

Econ 150-A: Health Economics

Tuesday-Thursday 8:40-10:00 GOLI-301

Instructor: **Dr. Carlena Cochi Ficano** [she/her]

Don't Be a Stranger – Drop-In Hours (No appointment needed 😊)

Drop In Hours M=3:30-5, T=12:00-1, W=3:30-5, Th=3-4

If class or other conflicts prevent you from stopping by at the above times, please feel free to contact me (phone or e-mail) to make an appointment. I check e-mail regularly & usually return messages within 24 hours.

What is *Health Economics* and why is it an important and interesting area of study?

At some point in our lives, we all interact with the US health care and health insurance systems. The policies that shape those systems are ever-evolving and constantly under debate. Understanding the US health system from an economic perspective can help us make good decisions as customers and as voters.

The health care and health insurance industries provide interesting case studies both on how markets can supply important goods and services and also the inherent problems associated with relying solely upon market provision for those goods and services. Over the course of the semester, we will examine models of asymmetric information, externalities, and market power to understand issues as diverse as pharmaceutical patenting and pricing, antibiotic resistance, Medicaid/Medicare, and “Obama-care.”

By the end of the semester, I hope that you will have (Learning Outcomes and Assessment):

- ***Enhanced engagement with health care and health insurance***
 - in the US, including how it impacts US residents (YOU!), now and in the future
 - Measurable outcome: Explain and justify aspects of health care and health insurance that are personally relevant and/or interesting
 - Assessment via: What I know. What I want to know.(personal inventory -- pre and post)
 - relative to other health care and health insurance systems in other countries
 - Measurable outcome: Collect and present comparative data and interpret the meaning of the data conveyed.
 - Assessment via: Creation and presentation of a data driven comparative slide as part of a group class presentation
- ***Increased ability to clearly connect the US health care system to the larger web of social and economic systems***
 - Measurable outcome: Articulate connection between health and other market system.
 - Assessment via: Public service infographic connecting health system to other related system.
- ***More active participation in the current debate on expanding public support for health insurance and health care***
 - Measurable outcome: Development and articulation of an informed personal stand on current policy under consideration related to health care and related systems
 - Assessment via: Preparation of a letter to one's US Senator detailing an informed perspective on above policy

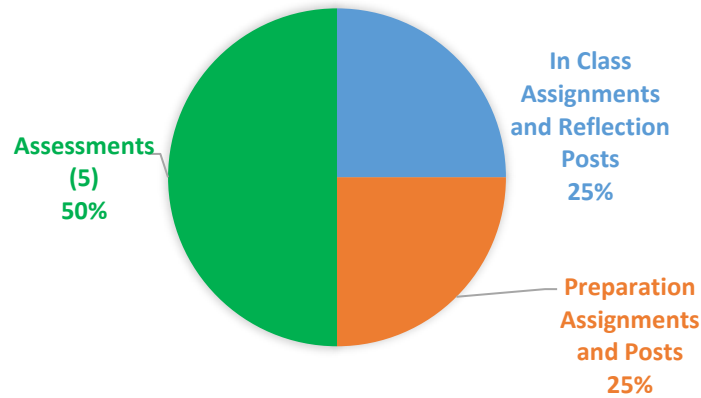
How will you meet these goals? In this class, you can expect to

- Learn about and apply basic economic models to issues of contemporary significance in health care
- Access relevant information from a variety of sources (published reports and other print, videos, databases) to build knowledge base
- Organize and synthesize new information to make and justify recommendations or conclusions
- Present recommendations orally and in written report form
- Be guided on all of the above through completion of reading assignments, discussion posts, in and out of class problem solving assignments, and mini research projects.

Texts and Other Instructional Materials – On D2L:

All text for this class will be distributed in electronic format via D2L. Students are responsible for making copies of material for in class use. Note that I will only accept assignments that are submitted in D2L in MSWord format. I will not accept hard copy or e-mail assignments or assignments in other formats (including .pages or .hesc format). I am more than happy to sit down with you after the first day of class if you are having trouble submitting your assignments on D2L.

How will your grade be calculated?



How can you best set yourself up for success in this class?

- Attendance and active engagement with the material during class matter a great deal. *Come to class on time and having done the pre-class assignments.*
- *Stay focused on the course material during the entire class period* (e.g., “unplug” from electronic devices and avoid leaving class unless it is absolutely necessary). *Unless we are using them for an in-class assignment, computers and tablets should be stored out of sight during class.* Please speak to me if this is a hardship.
- In the event that you need to miss class for a health or other emergency, *notify me as much in advance of class as possible* to make arrangement to receive and complete that day’s in class assignments. This course includes daily graded in class work. *I can only give you credit for late submission of in class work IF you let me know before class starts that you will be absent.*
- *Silence and put away all phones, earbuds, and other smart devices.* If you need to take an emergency call/respond to an emergency text during class, you may leave the room to do so. Recording of lectures or class activity is allowed only by permission.
- *Keep a notebook dedicated to this class*, bring it to class every day, and follow-up after class if there is material in your notes that is not clear to you. I LOVE having students come to office hours – it helps me understand what material is not clear and also helps me get to know you!
- *Read my feedback on assignments and come to see me if you need additional practice or follow up.* As I said before, I LOVE having students come to office hours – it helps me understand what material is not clear and also helps me get to know you

Tentative Course Schedule:

Date	Preparation for Next Class / Practice from Previous Class (ALL <i>due before class in D2L on day indicated</i>)	In Class Topic
A domestic perspective – Health Insurance and Health Care in the USA		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Goals: mine and yours! • What we already know...what we want to learn.
	Assigned articles and Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For profit health care and health insurance in the US • Navigating health insurance choice
	Assigned article, data review and Discussion Post on D2L. Text chapter and online quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care expenditure trends [Introduce Health Care Tracker tool] • Health insurance market supply, demand and elasticity
	Assigned data review and Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance and healthcare inequity • Subsidies in S and D (and taxes) [Introduce Health Care Tracker Tool]
	Assigned articles and Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary issue – Medicaid unravelling and the 2024 elections
	Practice questions for first learning assessment.	Review
	Study	Assessment 1: Exam
A comparative perspective – Health Insurance and Health Care in Other Countries		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance, adverse selection, and moral hazard.
	Select focus country for comparative analysis. Review slide deck on US health system as a baseline. Discussion post on D2L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health production function • Health care rationing – price • Health care rationing – non-price
	Complete google form on health system for country of interest. Prepare questions in Discussion post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Metrics • Connecting inputs and outputs
	Submit outcome metrics on google sheet for country of interest. Draft Poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop -- Narrative Building with Data
	Complete Poster	Assessment 2: Poster Session and Comparative Analysis
SPRING BREAK		
A systems perspective -- Public Health as Cause and Effect		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of market linkages – brainstorming connections and finding evidence (in pairs)
	Text chapter and online quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalities – graphing exercises
	Assigned reading and Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Externalities – graphing and applying data
	Text chapter and online quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health as a Public Good – graphing exercises
	Select article for class. Rewrite abstract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for reading academic articles
	Complete source outline for your article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a bibliographic annotation
	Prepare your article to share with the group. Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice questions – exam 3
	Study	Assessment 3: Exam
A market perspective -- Power and Control		
	Listen to podcast & Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopoly power and pharmaceutical patents.

	Text chapter and online quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopsony power and the role of government.
	Assigned reading and Discussion Post on D2L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate Intro [Patents & Govt Negotiation] Team Assignment • Platform identification
	Team debate preparation out of class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform preparation • Evidence gathering.
	Team debate preparation out of class	Assessment 4 – Class Debate
	Recommendations for Reform Discussion Post (see link for ideas)	Final Assessment – Policy Letter

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT MATERIAL AND POLICIES

Names and Pronouns: I find that learning names and pronouns is an important way of getting to know you. I will try to learn your names and pronouns as quickly as possible, but I ask for your grace as I am doing so. Please correct me if I mispronounce your name, and please contact me (email or phone) to let me know your preferred pronouns. I go by Carli or Professor Ficano and use she/her pronouns.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct:

Hartwick College is committed to equal opportunity and providing a safe community free from all forms of sexual misconduct including sexual/gender-based harassment, discrimination, dating or domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and sexual assault. If you wish to make an official report to the College or have questions about the College’s policy and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@hartwick.edu or (607) 431-4293. Additional reporting and policy information is available online at <https://www.hartwick.edu/about-us/employment/human-resources/title-ix/>.

If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact one of the following resources: Perrella Wellness Center, Health - (607) 431-4120, or Counseling – (607) 431-4120; or Opportunities for Otsego’s Violence Intervention Program – (607) 432-4855.

All other employees, including faculty, are responsible employees at Hartwick College and are required to report any incident of sexual misconduct that is personally reported to them to the Title IX Coordinator so that support and resources can be provided for all parties.

Academic Accommodations:

Hartwick College is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students, and welcomes students with disabilities into all the College’s educational programs. The AccessAbility Services Office is responsible for the determination of appropriate modifications for students who encounter barriers due to a disability. If a student with a disability wishes to request academic accommodations, they should contact Lara Sanford, Director of AccessAbility Services and Academic Inclusivity, at sanfordl@hartwick.edu or AccessAbilityServices@hartwick.edu. To serve you best, requests should be made as early as possible. Please let me know if you have questions or need assistance. **I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if an accommodation might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design.** I am always happy to consider creative solutions provided they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. Please feel welcome to work with me as your partner in designing a learning experience that best leverages your strengths and meets your needs -- let's communicate as regularly and as often as you feel comfortable doing.

Campus Mental Health Support Services:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. The Counseling Center is available to help with these issues and may be reached by calling (607) 431-4420 or emailing

counselingcenter@hartwick.edu. Counseling services are **free of charge** and confidential. Heart, a peer counseling service, is also available if you are more comfortable talking with a fellow student who has been trained to offer information and support in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere. To reach a Heart Peer Counselor, call (607) 431-5050 or email heart@hartwick.edu.

Classroom Code of Conduct and Academic Honesty:

I assume that everyone is submitting their own work on labs, problem sets, exams, and the final research project unless groupwork is explicitly called for. I also assume that any external material used in completing an assignment will be appropriately cited. This includes the use of Chat-GPT and other AI tools. If I find evidence that this is not the case, I will prosecute instances of academic dishonesty to the full extent allowed by Hartwick College. If you have questions about academic dishonesty, please see me or consult the Hartwick webpage for more information (<https://www.hartwick.edu/academics/student-services/academic-affairs/academic-policies/>).

Departmental Incomplete Policy:

An “Incomplete” will only be issued for circumstances beyond your control that prevent you from completing the course work during the semester. An example would be a death in the family or a serious illness late in the semester. By policy of the Economics Department, I cannot issue any incompletes on my own. Student requests for incompletes will be discussed with the other department faculty and a determination of whether to issue an incomplete will then be made by the department as a whole.

In a case where circumstances arise too close to the final for this process to be carried out, you will be issued a “provisional” incomplete. If the department agrees with the request, your “I” will remain either until you complete the necessary work or until the deadline we set for you. If we deny the request or if you fail to complete the work by the new deadline, I will calculate your grade based on the work you completed, with missing assignments receiving a “zero,” and the resulting grade will replace the “I”. This means that if you submit a request for an incomplete on the first day of finals, do not attend the final, and we reject your request for an incomplete, you will receive a grade of 0 on the final exam and your course average will be calculated accordingly.

FlightPath:

The Hartwick Flightpath is a student-centered program that is flexible and adaptable to support your individualized pathway to graduation and to prepare you for what lies ahead. By the time you graduate from Hartwick, you will have a suite of skills and experiences that tie together the breadth of your Hartwick education and highlight your accomplishments. This course supports the development of student educational outcomes in the following way(s): Fulfills an economics major and public health major elective,

Inclement Weather and COVID-19:

In the event that the College is closed due to inclement weather, we will meet via Zoom at our normal time using this link: <https://hartwick.zoom.us/j/6738540122>

Any COVID-19 updates will be provided on the College website (<https://www.hartwick.edu/about-us/covid-19-updates/>). I will communicate with you about any specific adjustments that are being made to their courses, such as modality of instruction, expectations for participation, and any changes to assigned work; students should check their Hartwick email accounts frequently for information from their instructors.