MPNA 635 : Economic Reasoning for Public Administrators and Nonprofit Managers

A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week :

MnTC Goals: None

This course introduces MPNA, MPA, MNLM, and other Metro State graduate students to the application of the principles and methods of economic analysis to the policy, management, and operational decisions faced by public administrators, nonprofit managers, social entrepreneurs, and other public service professionals. Public and nonprofit organizations (hereinafter referred to as not-for-profit organizations) are fundamentally different from profit-seeking firms. They are organized to provide socially valuable goods and services (e.g., public education, social services for the unemployed) independent of the revenues they receive from the sale of their products. While surpluses and profits can support their social missions, not-for-profit organizations do not intend to maximize these surpluses/profits. Because not-for-profit organizations use scarce resources from taxpayers, donors, volunteers, and other external stakeholders, they also operate under greater public scrutiny and with unique public expectations for openness/transparency, honesty, accountability, and fairness. This course will explain how managers and leaders of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and social enterprises can apply economic analysis and reasoning in the complex task of effectively providing social goods and services, taking into primary consideration the fundamentally different social and political goals, internal constraints, and external authorizing environments faced by not-for-profit organizations. MPNA 635 will also improve the economic literacy of public and nonprofit professionals in discussing and defending their respective positions on a public policy issue or controversy. Competence Statement Students will understand the fundamental concepts and methods of economic analysis and critically appraise and adapt them to the context of policy analysis, public administration, nonprofit management, social entrepreneurship, political advocacy, criminal justice and law enforcement, and other related public service professional fields.

B. Course Effective Dates: 05/07/2019 - Present

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. have a greater understanding of the fundamental differences of the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors and the implications of these differences to the application of economic theory in not-for-profit organizations;
2. understand and apply key concepts and methods of economic analysis, such as thinking at the margin, opportunity cost, risk and uncertainty, consumer and producer surplus, market failures to the policy, management, and operational decisions of public and nonprofit managers;
3. appreciate how competitive markets work and the critical role of government, public policy, and nonprofit social programs in addressing market imperfections and/or enhancing their efficiency;
4. conduct graphical and quantitative economic analyses of policy and management problems faced by public administrators, nonprofit managers, social entrepreneurs, and other professionals;
5. compare and evaluate alternative policies, programs, and projects using cost-benefit analysis and economics generally; and
6. assess economic arguments in media and policy sources critically.

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

This contains no goal areas.

G. Special Information
None