

Economics 4646
Topics in Health Economics
Fall 2025

Instructor Contact Info:

Professor East (she/her)
Department of Economics
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Office hours: Wed 10:30-11:30am or by appointment

Please allow one business day to receive a reply to an email. I *strongly* recommend you review the guidelines provided at the following link regarding email communication with faculty. It will help you not only in this class, but all your classes, and with all professional email exchanges you have in the future: <https://articles.outlier.org/email-etiquette-students>

Course Learning Objectives:

- How key health outcomes have changed in the U.S. over time and how health outcomes differ by demographic groups within the U.S.
- An understanding of how economists think about health and the determinants of health and how this is changing over time
- How health policy has changed in the U.S. over time, economists' role in health policy making, and where we are at now with health policy in the U.S.
- How health outcomes and health policy differ in the U.S. compared to other countries around the world

Prerequisites: ECON 3070 Intermediate Microeconomic Theory

Class Structure:

I will offer an in person lecture and discussion Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:05am – 9:55am in Stadium Building 140. I will use a mix of slides and other materials on my computer and the board to take notes. We may have a few classes meet over zoom and I will let you know if advance if this is happening.

Office Hours:

I will hold [office hours](#) each week. Attendance is encouraged to ask questions or for advice, especially if you are having any difficulty understanding the material in lecture. If the scheduled time and day doesn't work for you, please email me to set up an alternative time and day to meet.

Course grades:

Your course grades will be based on your participation in class (20%), in class reflection papers (25%), in class presentation (15%), one in-class exam (20%), and a final exam (20%).

Participation Grades:

Your participation grade will be based on general participation in class discussions, completion of a one-on-one meeting with me (see below), completion of in class surveys (see below), and demonstration of reviewing the required material for class by answering questions about it when called on.

On the days that there is a required reading/listening/watching, you are expected to do this before class and come ready to discuss in class. This includes bringing questions about the material as well as being ready to answer questions about the material. *I will randomly select one student to start off our discussion of each material with a quick summary.*

Please raise your hand to participate, so that we can ensure everyone gets a chance to participate. I will work to learn your names in the first few weeks of class and may call on you to make sure everyone is paying attention and understanding the material.

At the end of each class each day I will ask you to complete a short survey on paper. This will help me to track attendance which contributes towards your participation grade and to understand how you all are following the material.

One-on-One Meetings:

In the first week of September (9/2 – 9/5), I would like to meet one-on-one with each of you to discuss your course plans, your major choice, your plans for after college, and to generally get to know you better. To facilitate this, you must sign up for a 10-minute zoom meeting time using this link here **by the end of the day Friday August 29th:**

<https://calendly.com/chloeeast/new-meeting>

Meeting with me will count towards your participation grade in class.

In Class Reflection Papers:

There will be 5 reflection papers and the *lowest score will be dropped*. I will set aside class meeting time to work on your reflection papers. I will bring paper for you to use to complete your papers. I expect the papers to be about one page long. The prompt for the paper will be given in class the day of the paper.

In Class Presentation:

You will each choose one country besides the U.S. to study. You will read background information I will provide on the health systems in your chosen country and are responsible for looking up how key health metrics differ in your country compared to the U.S. You will then present this to the class and lead a short class discussion.

Exams:

There will be one exam during the semester, and a final exam, which will be weighted the same as the first exam. **The first exam will be held in person during the class meeting time**, so please make sure you can attend class on the day of the exam: 10/15.

Make-up exams are only administered in extreme circumstances, so please do not miss exam days. Excuses for missed exams must be pre-approved except when this is not possible in an emergency situation. Personal travel (vacation) is not considered an excused absence, so be careful not to make travel plans that might overlap with exams. If you are sick, you should email me about it before the exam.

Grading Scale:

Assignments will be scored numerically. After grading is complete, identical adjustments may be made to everyone's grade if the median score is lower than expected. I will be very clear if I plan to do this, and I will tell you if I will do so before the end of the semester.

Re-grading Policy:

You must submit written requests for re-grades within *three working days* of the day they were returned. I reserve the right to re-grade the whole work, meaning that you may lose points (since mistakes can happen in both directions).

Use of LLMs/Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Most assignments for this class will be in person and therefore you will not be able to use AI. You may use AI tools on specific assignments in this course, and I will discuss this as appropriate in class. If you use AI tools on permitted assignments in this class, document your usage with the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots], cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part of adhering to the Honor Code.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution:

StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and will be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please reach out to me as soon as possible and we will discuss an alternative arrangement. You must reach out to me within 3 business days of the temporary health situation for us to ensure a timely alternative arrangement.

Accommodation for Religious Obligations

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation within the first two weeks of the semester and we will work out an alternative arrangement. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information does not always align with how they identify. If you wish to have your preferred name (rather than your legal name) and/or your preferred pronouns appear on your instructors' class rosters and in Canvas, visit the [Registrar's website](#) for instructions on how to change your personal information in university systems.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

Additional classroom behavior information

- [Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior Policy](#).
- [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).
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- [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email OIEC@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [OIEC support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors are required to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these concerns regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure the person impacted receives outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#), located in C4C, or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Date	Topic	Required Student Prep for Class
Fri 8/22	Introductions to each other and the course; How do Economists think about health and determinants of health?	
Mon 8/25	Income and Health, Research Methods	Health Inequality and Economic Development by Angus Deaton (through section 2.1.3)
Wed 8/27	Income and Health, Research Methods	
Fri 8/29	Immigration Status and Health; Major sources of Health Insurance in US	Disparities in Access to Health Care During a Pandemic by East and Marcus Sign up for one on one meeting by end of day
Mon 9/1	Labor Day – No Class	
Wed 9/3	one-on-one meetings, no formal class	
Fri 9/5	one-on-one meetings, no formal class	
Mon 9/8	Guest Lecture on Immigration Policy and Health	
Wed 9/10	In Class Reflection Paper 1	
Fri 9/12	Race and Health	New York Times Coverage of Economics Paper on Maternal Mortality by Race and Income (gift link)
Mon 9/15	Why Have Health Insurance? Economic Arguments	
Wed 9/17	History of Health Insurance Systems in US –pre Affordable Care Act	
Fri 9/19	Affordable Care Act – basics of it and show example of marketplace, what fits econ theory and what doesn't	The State of Health Insurance in America
Mon 9/22	Research Evidence on Impacts of Health Insurance	
Wed 9/24	Economic Argument for Universal Health Insurance/Care	Designing US health insurance from scratch: A proposal for universal basic coverage
Fri 9/26	Changes in Health Insurance under Trump 2.0, Work Requirements	
Mon 9/29	In Class Reflection Paper 2	
Wed 9/24	Public Health and Externalities, Vaccines and Viruses	
Fri 10/3	COVID-19 Economic and Health Disparities	Zachary Parolin on What We Learned About U.S. Poverty, and Ways to Reduce It, from the Pandemic
Mon 10/6	Guest Lecture on Public Health Research from Anschutz	
Wed 10/8	Catch-up on material day	
Fri 10/10	In Class Reflection Paper 3	

Mon 10/13	Exam Review	
Wed 10/15	Midterm Exam	
Fri 10/17	Public Health and Externalities, Lead in Colorado Pipes	
Mon 10/20	Public Health and Externalities, Air Pollution	How Pollution Can Hurt the Health of the Economy
Wed 10/22	Public Health and Externalities, Democracy	Choose your country and let me know by today in class
Fri 10/24	In Class Reflection Paper 4	
Mon 10/27	Cost – Benefit Analysis, Economists' Approach	
Wed 10/29	Example of Country Presentation by Dr. East, Discussion of LLMs	
Fri 10/31	Supply Side – Access to Health Care and Prices (ACA marketplace)	First draft of country slides due by 5pm
Mon 11/3	Supply Side – Recent Changes including Private Equity	Private equity's appetite for hospitals may put patients at risk
Wed 11/5	Catch up on material and discuss presentations	
Fri 11/7	In Class Country Presentations	
Mon 11/10	In Class Country Presentations	
Wed 11/12	Class Cancelled – Dr. East travelling for conference	
Fri 11/14	Class Cancelled – Dr. East travelling for conference	
Mon 11/17	In Class Country Presentations	
Wed 11/19	In Class Country Presentations	
Fri 11/21	In Class Country Presentations	
Mon 11/24- Fri 11/28	Fall Break – No Class	
Mon 12/1	In Class Reflection Paper 5	
Wed 12/3	Exam Review	
Fri 12/5	Optional Office Hours, No Formal Class	
Final Exam Day		

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Any change in due dates or exam dates will be announced in class and via email/Canvas.