

Health Economics
PHS/Econ/PA 848, Spring 2011
Tuesdays, 9:30AM-12:00PM, 511 WARF

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Overview

Health Economics is an advanced graduate-level survey course covering selected topics in health economics. In most cases a solid understanding of microeconomic theory and basic econometrics will be sufficient for understanding the main concepts and ideas in the lectures and readings; such basic theory will *not* be taught in the lectures. In some cases a more advanced treatment of topics is appropriate, in which cases the relevant concepts or methodologies will be taught alongside the applied material. The **expectations** for written assignments and examinations are for exposition at the level of one prepared accordingly in microeconomics. Students who are unsure about their methodological preparedness for the course are encouraged to discuss this with Prof. Mullahy at an early date.

The class is lecture style, but students are strongly encouraged to participate in discussion, commentary, etc. The course is also moderately reading-intensive. Each week there will be a set of readings assigned, and these will be posted on the course's learn@uw web page. Many will be drawn from the bibliography listed below, but some additional readings may be added during the course of the semester. It is important to note that not all assigned readings will be covered during the lectures but that students are responsible for covering such readings in their preparation for examinations, etc.. Given the fast-changing, dynamic nature of the health and healthcare systems, students are strongly encouraged to read regularly the health-related reporting in publications like *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*.

Grading

1. (45% of semester grade) A paper **not exceeding 1,500** words that critiques a paper NOT on the reading list that addresses a topic on the on the syllabus or a topic in the area of health economics not covered on the syllabus but approved by Prof. Mullahy. (References do not count against the word limit.) The student must indicate, among other things, what topic is being addressed and why the selected paper is (or is not) an important contribution to the topic area. Discussions of methods, theory, data, etc. are entirely appropriate and encouraged. The paper will be graded on the basis of its arguments and quality of exposition, NOT on the quality of the paper being critiqued, although students are encouraged to select papers that *before being read* would reasonably be expected to be of high quality. The paper being critiqued should be either:

- (a) a paper published in a peer-reviewed academic journal between 2008-2011; or
- (b) a paper in the NBER working paper series with an issue date 2008-2011 (<http://www.nber.org/jel/I1.html>).

If in doubt about the suitability of a paper, or if you would like some guidance on selecting a paper, please contact Prof. Mullahy. **This paper is due no later than Tuesday, April 26, 2011, 3PM CDT.** Since it is possible to begin work on this paper at any time during the semester, there will be **no accommodations** for late papers **for any reason.** Papers handed in after the due date will have their grades **reduced by 15%** for each day the paper is late. **The paper must be submitted hardcopy (not electronically) and must be accompanied by a hardcopy submission of the paper being critiqued.**

2. (45% of semester grade) A comprehensive **final exam** based on the lectures and readings. The time and place for the final exam will be announced. Please note **expectations** above.

3. (10% of semester grade) *Quality* of class participation and attendance.

The schedule for the semester is as follows. In addition to the Tuesday morning classes, I am hoping to schedule one or two optional clinical experiences during which the "real side" of some important health economics issues might be experienced.

Date	Topic	Instructor
Jan. 18	Introduction / Health Outcomes	Mullahy
Jan. 25	Health Production, Health Capital, the Demand for Health	Mullahy & Green
Feb. 1	Health Insurance and the Demand for Health Insurance	Mullahy
Feb. 8	Health Care Demand and Utilization	Mullahy
Feb. 15	Provider-Side Economics	Mullahy
Feb. 22	Cost and Quality Issues	Mullahy
Mar. 1	Technology and Regulation	Mullahy
Mar. 8	Disparities in Health	Wolfe
Mar. 15	Spring Break	
Mar. 22	Publicly Provided Health Insurance	Wolfe
Mar. 29	US Health Care Reform and What We Can Learn from Other Systems	Wolfe
Apr. 5	Health Technology Assessment and Comparative Effectiveness Research	Vanness
Apr. 12	Uncertainty in Economic Evaluation	Vanness
Apr. 19	Unhealthy Behaviors	Mullahy
Apr. 26	Health, Disabilities, and the Labor Market	Mullahy
May 3	Empirical Health Economics (Health Econometrics)	Mullahy

Selected Bibliography

Some of the papers listed here, particularly those specifically relevant to the lectures, will be made available on the learn@uw course webpage, typically by the Friday prior to the lecture. Most are available electronically through various UW Library channels (JSTOR, etc.).

This bibliography is intended mainly as a reference source for students interested in pursuing additional reading in the topic areas discussed in the lectures. Most readings listed here will *not* be covered or assigned for the course; moreover, some papers assigned for reading during the semester may *not* appear in this list.

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