Summer 2014 Course Plan

Applied Health Economics
(32.515)

A. James (Jim) Lee, PhD
Associate Professor

Office
301 Pinanski Hall

E-Mail
ajames_lee@uml.edu

Campus Phone
978-934-4522

Skype
978-710-0568

This course introduces graduate students to the theory, practice and application of health economics to contemporary health policy in the United States. No prior coursework in economics is assumed.

Course Objectives

Students gain:

• An understanding of basic economic concepts and how they are applied to health care;
• An appreciation of the circumstances under which markets may or may not work well in efficiently and equitably producing health care services;
• A broad familiarity with the health economics and related health services research literature;
• Experience in using economics to analyze health care reform proposals and other health policy issues within the U.S. health care system.

Textbooks


All three books are available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), as well as the University Bookstore.

**Teaching Approach**

The course is taught on a “blended” basis, including both face-to-face and “synchronous” online classes. The class meets face-to-face six (6) times, and online four (4) times using the Blackboard Collaborate Internet-based conferencing facility.

**Face-to-Face Classes**

The class meets in the new Health and Social Sciences building (on South Campus) from 5:30 to 8:30 pm on six Wednesday evenings (see Face-to-Face Class Calendar)

You have assignments for each class, including the first:

- **Textbook Reading Assignment.** For each face-to-face class, you will read one or more chapters from *Health Economics* (our primary textbook).

- **Practical Focus Reading Assignment.** For each face-to-face class, you will also have one or more “practical focus” reading assignments, articles that apply economics to contemporary health policy issues. In general, these reading assignments are drawn from national media (e.g., *Wall Street Journal*).

- **Journal Article Assignment.** For each class, you will be reading an article from either the health economics or related health services research literature. These articles will be selected in consultation with class members as discussed below.

**Journal Article.** In each face-to-face class, we will read and discuss an article from the health economics/health services research literature. The articles will be selected and presented by Student Teams. Each student will do this once. The Student Team will take responsibility for selecting, in consultation with me, a journal article, distributing the article to other students, preparing and presenting the article using PowerPoint, and then leading a discussion of the article’s strengths, weaknesses, and lessons earned.

**Policy Debate.** In each face-to-face class, after the first, our reading assignments will provide a common analytic and informational foundation for debating a related health
policy question. As part of one’s debate preparation, you will be expected to conduct additional research as appropriate. Each student will do this only once. Health economics principles should be used in presenting and defending your position. Other students will assist in refereeing the debate, and assuring that emotional and anecdotal arguments are not used.

Reading assignments are not optional. You will get so much more out of the course if you prepare adequately for our time together. I encourage you to read assignments three times, preferably at different sittings. First, read the assignment quickly to get an overall perspective on what is covered and how the information is organized. Second, read the assignment slowly and carefully for comprehension. Third, quickly read the assignment once more, and highlight key points.

The face-to-face classes will be recorded, and the recordings will be available from Blackboard. If you are not able to attend a class, you must listen to the recording and prepare a one-page report reflecting on what you learned.

**Collaborate (online) Classes**

On the Wednesday nights when the class does not meet face-to-face, the class will meet online from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm (see Collaborate Class Calendar below). The Collaborate classes will be also recorded. If you are not available to participate in a Collaborate class, you must listen to the recording and prepare a one-page report reflecting on what you learned. Attendance during the last hour of class is optional. This time will be reserved for general discussion and questions.

You will have reading assignments for each Collaborate class, as indicated from the Collaborate Class Calendar. Prior to each online class, you are required to post a “reflection” on what you’ve read (i.e., questions, comments and supplemental research) to Blackboard Vista, the course’s web site. You are required to read through everyone’s postings in preparation for class. Each week’s posting is due on the Monday night before class. I recommend that you draft your posting offline in Word and then “cut and paste” your composition into the posting message box. Please do not attach your posting as a Word document.

The online classes will be conducted using Blackboard Collaborate, an Internet-based communications facility accessed through Blackboard. To use Collaborate, you will need a computer microphone and speaker (or headset). A noise-cancelling microphone is strongly recommended. Any webcam sold today also includes a noise-cancelling microphone.

The procedures for posting discussions to Blackboard will be demonstrated during the first face-to-face class. You will receive information on accessing and using both Blackboard and the Collaborate conferencing facility. If needed, technical support is available.
Grading

Grades will be assigned using the following weights:

25%-- Class Attendance and Participation
35%--Discussion Board Postings
20%--Journal Presentation
20%--Policy Debate Prep/Performance

If you miss more than one Face-to-Face class, your grade for the entire course will be reduced.

Each Collaborate assignment will be graded using a 10-point scale. Up to two points “extra credit” will be available to anyone providing unusually expansive and well-researched answers.

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA Equivalent</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA Equivalent</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>&gt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic Integrity

There is a University policy regarding academic integrity. For details, see the Academic Integrity Policy at [http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx](http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx). It is your responsibility to review and understand this policy.
# Face-to-Face Class Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Textbook Assignment</th>
<th>Practical Focus Assignment</th>
<th>Journal Article Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| May 21     | Health Economics: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 | *The Tofu Triangle*  
*Eliminating Waste in Health Care* | To be selected in consultation with presenting student team. |
| June 4     | Health Economics: Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 | *The Moral Hazard Myth*  
*Need a Knee Replaced? Check Your ZIP Code* | To be selected in consultation with presenting student team. |
| June 18    | Health Economics: Chapters 10, 11 and 12 | *British Balance Gain Against the Cost of the Latest Drugs*  
*Pinning Down the Money Value of a Person’s Life* | To be selected in consultation with presenting student team. |
| June 25    | Health Economics: Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16 | *The Hospital Wars*  
*The Cost Conundrum* | To be selected in consultation with presenting student team. |
| July 9     | Health Economics: Chapters 17, 18, 19 and 20 | *The Lessons of Success--Revisiting the Medicare Story*  
*Cut Medicare, Help Patients* | To be selected in consultation with presenting Student Team. |
<p>| July 23    | Health Economics: Chapters 21, 22 and 23 | <em>DHCFP Total Medical Expenses 2009</em> | To be selected in consultation with presenting student team. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Posting Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Overtreated: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5</td>
<td>Conduct supplemental research and reflect on what you’ve read in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18</td>
<td>Overtreated: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10</td>
<td>Conduct supplemental research and reflect on what you’ve read in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>Innovator’s Prescription: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>Conduct supplemental research and reflect on what you’ve read in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 16</td>
<td>Innovator’s Prescription: Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and Epilogue</td>
<td>Conduct supplemental research and reflect on what you’ve read in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>