Policy Issue Discussion Post

Federal Government Shutdown and the Budget Process

PAD 642

In this module, you learned how budgets function as accountability mechanisms that support control, planning, and management (textbook, pp. 9–10). You also learned that the budget process is a core part of government policymaking because it structures how public decisions are made about taxing and spending. Typically, this process is established in law and outlines how the executive branch proposes a budget, the legislature approves it, and the executive then executes and implements it, followed by evaluation/audit (textbook, chapter 4).

When the budget process breaks down, the basic functions of a budget can be jeopardized. In extreme cases—such as a government shutdown—agencies may lose the authority to operate normally because appropriations are not enacted. A shutdown occurs when lawmakers do not pass appropriations (or a continuing resolution) before the fiscal year begins (or when funding lapses), leaving the government without legal authority to fund many activities.

The policy issue we want to focus on in this discussion is the 2025 federal government shutdown, which is the longest government shutdown in the history of this country. What is your position on this government shutdown?

Find relevant and credible sources to learn about the shutdown. I have provided several links to get your started. After your research, write a discussion post of no more than 500 words responding to **2-3 of the guiding questions** below. Your answers should draw on module concepts and based on what you learn from the credible sources.

Sources to start with (views do not represent the instructor's own). Feel free to start with **one** of these links (or just skim them, or don't view them at all if you don't like them) to learn about the topic, and find your own sources to learn about the shutdown.

1. What the Shutdown is Really About | The Ezra Klein Show (YouTube)
2. Philip Joyce on the Government Shutdown and Presidential Budget Power | Washington Journal (C-SPAN)
3. Podcast: Inside the Federal Government Shutdown | Matt Weidinger AEI

Guiding questions (Pick 2-3 of the questions below to guide your post)

1. What are the policy issues that caused the 2025 government shutdown, according to your reading?
2. Who are the key actors involved in the budget negotiations that lead to the government shutdown?
3. How does a government shutdown undermine the budget's core functions—control, planning, and management?
4. How does the shutdown affect state and local governments?
5. How does a shutdown occur in the budget process? Which phase of the budgeting process (executive proposal, legislative approval, execution, or evaluation) doesn't work that lead to the shutdown?

6. The interview with Philip Joyce suggests shutdowns can also expand executive discretion. Do you agree?
7. Does a government shutdown give the legislature, or the opposition party, greater leverage in negotiating policy outcomes?
8. What change to the budgeting process or related policies could reduce the harms of shutdowns while preserving accountability in the budget process?

Do not use generative AI to write your discussion post. I want to read your own thinking—your position, values, perspective, and voice. AI-generated posts tend to sound superficial. They often summarize from Wikipedia without analysis, avoid taking a clear stance, and lack a personal voice. Posts that appear to be AI-generated will receive lower scores.

It is very valuable to have an informed, rational discussion on a policy issue. We all have our own opinions on this matter. Let's have a good discussion. After posting, read and respond to at least one other posts to contribute to the class discussion.