



Departments of Community Health Sciences and Economics Course Outline

		Term:	Fall 2004
Course:	MDSC / ECON 679 [Health Economics and Health Policy]	Section:	01
Time:	M 09:00 ? 12:00	Place:	G570 Health Sciences Building (subject to change)
Instructor:	Alan Shiell		
Office:	HSC G012E	Telephone:	210-9376
Office Hours:	By arrangement	E-mail:	ashiell@ucalgary.ca

Textbook(s):

There is no set text for this course. The titles listed below are a few of the seminal references in health economics and we will refer to them through the course. You are required to read extensively, however, and we will make considerable use of journal articles in class discussion. A detailed reading list will be distributed on the first day of class and a folder containing the essential readings will be made available.

Health sciences students who are new to economics are *strongly advised* to read Mooney's 'Economics, Medicine and Health Care' before the class begins. Copies are in the bookstore. Indeed ? you should read as much as you can about health economics. Economists should grapple with the first five chapters of Evans (available on line).

Donaldson C, Gerard K. *Economics of Health Care Financing*, London, Macmillan, 1993. (A second edition is now available)

Evans RG. *Strained Mercy: The Economics of Canadian Health Care*, Toronto, Butterworths 1984.

Mooney GH. *Economics, Medicine and Health Care*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1992.

Mooney GH. *Key Issues in Health Economics*, New York, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.

Two essential references for any of you seriously considering undertaking an economic evaluation are:

Drummond MF, O'Brien B, Stoddart GL, Torrance GW. *Methods for the Economic Evaluation of Health Care Programmes*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Gold MR, Siegel JE, Russell LB, Weinstein MC. *Cost-Effectiveness in Health and Medicine*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Course Outline:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the *application* of economic thinking to the analysis of health policy and health systems. Specifically, we will survey the organisation, financing and delivery of health services, proposals for health systems reform in Canada, the economic evaluation of alternative methods of providing health care, priority setting and resource allocation, the health behaviors of individuals and the relationship between macroeconomic policy and health.

The material to be covered combines the conceptual and the theoretical with practical applications of health economic thinking. Sessions will be largely interactive involving brief lectures, open class discussion and occasional seminars from visitors who will bring a variety of practical experiences to the classroom.

The course is open to graduate economics students and students with little or no economic experience but a background in one or more of the health sciences. Health economics is typically applied in multidisciplinary settings. It is important therefore that economists become adept at explaining their ideas in language that is accessible to non-economists. Equally, health researchers can benefit by learning a little of the language of economists and the concepts it describes. Recognising this, emphasis will be placed on facilitating an exchange of learning between these groups of students.

A summary of the syllabus to be covered is attached. Please note that this not yet finalized. It remains provisional and subject to change.

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

There will be no final examination for this course. Performance will be assessed instead by completion of two written assignments to be submitted over the course of the semester, plus class participation. The written assignments are each worth 50% of the final mark. Class participation will then be used to adjust the scores up and down (that is the relationship between the mark for class participation and written assignments is multiplicative not additive!). That is, the overall score for the two assignments is then multiplied by the score for participation to get the final grade.

The university's official grading system will be used to assign a score to the written assignments. Each assignment is marked on a numerical (percentage) basis, then converted to letter grades. The course grade is then calculated using the weights indicated above.

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, at the instructor's discretion, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.

Students? Union Vice-President Academic:

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Notes:

Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, etc.) should discuss their work with the Instructor within two weeks of the work being returned to the class.

Safewalk / Campus Security: 220-5333

AS:dm
2004-09-09

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

DATE	TIMES	CONTENT
Sept 13	900-1100	Introduction to the economics of health and health care. The nature of the health care commodity, markets and market / government failure.
	1100-1200	Group Discussion: Is health care different?
Sept 20	900-1100	The Canadian Health Care System: how does it compare with others?
	1100-1200	<i>Stuart Peacock (Monash University): Health care in Australia</i>
Sept 27	900-1100	Payment systems and incentives on the supply side. How should we pay our doctors? How should we pay our hospitals
	1100-1200	Group discussion: Should we introduce user charges?

Oct 4	900-1100	Economic evaluation: basic concepts
	1100-1200	<i>To be arranged</i>
Oct 11	900-1100	Economic evaluation: valuing benefits (QALYs, WTP)
	1100-1200	<i>To be arranged</i>
Oct 18	900-1100	Economic evaluation: valuing costs
	1100-1200	<i>To be arranged</i>
Oct 25	900-1100	Economic evaluation: handling uncertainty / presenting results
	1100-1200	<i>Marjon van der Pol (University of Aberdeen): Topic to be arranged</i>
Nov 1	900-1100	Resource allocation, priority setting and rationing.
	1100-1200	<i>Cam Waddel: Calgary Health Region's experiences with priority setting</i>
Nov 8	900-1100	Financing health care ? Private versus public insurance
	1100-1200	<i>Stephen Lewis: four economic dilemmas with the Canadian health care system</i>
Nov 15	900-1100	Some (more) economics of Medicare: What should be in the Medicare ?basket?? How should this be determined?
	1100-1200	Group discussion:
Nov 22	900-1100	Macroeconomics and health.
	1100-1200	Group discussion: Is the World Bank good for one's health?
Nov 29	900-1100	The demand for health: an economic perspective on health behaviors.
	1100-1200	<i>Chris Auld: Is risky sex rational?</i>
Dec 6	900-1200	The economics of health (care) reconsidered: critiques and a review

