

## PADM 544 Financial Management for Public Organizations

Course Credits: 3

Professor Agustin Leon Moreta

Fall 2025

**Class Meeting:** 6 to 8:45 pm on Monday at TBA

**Office Hours:** 4 to 6:00 pm on Friday, and Zoom calls available by appointment

**Address:** Social Sciences 3006

**Email:** Email is best to get in touch. *Allow 24 hours for a response to emails.*

apleonmoreta@unm.edu

**Phone:** Call (505) 277-1092 if you need immediate assistance.

### RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

- PADM 500 Introduction to Public Administration or equivalent coursework
- Basic familiarity with Excel spreadsheets. Students unfamiliar with Excel are encouraged to seek one-on-one support from the professor or Graduate Support from the Center for Teaching and Learning.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to *PADM 544 Financial Management for Public Organizations*. This course introduces you to the theory and practice of public budgeting and financial management. In this core course, you will learn the fundamentals of budgeting and financial management for government and not-for-profit organizations. Through readings, lectures, problem sets, and exams, you will gain an understanding of how to use budgetary and financial information in organizational planning, implementation, control, reporting, and analysis. Topics include basic management of public funds, preparation and processing of budgets, revenue projection, expenditure controls, issues of fiscal policy, and the establishment of priorities through budgeting and financial management. You'll also have a chance to develop spreadsheet skills by using Excel to perform financial calculations and create financial documents.

### COURSE GOALS

The primary objective of this core course in public budgeting and financial management is to teach students how to use budgetary and financial information to make decisions in public and nonprofit organizations. A secondary objective is to help students develop their quantitative and communication skills. This course looks at budgeting and financial management as a process. The process begins with the development of a plan for the future. The plan is then implemented. Actions are taken to control operations to keep to the plan. Results of operations are then reported, and those results are analyzed.

The first half of the course focuses on developing, implementing, and controlling the plan. The course covers the development of operating budgets, tools for short-term decision making, capital budgeting decisions, and the analysis of long-term financing options. Management of short-term resources and variance analysis are also covered in this half of the course. The material in the first half of the course is often referred to as budgeting and accounting for managerial control.

The second half of the course focuses on summarizing, reporting, and analyzing an organization's financial position and the results of its operations. We'll study theory and practice related to accounting principles, financial statements, financial analysis, and specific aspects of accounting for government and not-for-profit organizations. We'll consider how financial information is presented and how it can be used to provide meaningful conclusions about the financial position and performance of a public service organization. The material in the second half of the course is often referred to as financial accounting and reporting.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following MPA core learning outcomes are addressed in this course. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with basic budgeting processes, concepts, and models.
- Distinguish among key administrative resource concepts such as efficiency and effectiveness, inputs, outputs, outcomes, budgeting, and finance in public programs.

## COURSE POLICIES

*Punctual Attendance Required:* Attendance will be taken at the start of a class meeting. Per the UNM Student Handbook, a student may be dropped from the course as a consequence of absences from class. This attendance requirement applies equally to main-campus students and distance/online students. Online students must use a computer, a camera, and cable internet or a high-speed connection to participate in class. Your camera **must be on** during class meetings—students invisible to the professor won't be considered in attendance.

*No Late/Makeup Assignments:* Late or makeup assignments won't be accepted. Under exceptional circumstances, I reserve the right to consider a late submission for partial credit.

*Workload/Credit Hours:* This is a three-credit-hour class of the MPA program that requires **independent work and study**. To learn the course material successfully, graduate **students should commit at least 10 hours per week** to the course outside of class.

*Electronic Devices:* **Turn off cell phones** during class. A computer is only permitted for class-related work, such as participating in class or taking notes. **Don't use your computer for other purposes.**

*Student Feedback:* Your feedback on the course will be welcome and appreciated. We'll ask for your feedback through various channels, formal and informal, throughout the semester.

*Email Communication:* Using your UNM email account is encouraged for electronic communication.

*Syllabus Changes:* This **syllabus will be updated** as needed at any time. I reserve the right to change any content of the syllabus, including the grading rubrics, re-weighting, and assignments. Assignments may be changed or added at any point. I'll announce any significant change during class or update the syllabus. **Use the most recent syllabus posted on Canvas.**

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

*Academic Integrity and Consequences:* The University of New Mexico believes that academic honesty is a foundation principle for personal and academic development. All University policies regarding academic honesty apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying, plagiarism (claiming credit for the words or works of another from any type of sources such as print, internet or electronic database, or failing to cite the source), fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of tests and exams, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the professor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. **All course assignments are independent, individual work.** Student assignments will be checked for originality through the UNM Turnitin system. The University's statement on academic honesty and the consequences for failure to comply are available in the Catalog and the Pathfinder.

*Accommodations:* UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (<https://arc.unm.edu/>) at [arcsrvs@unm.edu](mailto:arcsrvs@unm.edu) or by phone at 505-277-3506.

*Title IX:* The University of New Mexico and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and providing an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. The University's programs and activities, including the classroom, should always provide a space of mutual respect, kindness, and support without fear of harassment, violence, or discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of assigned sex at birth, sex characteristics, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation and gender identity. If you have encountered any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. You can access the confidential resources available on campus at the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center (<https://loborespect.unm.edu>), the Women's Resource Center (<https://women.unm.edu>), and the LGBTQ Resource Center (<https://lgbtqrc.unm.edu>). If you speak with an instructor (including a TA or a GA) regarding an incident connected to discrimination on the basis of sex, they must notify UNM's Title IX Coordinator that you shared an experience relating to Title IX, even if you ask the instructor not to disclose it. The Title IX Coordinator is available to assist you in understanding your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct and reporting, please see <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html> and the Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity's (CEEO) website. If you are pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, you may contact the CEEO at [ceeo@unm.edu](mailto:ceeo@unm.edu). The CEEO staff will provide you with access to available resources and supportive measures and assist you in understanding your rights.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

*Participation:* This will be worth 10 points out of 100 points. **Punctual attendance is required for every class** meeting of the semester. Active participation in class is expected. In class, please

feel free to interrupt me with questions or comments. Please thoroughly study the weekly material in preparation for class participation. Participation includes asking questions, commenting on the class material, answering the instructor's questions, and exhibiting citizenship behavior in class. This participation requirement applies equally to main-campus students and distance/online students.

*Problem Sets:* Weekly problem sets will be worth 10 points out of 100 total points. They will be applied exercises regarding the weekly material. The problem sets are a key component of the course because they give you opportunities for practical applications. The problem set will be announced on Canvas. I'm happy to take a look at working drafts of your work. If you'd like early feedback, feel free to send me draft versions at least twenty-four hours before the deadline. Weekly problem sets must be submitted on Canvas by Monday at 9 am.

*Tests:* These will be worth 20 points out of 100 total points. They will assess weekly reading assignments. **Readings must be completed before a class meeting** when we'll discuss the readings. Weekly readings will be based on the textbooks, but additional readings may be assigned during the semester. Weekly tests will be open on Canvas after class and are due by Monday at 9 am. Tests may include a variety of questions. Tests are a key component of this course because they give you opportunities for skill application and practice toward the final exam. To ensure the highest possible grade, each test offers three attempts for you to take.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will be worth 30 points out of 100 total points. The exam format will be similar to the tests but comprehensive of all course materials. This final examination will be open from November 29 after noon through December 01.

*Case Study:* A larger case study will be worth 30 points out of 100 total points. The case study will be about assessing the financial condition of a city government. The case study should be written in APA style. You'll provide reports of your research over the semester and an oral presentation. Students' submitted work will be checked for originality through the Turnitin system. See the appendix for case study guidelines. I'll provide further information regarding this case study in class or by email. Turn in your case study by December 13.

## **GRADING**

Participation	10
Problem sets	10
Tests	20
Case study	30
Final exam	30
<b>Total grade</b>	<b>100 points</b>

## **Grading Rubric**

(A+) Excellent: Outstanding work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, comprehensive, creative, innovative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of the highest professional quality.

(A/A-) Very good: Strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates a strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

(B+) Good: Good work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and methodologically sound. This grade indicates the student has accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

(B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some critical issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate, but the student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

(B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; it barely meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in good standing.

(C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; doesn't meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate the knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

(F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance is consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with severe limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limitations are pervasive.

## TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLIES

Your Canvas page is automatically loaded with the textbook by RedShelf. The bookstore will charge the cost of the ebook to your bursar account. If you want a print book or more information, check out [https://bookstore.unm.edu/t-1unm\\_inclusiveaccess.aspx](https://bookstore.unm.edu/t-1unm_inclusiveaccess.aspx) or contact [inclusiveaccess@unm.edu](mailto:inclusiveaccess@unm.edu). **Opt out before the deadline** if you prefer to buy the book from another vendor. Finkler, Steven et al., 2026. Financial Management for Public, Health, and Not-for-Profit Organizations, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (posted on Canvas)

- Microsoft Excel. Available for free at [Download :: Information Technologies | The University of New Mexico](#)
- Additional materials posted on Canvas

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Week	Read	Test-Set by
I	Preface, Ch. 1 Introduction, and Appendix 1-A	Aug 18
II	Ch. 7 Short-term financial management, Appendix 7-A and 7-B	Aug 25
	Labor Day—no class	Sep 01
III	Ch. 2 Planning for success: budgeting	Sep 08

IV	Ch. 3 Additional budgeting concepts, Appendix 3-A and 3-B	Sep 15
V	Ch. 8 Accountability and control	Sep 22
VI	Ch. 4 Understanding costs	Sep 29
VII	Ch. 5 Capital budgeting and Appendices 5-A and 5-B	Oct 06
VIII	Ch. 6 Long-term financing	Oct 13
IX	Ch. 9 Balance sheet and Appendices 9-A and 9-B	Oct 20
X	Ch. 10 Activity statements and Appendices 10-A thru 10-E	Oct 27
XI	Ch. 13 Reporting for state and local governments	Nov 03
XII	Ch. 14 Financial statement analysis	Nov 10
XIII	Ch. 15 Financial condition, Appendix 15-A and presentations	Nov 17
	Thanksgiving—no class	Nov 24
	Final exam	Dec 01

## APPENDIX Case Study Expectations

### *I. Introduction (1 page)*

In this case, you will assess the financial condition of a city government. You will examine the (1) Budget and (2) Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) of a large U.S. city of your choice. The city must have at least 100,000 population. **The city must have a recent Budget and ACFR available online** because you will need to download and use both documents for this research. Interpreting financial reports is one of the most critical skills for a public manager. The report should be organized into two major sections. In the first section, you will present the social, economic, and fiscal characteristics of your city. In the second section, you will develop the financial analysis of your city.

### *II. Institutional, Economic and Budgetary Characteristics (about five pages)*

Using the most recent Budget and the ACFR, identify the main functions of your city. Describe the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of your city. Next, describe the main programs and services provided by your city. What are the main operating programs of the city (e.g., police, fire)? What are the largest capital spending programs (e.g., highways, sewage)? What are the major sources of revenue for the city and why? Discuss how diversified or constrained the revenues of the city are. Does the city rely on one major tax, or does it rely on multiple sources of revenue? What advantages or disadvantages do you see in this city's dependence on those revenues? Lastly, how could this city save money, e.g., in the event of a revenue shortfall? Support your analyses by presenting significant amounts from the budget. At a minimum, questions to examine include:

- What are the largest spending programs of your city?
- What sources of revenue support those expenditures? Calculate the percentage of own-source revenue out of total revenues.
- How many functions (or services) does the city provide? E.g., public works, safety, utilities, parks, etc. Calculate the percentage of expenditure allocated to each of those functions out of total expenditures.

### *III. Financial Analysis (about five pages)*

Using the most recent Financial Report (ACFR) and its supplementary information, analyze the financial condition of the city. Assess the liquidity and solvency of the city. Does the city have enough cash and short-term assets to meet short-term obligations? Assess the financial condition and solvency of the city. Does the municipality have a strong ability to serve long-run obligations? Using the Notes, identify significant accounting policies that potentially affect the reliability of the financial reports. Are you concerned about the credibility of the financial report based on your reading of the Notes?

### *IV. Conclusion and Recommendations (1 page)*

In this concluding section, briefly summarize your findings concerning the financial condition as well as the service priorities of the city for the upcoming year. May suggest policy priorities or good practices for future years based on your research. You may suggest what the city can do to strengthen its long-run financial condition.

### *Format of the Paper*

Length: At least 10 double-spaced pages, aside from appendices. There's no upper limit.  
Appendices: Place references, graphs, or tables in appendices (not within the text)  
Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt.  
Margins: 1 inch

### *Suggestions*

You may incorporate preliminary ideas and analyses on your city from the weekly problem sets. You may use and cite additional bibliography for this case study.