

**Course Syllabus ECN 240**  
**Health Economics**  
**Spring 2015**

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**Prerequisite:** ECN 150 and an applied statistics course  
**Meeting Days:** Tuesday and Thursday  
**Meeting Time:** 3:00pm-4:45pm  
**Meeting Room:** Kirby 103  
**Instructor:** Dr. Christina Marsh Dalton  
**Office Address:** 204B Kirby Hall  
**Office Phone:** 336-758-4495  
**Office Hours:** Monday 3pm-4pm, Thursday 2pm-3pm  
**Course website:** [http://users.wfu.edu/daltonc/teaching\\_240.html](http://users.wfu.edu/daltonc/teaching_240.html)

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**I. Course Description**

This course serves as an introduction to the role of economics in health care and health policy. We will be using the methods of economic analysis to the study of the health care industry. It builds on microeconomic principles of supply and demand and covers topics such as the market for medical care, the market for health insurance, the role of government in health care, and health care reform.

**II. Course Prerequisites**

ECN 150 and an applied statistics course

**III. Course Goals and Objectives**

The course aims to

- Enhance your understanding of the economic principles that drive the health care system
  - Supply and demand for health care and health insurance
  - Sources of market failures
  - Role of government intervention
- Introduce you to the use of economic analysis for evaluating reforms and proposals in health-care policy making
- Improve your research and presentation skills in general

**IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations**

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading and class time will be spent as a combination of lecture and discussion. The goal of the course to learn health economics and health policy, but will also emphasize how to conduct research, work in teams, and present research. These are all important skills for your career development.

For most weeks, the course will be heavier on instructor's lecture, but will still involve significant student interaction. Some lectures will partially rely on a seminar-like setting in which students will be even more involved through discussions and presentations.

I strongly encourage you to read newspapers and magazines (such as *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*) to keep abreast of health-related news. There are a lot of changes and debates taking place right now in the U.S., and we can discuss any questions you have in class. Finally, *Health Affairs*, the policy journal of the health system, hosts a communal blog at <http://www.healthaffairs.org/blog/>.

## V. Course Text and Readings

There is one required textbook for the course.

*Health Economics : Theory, Insights, and Industry Studies, 6th Edition* Santerre/Neun.

In addition, I will post readings at the course website.

## VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

Day	Dates	Topic	Readings	Notes
Tues	13-Jan	Overview & Economic Perspective	Ch. 1, Ch. 2	
Thurs	15-Jan	Value of Health, Life	Read "Your Money or Your Life" posted on the course web-site. There will be an in-class discussion.	
Tues	20-Jan	Cost-Benefit Analysis	Ch. 3	
Thurs	22-Jan	Technological Change	Read "Technological Change" posted on the course web-site. There will be an in-class discussion.	
Tues	27-Jan	Demand For Medical Care	Ch. 5	
Thurs	29-Jan	Demand For Medical Care	Ch. 5	
Tues	3-Feb	Demand for Health Insurance	Ch. 6	
Thurs	5-Feb	Demand for Health Insurance	Ch. 6	
Tues	10-Feb	Demand for Health Insurance	Ch. 6	
Thurs	12-Feb	Market Models for Medical Care	Ch. 8	

Tues	17-Feb	Market Models for Medical Care	Ch. 8	
Thurs	19-Feb	<b>Midterm I</b>		
Tues	24-Feb	Health Insurance Markets	Ch. 11	Groups for Group Project assigned
Thurs	26-Feb	Health Insurance Markets	Ch. 11	
Tues	3-Mar	Economics of Physicians	Ch. 12	
Thurs	5-Mar	Economics of Physicians	Ch. 12	Brief Group Statement due in class
Tues	10-Mar	Spring Break		
Thurs	12-Mar	Spring Break		
Tues	17-Mar	Economics of Hospitals	Ch. 13	
Thurs	19-Mar	Economics of Hospitals	Ch. 13	
Tues	24-Mar	Special Topics of Choice		
Thurs	26-Mar	Special Topics of Choice		Group Draft Presentations begin
Tues	31-Mar	<b>Midterm II</b>		
Thurs	2-Apr	The Case for Government Intervention	Ch. 9	
Tues	7-Apr	<b>In-class presentations</b>		
Thurs	9-Apr	<b>In-class presentations</b>		
Tues	14-Apr	<b>In-class presentations</b>		
Thurs	16-Apr	Lecture by Sam Peltzman		
Tues	21-Apr	<b>In-class presentations</b>		
Thurs	23-Apr	Global Health Care Systems	Ch. 4	
Tues	28-Apr	Global Health Care Competition		

The final exam is May 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 2pm.

## VII. Evaluation and Grading

You will be evaluated on both individual and group activity as detailed below:

2 Midterms: 40% (20 % each)

Final: 25%

Group Draft Presentation: 5%

Group Final Presentation: 20%

Class Participation and 3 Articles: 10%

Total 100%

Midterms: The midterms will include the material covered in class and assigned as reading (whether discussed in class or not) up to *one class period previous* to the exam. If you have a letter registered with the Learning Assistance Center & Disability Services, you must inform the instructor within two weeks of the exam in order to schedule accommodation.

Final: Final will be *cumulative* and will include the material covered in class and assigned as reading (whether discussed in class or not). The final will also cover all the in-class Group Presentations.

Group Project: You will complete a group project as a part of a team (3-5 individuals). The goal of the group project is to give you an opportunity to use the tools and concepts learned in class to evaluate recent health care reform topics.

The first outline of your project is due after Midterm I. This is an opportunity for me to provide as much feedback as possible before your draft presentation. The more complete, the better position you will be in for the draft grade. This outline is mandatory and is a component of the final project grade. Failure to turn in this outline on time will result in a zero for that part of the project.

At the end of the project, you will be asked to peer review your team members. 25% of your group project grade will depend on your team members' peer review.

The outcome of the group project will be a full-class presentation. There is a draft presentation approximately one week before the in-class presentation. I reserve the right to cancel your final presentation if your group does not show up for the draft presentation or if the presentation is sufficiently underprepared that it would waste your colleagues' time. This would result in a zero for both the draft and the final project.

Your group will choose a topic from health reform, broadly defined—meaning any way to improve market functioning, whether proposed currently or not. The presentation will be based on resources such as academic publications, think tank research, and media. You are not required to pick a side. The key is the demonstration of critical thinking based on the economics tools acquired in class. You will be expected to evaluate economic arguments behind the reform proposals.

**This is an academic presentation- make sure it is organized appropriately, including MLA citations and a bibliography with *reputable* sources. This means primary sources when possible, and concentrating on academic papers, responsible media outlets, and published material. If you are unsure what constitutes a *reputable* source, please consult with the professor.**

Some useful websites

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/index.dtl>

[http://www.commonwealthfund.org/General/General\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=670761](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/General/General_show.htm?doc_id=670761)

<http://www.nhpf.org/>

<http://www.kff.org/uninsured/reform.cfm>

<http://www.urban.org/health/index.cfm>

**Class Participation and 3 Articles:** Be on time and ready to participate. However, just sitting in the class does not fulfill participation. Other components of participation:

- In some lectures, we will have seminar-like active “in-class” discussions based on the additional reading. Your attention and participation in these discussions will improve your participation grade.
- Participation is also dependent on a writeup of three articles related to the course during the semester. These articles can be from newspapers such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or other reputable news sources or blogs. The article writeup should be approximately one page, and will be judged on how well the article is related to the concepts we’ve learned. To ensure I have time to read articles, you may only submit one article per week. (Solve this problem backwards!)

**Reading non-course related materials and is not acceptable during this class. If you are not going to engage and participate- you are wasting your time, mine, and your colleagues. Do not show up.**

Make-Up Exam policy: No make-up midterms, group presentations, or final exams will be given unless pre-approved by the instructor. Absence due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances is understood with respect. Students are responsible for providing documentation to the instructor to verify the reason for the absence as far in advance as possible.

Re-Grade policy: Students requesting that their exam must be re-graded have to submit their original exam with a written note explaining the reason for their re-grade request within 2 course meetings of the time the exams are returned. Any exam submitted for a re-grade will be subject to a complete re-grade of the whole text by the instructor.

**The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.**