EC385.02
Health Economics
Spring 2016
T Th 3-4:15pm
Gasson 202

Professor Tracy L Regan
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Email: tracy.regan@bc.edu
Phone: 617-552-2339 or 3679
Fax: 617-552-2308
Office Hours: Wed. 1-3pm and by email appointment

Course Description: This course is designed as an introduction to the study of health care economics with special emphasis on the pharmaceutical and health insurance industries. We will discuss the historical evolution of health care markets and current legislative changes and public policy implications. Students will apply the tools learned in their introductory and intermediate microeconomics courses to current and past topics in the health care industry. Guest speakers will focus on the business of health care, health and wellness, and entrepreneurship. Presentation and discussion of current events will introduce students to recent topics in health care.

Prerequisites: Students are expected to have completed and passed micro and macro principles (EC131 and EC132) and microeconomic theory (EC201). It is assumed that students have a working knowledge of the material from these courses and are comfortable with some basic calculus.

Teaching Assistant: Choon Sung Lim, cs.lim@bc.edu. Office hours: TBA, Maloney 336.

Required Course Packets: A bound, partially complete set of course notes will be available for purchase at the BC bookstore (~$15.) Students are expected to bring these to class and to complete them based on the lecture slides.

Canvas Learning Management System: Canvas will be used to post class announcements, gain access to grades, and to download/print course documents. Canvas can be accessed via the BC Agora Portal. Information about Canvas can be learned by watching the various tutorials and reading the FAQs. It is your responsibility to check this system periodically and to arrive to class prepared and informed. Please ensure that your preferred email is registered with this system.

Reading and Listening List: The reading and listening list is available on Canvas, along with .pdfs of the journal articles.

Class Attendance: Class attendance is strongly encouraged as it is essential to learning the material of this course. The material is analytical, theoretical, and cumulative in nature and thus it is necessary to keep up with the subject matter. Material covered in class is not always readily available in the assigned readings. Do not allow yourself to get behind. If a student misses a lecture, it is his/her responsibility to get the lecture notes from a classmate; neither the Professor...
nor the T.A. will make the lecture notes available. Moreover, please do not attempt to copy a classmate’s previous notes during the lecture when the student returns. If you will miss a guest lecture due to a religious observation or civic obligation, please notify the instructor at least one week in advance and provide requested and appropriate documentation. Should an emergency arise, the student—or someone acting on his/her behalf—is required to contact the Professor as soon as possible. The Professor will determine if your absence is excused and, if so, what can be done to make-up for the material you missed.

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected and required to maintain a professional and pleasant environment that facilitates learning. Any disrespectful, disruptive, or otherwise unbecoming behavior will result in a verbal warning. If such behaviors continue the student will be issued a written notice. Upon the third violation the student will be administratively dropped from the course. Students are encouraged and expected to:

1. Arrive on time.
2. Do not leave early (except for a legitimate/valid reason).
3. Be courteous to the Professor and to their fellow peers.
4. Do not talk while Professor or other student is talking or during exams.
5. Silence/turn off and put away all cell phones, etc.
6. Only use laptops/tablets for taking class notes.
7. Maintain maturity and professionalism.
8. Participate in class activities and discussions.

Grading Policy: Each student’s course grade will be determined on the basis of the student’s overall performance on the problem sets, summaries of assigned reading, current event presentation, in-class participation, exams, and group project.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Sets</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary and Analysis of Written and Audio Media</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class attendance, participation, etc.</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest speakers</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterms and Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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There are two midterm exams and an optional comprehensive final exam, each weighted equally. Subject to the Professor’s approval, students have two options available in calculating the remaining 40 percent of their grade.

Option #1
The student is required to take both midterm exams. Each exam is worth 20 percent of the course grade. If the student is satisfied with his/her grade, the comprehensive final exam is optional. Student will notify Professor on the last day of class as to his/her decision whether or not to take the final exam. Should
the student choose to take the comprehensive final exam, the lowest midterm exam score will be dropped and replaced by the score received on the final exam.

**Option #2**
Should the student miss one midterm exam, he/she is required to contact the Professor **before the scheduled day/time or immediately thereafter**, subject to feasibility. The student will provide the appropriate documentation to the Professor, as requested, to support the excused absence (e.g., illness). The student is then required to take the comprehensive final exam that will replaced the missed midterm exam and count for 20 percent.

**Problem Sets:** Problem sets will be posted on Canvas periodically throughout the semester. The problem sets count for 10 percent of the course grade. Each part of a question will be worth one point and can earn 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, and 1. You should attempt to complete each as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. The problem sets are designed to provide additional aid in understanding the subject material covered in class and in the readings and as a review for the midterms and final. You are welcome and encouraged to form study groups and work on the problem sets collectively. You can submit one hard copy assignment per max. 4-person group; however, each group member will submit individual responses to the written (i.e. non-numerical, graphical) questions. That being said, it is important that you individually know how to do each question as you will see similar material on the exams. Thus, do not merely put your name on a group’s problem set without having participated and without full knowledge of how to complete each problem. You are of course welcome to work individually as well. Problem sets are due on the date specified at the **beginning** of the class period.

**No late problem sets will be accepted.** **Problem sets are required to be in hard copy—no email attachments are acceptable.** Please note that problem sets must be legible. Thus, if your handwriting is poor the problem set should be typed. It is not necessary, however, to type graphs and numerical solutions.

**Summary and Analysis of Written and Audio Media:** The reading/listening list is available on Canvas; .pdfs of the journal articles are provided. The writing assignments count for 10 percent of the course grade. Students will submit a one-page, single-space, hard copy summary/analysis at the beginning of class on the designated date. The one-page summary/analysis of the journal articles should have the following format and address the following points, if appropriate:

- size 12 font, Times New Roman or Arial font, single-spaced, standard margins (1” top and bottom and 1.25” left and right)
- i. What is the goal of this study?
- ii. What is the time period analyzed?
- iii. What is/are the data source(s)?
- iv. What are the main findings?
- v. What new information did you learn?
- vi. What are some suggestions/criticisms you would make to the author(s)?
- vii. Questions you have for the author(s)?
The *podcasts* should be summarized and then commented upon for the minimum required one page. **Any summary short of one complete page will not receive credit.** A separate title page should include your name, course number and section, reading #, and titles and authors of chosen articles. A sample writing assignment corresponding to a journal article can be found on Canvas.

Writing assignments are required to be in hard copy—**no email attachments** are acceptable. Writing assignments are due on the designated date and **no late writing assignments will be accepted.**

**Presentation/Discussion of Current Events:** Students will choose or be assigned a class period in which they and some of their classmates will present and discuss current event articles chosen collectively by the class and the Professor. The current event presentation counts for 10 percent of the course grade. Students are expected to read all articles posted on Canvas, along with conducting their own research to update the topics. As a group, students will present the important and relevant material in a ~20 minute presentation. Five minutes will be devoted to classroom discussion and question.

**Group Project:** Students will form or be assigned groups, likely 4-5 persons. Each group member will read T.R. Reid’s *The Healing of America.* The Professor will assign each group a collection of countries to research regarding their health care market, demographics, diseases, etc. Each group member will write a minimum 4-page double-space report summarizing the country he/she researched. Along with the current health care system, it would be helpful to provide a general description of the country, its location, demographics, health problems, income level, etc. As a group, the students will then write a minimum 2-page double-space comparison of the countries researched to those highlighted in Reid’s book. The paper will conclude with a minimum 2-page double-space report suggesting an ideal health insurance system for the U.S. Thus, in total the paper will approximately be 20-24 pages with the typical margins, font size, etc. **Any paper short of the assigned minimum page limits will lose points.** Supporting tables and graphs are strongly encouraged and should be included at the paper’s end; they are not part of the minimum written requirement, however. Students are expected to properly cite and document their list of references at the paper’s end. Again, this list of references is not part of minimum written requirement. Students are encouraged to write their papers with the aid of sections (e.g., I. Introduction) and to ensure that at least one person is in charge of reading the entire paper to ensure that it flows, reads well, and is edited correctly.

Grades for the group project will be distributed based on peer evaluations; should there be a low, outlying score, it will be dropped. Upon completion of the project, students will rate their group members’ participation on a scale of 1-10 where 1=no contribution and 10=perfect contribution. The student’s grade will be scaled by the average peer assessment. The group project counts for 15 percent of the course grade.
**Attendance and Participation:** All students are expected to be in attendance for the current event and group project presentations. Moreover, students are expected to contribute to and participate in class discussions and lectures. This will help comprise 10 percent of the course grade.

**Midterms and Final:** There will be two midterm exams and a comprehensive final exam. You are expected to be present for each examination, as there will be **no make-up exams**. **Missing an exam will result in a grade of zero.** Should the student miss one midterm exam, he/she is required to contact the Professor **before the scheduled day/time or immediately thereafter**, subject to feasibility. The student will provide the appropriate documentation to the Professor, as requested, to support the excused absence (e.g., illness) and the student will be given Option #2, as detailed above, in determining his/her course grade. Should the student miss an exam and **not contact the Professor and/or not provide an acceptable excuse**, he/she will **be assigned a grade of zero** for the unexcused missed midterm exam and **thus not eligible** for Option #2.

You may use a basic calculator during the exam; you cannot use a graphing calculator your cell phone, your PDA, etc., however. The Professor will have calculators available during the exam for everyone to share.

**Grade Appeals:** If you believe that a mistake has been made in the grading of one of the assignments/exams, you should submit your assignment/exam to the Professor **immediately at the conclusion of the class in which the assignment/exam was returned/reviewed.** No appeals will be considered after this time. **No appeals will be considered if the student was not in class on the day the assignments/exams were returned/reviewed.** Appeals must be submitted in written form, listing the question number and a clear explanation for the appeal. Appeals can result in your grade being raised or lowered.

**Guest Speakers:** A series of guest speakers will be visiting our course. Five percent of your course grade will be based on your on-time arrival, attention, and participation during the lecture. Additionally, students must submit **three questions for the speaker in hardcopy at the beginning of lecture; no late submissions of questions will be accepted.** Information on the guest speakers will be communicated on Canvas in advance of the speaker’s visit. The (tentative) schedule is:

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<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Tentative Date</th>
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<td>TBA</td>
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**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in any form. Please see the university’s policies and procedures regarding academic integrity. [http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html](http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html)
**Intellectual Property:** Please note that all the course materials are copyrighted and considered the intellectual property of the Professor. Thus, the reproduction, reposting, etc. of any materials without the explicit permission of the Professor is forbidden.

**Dropping the Course:** Classes can be dropped/added online (UIS) until Jan. 27, 2016. The last day to drop/add or pass/fail a course in the Associate Dean’s office is Feb. 15, 2016. Official withdrawals from courses must be completed before Apr. 19, 2016.

**Suggestions for Success:** While the material presented will be analytical, theoretical, and cumulative in nature it is my hope that each student succeeds in class. Students who put forth the effort and work hard should succeed in class. Here are my suggestions for success:
1. Read the assigned chapter before arriving to class.
2. Attend class.
3. Take notes and be attentive during class.
4. Review notes and readings nightly.
5. Form study groups.
6. Do problem sets.
7. Ask questions.
8. Visit office hours.
9. Do not get behind.
10. Stay positive.

**Special Needs and Disabilities:** If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss ways to best to coordinate your accommodations. If you determine that disability-related arrangements are necessary, please contact Paulette Durrett, Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (617.552.3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, disabilityservices@bc.edu, http://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/disabilityservices.html). The Connors Family Learning Center also provides services and support for students with such needs. Please contact Kathy Duggan (617.552.8093, dugganka@bc.edu, http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html).

**Student Athletes:** If you are a student athlete, please provide me as soon possible with the appropriate documentation and contact information for your coaches and your travel/game schedule. I will work with the Athletic Department and your coaches to help accommodate your travel and practices.

**Laptops, Cell/Smart Phones, Tablets, and other Recording/Imaging Devices:** Students may use laptops and tablets only to take notes in class. Phones must be silenced or turned off. Absolutely no recording/imaging devices are allowed during the lectures, exams, office hours, etc. Refrain from surfing the web, texting, emailing, social networking, etc. Your cooperation is appreciated.
**Note:** Pareto Superior changes in course policies, etc. may be made at the Professor’s discretion.

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<tr>
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<th>Dates &amp; Times</th>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Sets</td>
<td>TBD (due at the beginning of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Event Discussions</td>
<td>TBD (Last 20 minutes of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Listening #1</td>
<td>Feb. 4, 2016 (due at the beginning of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Listening #2</td>
<td>Feb. 25, 2016 (due at the beginning of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm #1</td>
<td>Mar. 3, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Listening #3</td>
<td>Mar. 22, 2016 (due at the beginning of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Listening #4</td>
<td>Apr. 14, 2016 (due at the beginning of class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>Apr. 28, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm #2</td>
<td>May 3, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 11, 2016 (9am-noon)</td>
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**Note:** All exams occur where we meet for lecture. The midterms occur at the regularly scheduled class meeting time but the day/time of the final exam is determined by the Office of Student Services and is determined at the University-level so that there are no conflicting final exams. The final exam will be only offered on the date specified by the university so please plan your travel accordingly. There are no exceptions to this. For more information please consult: http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/current/exams.html.