Bureau Chief for OHDS in Chicago. While most of his titles

related to managing financial operations, his assignments were to "fix" poorly operating organizations. He took three organizations from "worst to first."

Dr. Nordin has a BA from Knox College, an MPA from Roosevelt University and a DPA from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Nordin has published three book reviews in three different journals and an article in the Public Administration Times. More important, last year six of his students had short papers published in the PA Times in a student symposium on ethics.

Dr. Nordin has been teaching graduate courses in Public Administration at San Francisco State University since 1995 on a part-time basis. He has taught Public Sector Budgeting, Financial Management in the Public and Non-Profit Sector, Public Policy, and the introductory course (Public Administration and Democracy) at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

#### **INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

Office Hours: HSS 328; Mondays, 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.;  
Wednesdays, 2:30p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and by appointment

Dr. Nordin is available by phone at 707/372-3653 (cell); FAX: 707/427-8810

Email: [janordin@sfsu.edu](mailto:janordin@sfsu.edu)

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Financial Management for Public, Health, and Not-for-Profit Organizations,  
Steven A. Finkler, Second Edition, Pearson Education, Inc. (2005)

Handouts from instructor on an irregular basis.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

### **Expectations:**

Students will be expected to have read the assignments before class meetings and to have identified the important issues and questions in the readings. Class discussions will be an important part of students' grades.

Because class participation is a substantial portion of the grade, attendance is very important.

In the material which follows, "For this session" means that students should have completed the items before class begins for that session.

Students should have an SFSU email address.

Although this course is generally thought of as a mathematical course, that is not the case. Students need much more skill at analysis than they do with mathematics. At any rate, nothing more than algebra is required for this course. It IS NECESSARY that students have some degree of expertise with spreadsheet programs.

Education is frequently an individual effort with competition for the single best grade. Public administration, like all occupations, is not a solitary activity. While employers seek applicants with initiative, they also seek "team players." Organizations cannot long function when there is internal strife. Public (and private) organizations most often seek group input and cooperation. This class will function on this model.

Students will only gain to the extent they put forth effort. In general, you will have approximately 2-3 hours of required reading for each session. However, to be prepared for a class session, you may have to read the material a second time or consult with your classmates or pose questions on Blackboard to fully understand some concepts. Remember, you are expected to spend AT LEAST two hours outside of class for every hour in class. The assignments are based on this minimum requirement.

There are 168 hours in a week (24 times 7). You should get 8 hours of rest per night (8 times 7 = 56). Each of you probably works and commutes more

than 40 hours per week, probably at least 50 - 60 hours per week. You will spend 3 hours per week in class and AT LEAST 6 hours preparing for class (some of you may spend 12 hours preparing for class) for a total of 9 - 15 hours for class related work. That leaves approximately 40 hours per week to devote to "domestic tranquility." In other words, there is no excuse for not being prepared for class! Be organized; be disciplined!

### Assignments

Students will write short (five pages) papers on four different questions/scenarios assigned by the instructor.

Each student will prepare a paper of no less than twenty-five (25) or more than forty (40) pages on a topic mutually agreed upon with the instructor. The topic can be one from the text book, from handouts, from an actual work project or one created by the student or suggested by the instructor.

Each student will present a topic from the syllabus/reading to her/his fellow students during class. Students will select topics for presentation no later than the second class session and will begin making presentations beginning with the third class session. Students volunteering to present in the third or fourth class session will be eligible for 5%-10% extra credit.

In addition, exercises will be assigned on an irregular basis in order to practice the skills necessary in financial management.

Quizzes may be given depending on the level of preparation by class members: i.e., if class members are fully prepared and ready to discuss the materials for the class, no quizzes are necessary; if class members are repeatedly unprepared, quizzes will be given.

**Grades:** The final decision on the weighting of assignments for grades will be made at the first class meeting. The proposed weights are as follows:

- Class participation - 10%
- Short papers and exercises - 40%
- Leading class discussion/presenting topic - 15%
- Long paper - 35%

The weights of each element and the elements to be included are negotiable until the end of the second week of class meetings.

Grading Scale

95-100	= A	80-82	= B-	67-69	= D+
90-95	= A-	77-79	= C+	63-66	= D
87-89	= B+	73-76	= C	60-62	= D-
83-86	= B	70-72	= C-	0-59	= F

**COURSE/WRITING STANDARDS**

It is assumed that students will perform professionally in preparing work required for this course. Collegiate papers should always be typed or prepared on a laser or inkjet printer and printed on 20 or 24 lb. white bond paper. You are welcome to use any software program to prepare written assignments. Papers must be double-spaced and typed in the appropriate APA format.

Whenever you quote from, make reference to, or use ideas attributable to others in your writing, you must identify these sources in citations or in your bibliography, or in both. When you do not provide this attribution, whether deliberately or accidentally, you have committed plagiarism. Plagiarism, defined as the act of stealing or using as one's own the ideas of another, is not permitted in college or university work or in any published writing. "Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another's sentences as your own, adopting a particular apt phrase as your own, paraphrasing someone else's argument as though it were your own." (Modern Language Association Handbook, New York: MLA, 1977, P.4) The sanctions for plagiarism range from reprimands and counseling to expulsion from the University.

Representing another's work as your own or closely adhering to the content or arrangement of work other than your own, without citation, will result in an "F" in this course.

Content, mechanics, style, and clarity of expression are all important grading criteria. Good papers demonstrate in-depth understanding of the course content and the assignment objectives. They are also carefully written and revised, they use the English language correctly, and they have been

proofread, spell checked, and grammar checked before they are submitted. Grading will be determined among:

Content. Your papers in this course will be divided between answering topical questions from the chapters and a major paper. For all written assignments, content is the most important criterion for grading. You should answer the question(s) assigned from the chapters. The requirements for the "big" paper will be discussed at length in class.

Structure/format. Your papers must have an introductory and conclusion paragraph. Remember, your introductory paragraph must clearly state the purpose/thesis of your paper; and your conclusion paragraph must review the merits of your argument and offer any recommendations.

Research. No matter the structure, format, or style, you must be able to support your thesis and general arguments. Note: it is critical for you to research facts, statistics, theories, etc., to support your key points. This can come from course materials, the Internet, or other viable sources. I do not necessarily grade your viewpoint in this class but rather the information, obtained through your research that you use to support such viewpoints.

Grammar/Punctuation. Clarity of expression is all-important. Good papers are carefully written and revised; they use the English language correctly. Don't forget to proofread all papers before you submit them. Note: poor writing may very well lead to questionable credibility. Don't let others get the wrong idea about you just because you can't write well. Additionally, today's public sector environment requires information to be presented in a brief, yet comprehensive, format. "Executive summaries" are becoming the norm in the executive ranks. Therefore, eliminate any superfluous words. Finally, ensure paragraph transitions are logical and maintain the flow of thought throughout the paper.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Class begins promptly at 7:00 P.M. p.m. and will dismiss at 9:50 p.m. Arriving late or leaving early may affect a student's course grade. Should an unexpected emergency arise that will result in an absence or your inability to arrive at class on time, please contact me on my cell phone as soon as possible. Two absences will

not impact your grade. (An absence may consist of missing an entire session OR missing portions of several sessions.) Students who miss more than two sessions should expect to have their grade reduced by at least one-half grade. Students who miss more than four sessions should expect to fail the course.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

A full-grade deduction will be assessed for any assignment turned in within a week following the deadline. Another full-grade deduction will be assessed for each week of delay thereafter. No assignments will be accepted after the final day of class.

Absence from class does not excuse a student from the requirement to submit class assignments on the due date. Please email your assignments to the addresses on page two of this syllabus on the date the assignment is due.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The nature of the course and the material requires us to discuss in class and in our papers certain aspects of the organizations and public servants we will study. In all cases what is discussed in class is to remain in class. Students may in their papers disguise all references to an organizations so that confidentiality is preserved.

### **PERSONAL NOTE**

It is important for students to understand my approach to Public Administration education. I was a practitioner for over 30 years. While I continued my education while I was working, my education was always for a purpose - how can I use this new knowledge to make me a better manager and to make the organization for which I am responsible more productive and a better place to work. I realized early on that, while I was a manager, I was an employee as well. If I wanted a pleasant work environment, that environment had to be available to all employees.

I also realized early on that the work of an organization is done by first-line staff. If productivity is to increase, then attention must be paid to those staff doing the work. That attention, I found, was best applied by asking them what to do, not telling them what to do. My job as a manager was to

remove the barriers that prevented them from doing their job and providing the resources they needed to do the job. These are very difficult tasks, but very simple concepts.

I worked in Head Start for a number of years and learned that the most difficult skills in life are learned, not in a classroom, but at home. It is from interacting with our parents or care-givers that we learn that the sounds we hear mean things: our name, our food, our toys, our parents, and the myriad other words we eventually master. How do we learn that? By practice! No teacher lectures us; we do not read treatises on language development. We listen and we try to imitate what we hear. We learn by doing. The same is true for adults. If you want to learn to be a public administrator, you must practice public administration. We will apply that lesson over and over in this course. This belief is summarized in the quotation at the beginning of this syllabus.

In my experience, the most important asset you can possess as a public administrator is credibility. Credibility comes from your knowledge of and skill in performing your job, your ethics, and your ability to present yourself convincingly. Therefore, your presentation and writing skills are paramount to your success.

I want every student to be successful. I measure success in terms of growth and improvement, not just in performance. Towards this end, if at any time there exists an impediment or barrier to reach your potential, please contact me or the University immediately. In most cases, modifications or accommodations can be made to ensure you succeed in all your future endeavors.

Finally, I have a passion for social equity. I abhor social discrimination. I believe in fair treatment for everyone. Ideas and people have value in and of themselves. We may disagree with ideas and other people, but we may never degrade or discount either. I have endowed the Gloria Hobson Nordin Social Equity Award with the American Society for Public Administration in honor of my late wife in order that social equity maintains high visibility perpetually in the public service.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Course Overview**

**For this session.**

1. Course overview
2. Introductions
3. assignments
4. expectations
5. grades
6. Read ongoing case study, page #23.

**Wednesday January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

**Introduction to Financial Management**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 1
2. What is Financial Management?
3. What is Public Finance?
4. Revenues in Public Finance

**Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Budgeting and Planning in Financial Management**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 2
2. Short paper #1; Answer question 1-2, page #25
3. The budget as part of the overall planning process (student led)
4. Two kinds of budgets
5. The budget cycle (student led)
6. Political Arithmetic

**Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**  
**More Budgeting**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 3
2. Line-Item, Program, Performance, and zero-based budgets (student led)
3. Cost benefit analysis
4. Forecasting (student led)
5. Budget control and "reform"

**Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007**  
**Costs**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 4
2. Fixed, variable, average and marginal costs
3. Break-even analysis (student led)
4. Cost Allocation
5. Activity-Based Costing (student led)
6. Exercise #1 - cost-benefit analysis

**Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007**  
**Capital Budgeting and Long-Term Financing**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 5
2. Capital budgeting (student led)
3. The Time-Value of Money
4. Investment Analysis
5. Long-term financing (student led)

**Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Managing Short-term Resources and Obligations**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 6
2. Working Capital (student led)
3. Cash Management
4. Marketable Securities (student led)
5. A/R
6. Inventory (student led)
7. Short-term Obligations
8. Paper #2: Answer question 5-2, page #215

**Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Accountability and Control**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 7
2. Management Control Systems (student led)
3. Measuring Performance
4. Variance Analysis (student led)
5. Ethics
6. Safeguarding Assets (student led)

**Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

**Reporting Results: The Balance Sheet**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 8
2. Financial Accounting
3. GAAP (student led)
4. Fiscal Years, Calendar Years and Grant Years (student led)
5. Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balance
6. Recording Financial Information (student led)

**Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Reporting the Results of Operations: The Activity and Cash Flow Statements**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 9
2. The Activity Statement
3. The Statement of Cash Flows (student led)
4. Relationships Among Financial Statements (student led)
5. Notes to Financial Statements (student led)
6. Recording and Reporting Financial Information
7. exercise #2; reading financial statements

**Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Accounting for Not-for-Profit and Health Organizations**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 10
2. Accounting for Not-for-Profits
3. Fund Accounting (student led)
4. Depreciation (student led)

**Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Spring Break!**

**Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Accounting for State and Local Governments**

**For this session.**

1. Chapter 10 continued
2. Donated Goods and Services (Funny Money)
3. Taxes (student led)
4. Accounting for Health Care Organizations

**Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007**  
**Financial Statement Analysis**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 11
2. Bases of Accounting (student led)
3. Government Fund Accounting

**Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007**  
**Financial Condition Analysis**

**For this session.**

1. Chapter 11 continued
2. Budgetary Accounting
3. Reporting Financial Information (student led)
4. Federal Government Accounting

**Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**For this session.**

1. Read Chapter 12
2. Notes to the Financial Statements
3. Ratio Analysis (student led)
4. Paper #3: Answer question 11-1, page #489

**Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**For this session.**

1. long paper due
2. Read Chapter 13
3. Financial Condition Analysis versus Financial Statement Analysis
4. Ratio Analysis (student led)

**Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007**

**For this session.**

1. Summary and overview