



Department of Economics Course Outline

		Term:	Fall 2010
Course:	ECON 679/MDSC 679 [Health Economics I]	Section:	01
Time:	M 08:30 – 11:30	Place:	HS 1509 (Foothills Medical Centre, not on main campus!)
Instructor:	Dr. Herb Emery		
Office:	SS 420	Telephone.:	403-220-5489 403-210-8625
Office Hours:	M 11:30-noon in Community Health Sciences, T, TR 1-3 in the Dept. of Economics, or by appt.	E-mail:	hemery@ucalgary.ca

Course Description

This course provides an overview of topics in health economics. The aim of the course is to introduce students to economic principles and techniques which are of use in analyzing and planning health policy, in particular the delivery of health services, and for understanding the health behaviour of individuals. The course will be run as a combination of lectures and seminar discussions. A list of topics to be covered over the term will be available on the Course On-line Blackboard.

Prerequisite

The course is open to graduate students in Economics as well as students in Community Health Sciences (or other health sciences).

Required Resources

There is no set textbook for this course. A list of relevant textbook reference resources and journal articles will be distributed in class. [Selected articles and book chapters will be provided on the UofC BLACKBOARD site for this course.](#)

Course Goals

The course goals are to:

Have students understand of how economics can contribute to the organization and financing of health services, the evaluation of health and health care alternatives, decision making in a health environment and insight into the health behaviour of individuals.

Students who are new to economics will gain an understanding of how economic incentives influence key actors in the health care system even when explicit markets for health care services do not exist in the traditional sense.

Graduate students in economics will gain an understanding of the challenges for analyzing, and setting policy, for an important sector that lacks the market structures that economists typically appeal to in their work.

Much of health economics is applied in a multidisciplinary context, thus, it is important the economists become adept at explaining their ideas in a language accessible to non-economists. Equally, health researchers benefit by learning the language and concepts of economics. An emphasis will be placed on facilitating an exchange of learning between these two groups of students.

Learner Objectives

Following completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Integrate economic concepts into their future research
- Identify the strengths and limitations of economic and non-economic research methods/tools.

The Department of Community Health Sciences expects **intellectual honesty** from its students. Course participants should be aware of University policies relating to Principles of Conduct, Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. These are found in the printed Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar, or online under Faculty Regulations in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar, or at www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/how/How_LB.htm.

Cut Points For Grades

This course adheres to the grading system outlined in the University of Calgary, Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar. Percentage/letter-grade conversions are standard for courses in the Department of Community Health Sciences which I will be using here to ensure consistency across departments.

Grade	Course %	Grade Point Value*	Graduate Description*
A+	97-100	4.0	Outstanding
A	90-96.5	4.0	Excellent
A-	85-89.5	3.7	Very good performance
B+	77-84.5	3.3	Good performance
B	72-76.5	3.0	Satisfactory performance
B-	68-71.5	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Grad Studies
C+	63-67.5	2.3	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	60-62.5	2.0	

Late Assignments:

- Assignments are due on the specified date by 9 AM. Students who hand in assignments late will be penalized 10% per day for handing in late. Assignments that are handed in 7 calendar days or more after the due date will be refused and the students assigned a score of zero for the assignment.
- Students may hand in assignments late without penalty under the following circumstances:
 - The student has discussed the timelines with course instructor in advance of the due date and the course instructor has granted an extension
 - There is a valid health or family emergency such as is discussed under the University regulations for deferral of final examinations. Students may be required to provide the Course Coordinator with such documentation related to illness and/or emergency as is discussed and required in the University regulations pertaining to deferral of final examinations. This information can be found in the University Calendar.

Evaluation Plan

Due Dates	% of Final Mark	Evaluation Method
#1: Monday Sept. 27	20%	Media Excitement (3 to 5 pages) – you will identify and summarize one article from a newspaper or widely read periodical that has gained considerable attention from the public. In addition to the summary, you will critique the piece assessing the quality of the economic argument and the extent to which the claims are based on economic evidence.
#2 Monday Nov. 15	30%	What Can Health Services Research Gain from Health Economics? Choose a research topic, or research area, where the published work has not been carried out by economists. You will want to pick a well defined topic since you will need to find 5 to 10 articles published on this topic over the last 5 years. Where possible, choose the work considered to be “seminal” or exemplary of the highest quality for the area. Summarize the major findings, sources of evidence and policy implications of the work. Next you will assess what the underlying economics of the work appears to be. After that, you will identify key economic insights with respect to research program design (e.g. sampling), and/or data analysis, and/or interpretation of evidence that are missing from the work. Finally you will describe how you would do a study that addresses the claims that you have previously made.
#3: As scheduled in Final Exam period Dec. 13-22	30%	Final Examination
	20%	Class Participation – based on attendance, interactions/contributions in class and on-line discussions. This is a chance for you to demonstrate familiarity with course readings and key concepts.

Notes:

- Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, etc.) should discuss their work with the Instructor within *fifteen days* of the work being returned to the class.
- It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

Safewalk / Campus Security: 220-5333
