

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO**  
**Department of Economics**  
**Economics 4999-011**  
**Health Economics**  
**Fall 2008**

**Professor Tania Barham**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:30pm and  
Wednesday 2:30pm – 4:00pm in Economics 14C  
**Course Website:** <http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/hb/barham/courses/econ4999/>

**Course Description**

Health economics is a growing field and is an important aspect of public policy in developed and developing countries. The purpose of this course is to encourage students to read, think, and do research on issues in health economics. This course will cover issues that are pertinent to the US, other developed countries and developing countries. In order to help ready students for their working careers, students will be asked to use and improve their research and communication skills (writing and speaking) as well as their ability to work in groups. These skills will be developed while they learn about topics in health economics.

**Course Organization**

This course will comprise three parts. Part 1 will cover about a third of the time. During this time I will lecture on some of the basic concepts that underpin Health Economics. During part 2 of the course, which will last approximately 5 weeks, you will work on your research and presentation skills by doing a group paper and lecture. Finally, for part 3 you will write 3 short research papers on the health care system of a country and give a presentation.

**Prerequisites**

While there are no official course pre-requisites, students will be expected to be comfortable with the material from intro and intermediate micro or willing to put in some extra time to learn the material necessary. Some familiarity with calculus will be helpful for comprehending some of the reading material. An exposure to regression analysis will also be useful for understanding the material. Students who are unsure about their preparation for the course should speak with me after class.

**Textbook & Reading**

There is no required text for this course. Your readings are on the course website. They are password protected. I will be providing you with the user name and password in class.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation for this course will be based on a mid-term exam, individual project and group project. There will be no make-up exam so make sure you are there. The projects are described at the end of the course outline.

Written projects are due in class unless otherwise indicated below. There will be severe penalty for late projects: you will lose a full grade level for each day beyond the due date (i.e. an “A” paper that is handed in a day late will receive a “B”). **Note I count the first day late to be after class on the day it is due.**

PROJECT	DUE DATE	PERCENTAGES
<b><u>Mid-Term Exam</u></b>		<b>30 %</b>
<b><u>Individual Project</u></b>		<b>30 %</b>
Country Choice	Sept 2 send to me by email	
Stage 1	Sept 11 due in class	6
Stage 2	Sept 25 due in class	6
Stage 3	Oct 23 due in class	8
Oral Presentation		10
<b><u>Group Project</u></b>		<b>20%</b>
Group paper	2 days before oral presentation- send to me by email	10
Oral Presentation	TBD	10
<b><u>Participation</u></b>		<b>20 %</b>
Group Participation		8
Class Participation		12

### **Participation Points and Attendance**

*Group Participation Points (worth 8 percent of your entire grade)*

To prevent free riding, each member of a group will be asked to grade the *efforts* of the other group members. After you have finished your group lecture I will ask you each to email me participation grades from each of your group members so it is anonymous.

*Other Class Participation Points*

These are gained throughout the class and a worth a total of 12 percent of your grade.

5 percent will be given during the group presentations. You must prepare two questions for each lecture and hand the questions into me at the beginning of class. You can use the group paper to develop your questions. You will be awarded participation points for handing in your questions. You will receive 0 points if you are not at class. You will receive 1 point for being at class but not handing in any questions, you will receive 2 points for handing in 2 relevant questions and you will receive 3 points for handing in 2 relevant questions. **If you miss more than one class during the group presentations you will get a zero for the participation points for this section.**

4 percent will be given during the individual presentations. **If you miss more than one class during the individual presentations you will get a zero for the participation points for this section.** Since there is not always time to ask questions, I will have everyone sign into the class.

3 percent I assign based on who has asked questions and actively participated in the class throughout the year.

## Final Class Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	
		Tuesday	Thursday
1	Aug 25, 28	Syllabus Review and Introduction	Health and Economic Development
2	Sept 2, 4	Research Methods	Health Production Functions Demand for Health Care
3	Sept 9, 11	Health Production Functions Demand for Health Care	Equity, Efficiency and Need
4	Sept 16, 18	Rational for Government Intervention	Health Insurance
5	Sept 23, 25	Health Insurance	Health Insurance
6	Sept 30, Oct 2	Health Insurance	Health Sector Reform
7	Oct 7, 9	Economic Evaluation of Health	Economic Evaluation of Health
8	Oct 14, 16	<b><i>MID-TERM EXAM</i></b>	<i>Groups 1 &amp; 2 meet with Professor in classroom</i>
9	Oct 21, 23	<i>Groups 3 &amp; 4 meet with Professor in classroom</i>	<i>Groups 5 meet with Professor in classroom</i>
10	Oct 28, 30	Group Lecture: Developed Country Drug Policy	Group Lecture: Health Saving Accounts
11	Nov 4, 6	Group Lecture: Developing Country Drug Policy	No class
12	Nov 11, 13	Group Lecture: Social Insurance in the US	Group Lecture: Economics of HIV/AIDs
13	Nov 18, 20	Individual presentations	Individual presentations
14	Nov 25, 27	<b><i>FALL BREAK</i></b>	
15	Dec 2, 4	Individual presentations	Individual presentations
16	Dec 9, 11	Individual presentations	Individual presentations

## **Group Project**

The objective of this project is to research a particular topic in health economics. You will form groups of approximately 4 people. There are some topics which are developing country focused and others that are developed country focused. Your research output will take the form of a group paper (**to be made available to students 2 days before you lecture**) and a group lecture – your group will teach a class. Each group member should participate in the preparation of the paper and must give part of the group lecture. You may want to prepare some thought provoking questions to help engage the class.

**Please note that wikipedia may not be used as a reference.**

### **Office Meeting:**

I will meet with each group at least a week before they are to give their oral presentation. During this meeting you should have already done some research so you can come with reading you have found an outline of what you want to say and who will take which part. We will go over your outline together and discuss what you think you would like to say in your lecture.

### **Group Paper:**

You will prepare a paper on your topic as a group. Your paper must be properly referenced. You will base your oral presentation on this paper. I suggest no more than 30 pages long double spaced. To get full points you need to email me your paper 2 days before you give the lecture. Otherwise the late penalties described about will be applied. Feel free to give the class a couple of readings if you think that would help the class participate.

### **Group Lecture:**

Each group will teach a class based on the research they did in their paper using a power point or other type of presentation software. Each person in your group needs to participate in giving the lecture. You should plan on talking for an hour and leave 15 to minutes for class discussion and wrap up.

### **Suggested List of Topics:**

1. Drug Policy in the Developed World
2. Drug Policy in the Developing World
3. The Economics of HIV/AIDS
4. Social Insurance in the US: Medicaid and the Managed Care Revolution
5. User-fees in Developing Countries
6. Health Savings Accounts

## **Individual Project**

The objective of this project is to become the expert on the health system of a country of your choice, to describe the health challenges facing the country, and prescribe a potential policy solution. You may not choose the US. **Please note that wikipedia may not be used as a reference.** The project will consist of 4 stages:

### **Stage 1: Overview of the Health Care System**

Produce a paper that is a **maximum** of 8 double spaces pages plus bibliography (i.e. bibliography is not included in the page limit). Your bibliography should include at least 3 references. The paper must be properly referenced. It should outline the country's health care system. Below are the general areas

you should cover. Note depending on your country you may not be able to cover all these topics. However, you may find something else interesting to put in instead.

1. History: when the system was created and what led to its creation.
2. Funding: which areas are publicly or privately funded or both? And services are funded.
3. Delivery: Who delivers the health care? The private sector or the public sector?
4. Insurance: What type of insurance system is available (universal, employment-based), are there uninsured? Are there tax break systems such as Health Savings Accounts?

## **Stage 2: Performance of the Health Care System**

Produce a paper that is a maximum of 4 double spaced pages plus tables (i.e. tables are not included in the page limit). The paper must be properly referenced including the data sources. **I will give you three data sources during the research methods class. You must base your paper on one or more of these data sources.** You are welcome to find other sources as well. In this summary you want to use health data to report on the performance of the health care system (i.e. expenditure, morbidity, mortality, health care resources). Make comparisons between your country and other countries in the region and other countries at a similar income level ([www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/classgroups.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/classgroups.htm)). You also want to show how the trends have changed in your country (i.e how the infant mortality rate changed between 1960 and 2006). Make sure to describe the data in words in the text of your paper. Based on the data and your readings outline some of the challenges you think this country faces.

## **Stage 3: Problems and Solutions**

Produce a paper which is a maximum 6 double spaced pages plus bibliography. In this summary you want to outline one or two important health care problem the country is facing. Use statistics to describe the program and how this health problem differs or is the same to other countries in the region or form a similar income level. Then either:

1. Suggest a change in health care policy (health care reform) and the economic rationale for this reform, or
2. Describe how the country is tackling this problem and provide a critique using economic rationale.

## **Stage 4: Oral Presentation**

You should plan a presentation reviewing the three stages of your project. Once we have the final class numbers I'll let you know the length of the presentation. Usually there are 4 presentations in a day and you each have 15 minutes plus a few minutes for questions.

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

## **Religious Observances**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. If you have a conflict due to a religious obligation, please see me by January 24<sup>th</sup> so that alternate arrangements can be made. Policies regarding religious practice are available at [www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

## **Academic Misconduct**

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

## **Sexual Harassment**

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

## **Learning Environment**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail 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 differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)