

EC385.01  
Health Economics  
Spring 2017  
T Th 1:30-2:45pm  
O'Neill 257

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Office Hours: Wed. 1-3pm and by  
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**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, 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 introduce students to other areas in the health care arena. Presentation and discussion of current events will familiarize students with 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.

**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.

**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 the student misses a lecture, it is his/her responsibility to get the lecture notes from a classmate; the Professor will not 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 for whatever reason, please notify the Professor as soon as possible 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 homework assignments, current event presentation, in-class participation, guest speaker attendance/preparedness/participation, exams, and group project.

Homework Assignments	20%
Current Events Presentation	10%
Group Project	15%
Class attendance, participation, etc.	10%
Guest speakers	5%
Midterms	40%

There are two midterm exams and each are worth 20 percent of the course grade.

**Note:** Should a 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.

**Homework Assignments (HW):** Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. The HW assignments for 20 percent of the course grade. There are two types of HW, or some combination thereof:

1. **Numerical/Graphical Problem Sets (PS):** Problem sets will be posted and announced on Canvas periodically throughout the semester. You should attempt to complete each as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. The PS

are designed to provide additional aid in understanding the subject material covered in class and as a review for the midterms. You are welcome and encouraged to form study groups and work on the PS collectively. You can submit one PS per max. 4-person group. 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 PS without having participated and full knowledge of how to complete each exercise. You are of course welcome to work individually as well.

PS are due on the date specified at the **beginning** of the class period. They can be submitted in hardcopy to the Professor or uploaded via Canvas; please do not email your PS to the Professor. **No late problem sets will be accepted.** Please note that PS must be legible. Thus, if your handwriting is poor any written explanations should be typed. It is not necessary, however, to type graphs and numerical solutions.

2. **Reading, Listening, and Writing Assignments (RLW):** These must be completed individually. Academic journal articles will be available on Canvas as .pdfs and links to audio media will be provided as well. The RLW assignments are designed to provide additional aid in understanding the subject material covered in class, expose students to academic research, and familiarize students with other topics in health care.

Students will submit a **minimum one-page**, hard copy summary/analysis at the **beginning** of class on the designated date or upload their paper to Canvas in advance of the start of class—no email attachments will be accepted, or late submissions. The one page summary/analysis should be: size 12 font, Times New Roman/Arial/Cambria font, single-spaced, and with standard margins (1" top and bottom and 1.25" left and right). **Any summary short of the required minimum one complete page will not receive credit.**

The *journal articles* should be summarized in approximately one-half page. The following points should be addressed in the summary, if relevant:

- 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?

The second half of the paper should provide your analysis. This includes your reaction to the study, new and/or surprising information you learned, questions or suggestions you have for the author(s), etc.

The *podcasts* should be summarized and then commented upon for the minimum required one page, approximately one-half page for each of the two requirements.

A separate title page should include your name, RLW #,

titles and authors, podcast names, etc. The inclusion of this information is not part of the minimum one-page requirement, however.

**Presentation/Discussion of Current Events (CE):** Students will choose or be assigned a class period in which they and 1+ of their classmates will present and discuss current event articles chosen collectively by the class and the Professor. The CE presentation counts for 10 percent of the course grade. Students are expected to research their chosen/assigned topic and encouraged to prepare a slide deck. (Note: a rule of thumb is one slide per minute.) The slides, formatted as a .pdf or .pptx, needs to be emailed to the Professor in advance of the class so that it can be uploaded and ready. (Note: please do not email the Professor a link to your Google Slides; instead, download them as a .pptx or .pdf and email this file instead.) The group will present the findings of their research in a ~20 minute presentation. Five additional minutes will be devoted to classroom discussion and question. The last slide of the presentation should summarize all of the sources used in the research. Many of the topics can be easily researched using the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, or any of your preferred credible media outlets.

**Attendance and Participation (AP):** All students are expected to be in attendance for the current event and guest speakers. Moreover, students are expected to contribute to and participate in class discussions and lectures. This will help comprise 10 percent of the course grade.

**Group Project (GP):** Students will form or be assigned groups, likely 4 persons. Each group member will read T.R. Reid's *The Healing of America*. After soliciting group preferences, the Professor will assign each group a collection of countries to research regarding their health care market, demographics, diseases, etc. Each group member will research his/her assigned/chosen country. 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. Additionally, it should be briefly mentioned and explained which type of health care system each assigned country has by comparing it to those presented by Reid. As a group, the students will then prepare a 30-minute presentation to be presented to the Professor during the University's assigned time for the final exam. Since the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is now in peril, the groups will conclude their presentation by offering suggestions for an ideal health insurance system in the U.S. As with the CE Presentations, there should be a slide at the conclusion of each country that summarizes the sources of information. Supporting tables and graphs are strongly encouraged so that the presentation is not entirely text. A rule of thumb is one slide per minute. Students are welcome, and encouraged, to use notes when they present to the Professor; thus, it is not necessary that anything be memorized. The groups are encouraged to ensure that the presentations are properly and consistently edited. The presentations will be emailed to the Professor in advanced of the assigned/chosen presentation time on the day of the final. Again, please ensure that this file is a .pdf or .pptx and not a

link to Google Slides. The Professor may interrupt the presentation with questions or comments and a brief discussion with the Professor will conclude the students' presentation.

Grades for the group project will be distributed based on peer evaluations. Upon completion of the project, students will rate their individual and group members' participation on a scale of 1-5 regarding his/her: 1) cooperation; 2) dependability; 3) participation; 4) quality of work; and 5) interest and enthusiasm. The Professor will then average these scores across the group members and in an effort to eliminate "free-riders," each group members' score will be weighted by the average of their individual and peer assessments. The group project counts for 15 percent of the course grade.

**Midterms (MT):** There will be two midterm exams. 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 required to take a comprehensive final exam. 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 the comprehensive final exam.

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.

**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>

**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. 25, 2017. The last day to drop/add or pass/fail a course in the Associate Dean's office is Feb. 15, 2017. Official withdrawals from courses must be completed before Apr. 20, 2017.

**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](mailto:paulette.durrett@bc.edu), [disabilityservices@bc.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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.

	<u>Dates &amp; Times</u>
Homework Assignments	TBD (due at the beginning of class)
Current Event Discussions	TBD (last 25 minutes of class)
Guest Speakers	TBD
Midterm #1	Mar. 2, 2017
Midterm #2	May 2, 2017
Group Project Presentations (And Final Exam)	May 9, 2017 (12:30-3:30pm)

**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 (i.e. group project presentations) is determined by the Office of Student Services and is determined at the University-level so that there are no conflicts **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>.