



**PBHL 852 - HEALTH ECONOMICS I**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
Fall Quarter 2015  
Wednesdays, 3-5:50 pm @ Curtis 435

**Instructor**

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**Office Hours:**

- By appointment on Tuesdays (9:00-11:45 am) - make appointments on-line: <http://professor-kanter-office.lattiss.com/>
  - To expedite scheduling, please do not e-mail with appointment requests.
  - If you can't be on campus during office hours, you can also schedule a telephone appointment during these office hour times. Just indicate that it is a telephone appointment and the best number to reach you.
- After class on Wednesdays (6-6:30 pm) - no appointment necessary

**1. Course Description**

PBHL 852 (Health Economics I) is the first course in a 2-course sequence in health economics. This course provides an introduction to the economics of health and health care. Topics covered in this course include: the production of health, the demand for medical care, health care production and costs, determinants of the supply of medical care, payment systems, health insurance, and problems in health insurance markets (adverse selection and moral hazard). Previous college-level coursework in economics is recommended but not required. Students are expected to have facility with high school algebra (including the understanding and graphing of functions).

**2. Course Learning Objectives and Core Competencies**

**2.1. Course Learning Objectives**

- Understand the features of an economic approach to analyzing social issues in general, and to analyzing health, health care, and health insurance issues in particular
- Know the factors driving the demand for medical care
- Understand economic models of health production, health care production, and health care costs
- Know the factors driving the supply of medical care
- Know common forms of provider payment systems and economically analyze the implications of these systems
- Understand the concept of health insurance and two common problems, adverse selection and moral hazard, that can arise in insurance markets

## 2.2. Core Competencies

- Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing, and delivery of health services and public health systems in the US
- Discuss the policy process for improving the health status of populations
- Apply "systems thinking" for resolving organizational problems
- Apply evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health
- Identify unintended consequences produced by changes made to a public health system
- Analyze the effects of political, social and economic policies on public health systems at the local, state, national and international levels

## 3. Readings

The primary (required) text is:

- Hicks, Lanis L. 2014. *Economics of Health and Medical Care, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Jones and Bartlett.

There will be additional readings that will be made available on-line through Blackboard.

The following books may be good supporting resources. Mankiw is recommended as an introduction to economics if you have not had previous coursework in economics. Feldstein is a more advanced health economics text.

- Mankiw, N. Gregory. 2014. *Principles of Microeconomics, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Cengage Learning. On (Econ) reserve at Hagerty.
- Feldstein, Paul J. 2011. *Health Care Economics, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Cengage Learning. On reserve at Hagerty.

## 4. Evaluation

The course grade will be based on 7 problem sets, 7 quizzes, a midterm exam, a final exam, and class (clicker) or bonus exercises.

Problem Sets #1-#7	21% (3% each)
Quizzes #1-#7	14% (2% each)
Midterm Exam	25% (Part A 15%, Part B 10%)
Final Exam	38% (Part A 20%, Part B 18%)
Class/Bonus Exercises	2%

### 4.1. Problem sets

There will be 8 problem sets assigned, 7 of which will count towards your course grade (lowest score dropped). Problem sets will be assigned every week except during exam weeks. They are due at the beginning of each class. You may consult with other students on your problem sets but each student must write up his or her own work.

One problem, not announced in advance, from each problem set will be selected for grading. Solutions to the problem sets will be posted weekly. Students are advised to review the solutions and check their

answers for the problems that are not graded. Late problem sets will be accepted and graded but no points will be recorded.

#### 4.2. Quizzes

There will be 8 quizzes, 7 of which will count towards your course grade (lowest score dropped). Quizzes will be given at the end of class every week except during exam weeks. There will be no makeup quizzes.

#### 4.3. Midterm exam

There will be one midterm exam. The midterm exam will consist of two parts. Part A is the in-class portion of the exam. Part A will be conducted during class in the conventional way, with no notes or resources--electronic or otherwise--permitted during the exam. Part B is the take-home portion of the exam. Students are not allowed to consult with other classmates on Part B of the exams but are allowed to refer to class notes, library books, and web sources. Part B exams are due at the beginning of class on the day scheduled for the Part A exam (you turn in Part B before taking the in-class Part A exam). Late Part B exams will be accepted and graded, but penalties will be levied for lateness. Penalties for late Part B exams are as follows: (a) within 24 hours: 25% penalty; (b) more than 24 hours late but less than 48 hours late: 50% penalty; (c) more than 48 hours late: no points.

#### 4.4. Final exam

The final exam is cumulative. It consists of two parts and follows the same protocol as the midterm exam. Part A is the in-class portion of the final exam. Part A will be conducted during class in the conventional way, with no notes or resources--electronic or otherwise--permitted during the exam. Part B is the take-home portion of the exam. Students are not allowed to consult with other classmates on Part B of the exam but are allowed to refer to class notes, library books, and web sources. Late Part B exams will be accepted and graded, but penalties will be levied for lateness. Penalties for late Part B exams are as follows: (a) within 24 hours: 25% penalty; (b) more than 24 hours late but less than 48 hours late: 50% penalty; (c) more than 48 hours late: no points.

Part A of the final exam will be given during final exam week on the day/time scheduled by the Registrar. Part B of the final exam will be due at 5 pm on Friday of Finals Week (March 20).

#### 4.5. Class/bonus exercises

On occasion, you will be asked to participate in class exercises or complete surveys. A small number of points will be given for participation in these activities.

#### 4.6. Blind grading

Every effort will be made to grade problem sets and exams blind, i.e. the instructor will not know the identity of the student submitting the work when she does the grading. For this reason, please include, with your assignments, a cover sheet or header with the assignment title and *only* your ID number (no names). Please use the following format for your ID number: xxx-xxx-xx.

#### 4.7. Makeup exams

Makeup exams for this class are highly unusual and granted only under extenuating circumstances with extensive documentation (e.g. hospital discharge notice, obituary notice). In any case, you must notify the instructor within 24 hours of a missed exam.

#### 4.8. Re-grades

Although care is taken in grading, mistakes in grading assignments and exams can on rare occasions occur. If you feel an error was made in grading, please do the following:

- (1) Make a photocopy of your graded assignment, as re-grades will only be examined at the end of the quarter, after the final exam, and you may need the graded assignment to study.
- (2) If you believe an error was made in grading, submit a written explanation of why you believe an error was made--i.e. why your original answer was the correct answer compared to the solution or reference document--and submit a hard copy of your explanation and the graded assignment. These documents should be submitted (in-person or in mailbox) by 5 pm the day *before* the in-class Final Exam, Part A.
- (3) A request for a re-grade can result in a lower score based on your explanation or justification.

*All appeals for re-grades must go through this formal process. No informal (i.e. in-person) appeals will be accepted.*

#### 4.9. Grading scale

A+	98-100
A	94-97
A-	90-93
B+	88-89
B	84-87
B-	80-83
C+	78-79
C	74-77
C-	70-73

### 5. Class policies and expectations of student conduct

#### 5.1. Class attendance

Attendance will not be taken. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that you attend class and be well-prepared to engage in class discussions and activities because attendance in class will be crucial in preparing you for the exams and assignments. In addition, there may be in-class quizzes and activities that count towards your course grade. If you have to miss class for any reason, you are responsible for reviewing the material covered and for turning assignments in when they are due. If what you need is not available on Blackboard, please request materials and information from a fellow student.

#### 5.2. Email guidelines

- Please email me about any typos or errors you see on slides, problem sets, and solutions, and any clarifications you need for problem set and exam questions.
- Clarifying questions related to problem sets or exams should be sent by 12 noon the day before the problem set or exam is due or scheduled.
- You *do not* need to email me on issues related to class attendance (e.g. if you are not able to attend).
- If you have substantive questions about or difficulty with specific topics, these are better addressed in-person (after class or during office hours) rather than email.
- Try not to be offended if you do not receive a response; this is because of the volume of emails rather than intended neglect (please remind me of your question in class).

#### 5.3. Holidays

Please inform the instructor at the beginning of the quarter of any anticipated (exam) absences because of religious holidays, and we will negotiate reasonable accommodations for those absences.

#### 5.4. Civility in discourse and courtesy towards fellow classmates

Please respect each person and his/her ideas and questions. Please turn off all cell phones and do not listen to music, play games, web-surf, or read outside materials during class.

#### 5.5. Academic conduct

Students are expected to know, understand, and abide by the academic integrity policy as specified in the Code of Conduct in the Drexel University Official Student Handbook, pp. 110-113:  
[http://www.drexel.edu/studentaffairs/community\\_standards/studentHandbook/](http://www.drexel.edu/studentaffairs/community_standards/studentHandbook/)

Unless otherwise instructed, all of your work in this course should represent your own completely independent work. Any student found to have committed acts of misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, misconduct of research, breach of confidentiality, or illegal or unlawful acts) will be subject to the sanctions and procedures outlined in the Code of Conduct.

## 6. Drexel University policies

### 6.1. Accommodation for disabilities

Student with disabilities requesting accommodations and services at Drexel University need to present a current Accommodation Verification Letter (AVL) to faculty before accommodations can be made. AVL's are issued by the Office of Disability Resources (ODR). For additional information, contact ODR at [www.drexel.edu/odr](http://www.drexel.edu/odr), 3201 Arch St., Street, Suite 210, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215.895.1401 (V), or 215.895.2299 (TTY).

### 6.2. University course drop policy

Please note that “dropping” a course and “withdrawing” from a course are distinct actions and are governed by different policies. (See “Course Withdrawal Policy” below.)

For both graduate and undergraduate students, courses may only be dropped during the “drop period” lasting from the beginning of the enrollment period through the end of the second week of the quarter. Dropping a course results in the course being removed from the student’s academic record without a “W” appearing on the transcript—specifically, neither the course nor the grade of “W” appears on the student’s transcript. Freshmen and new first-term transfer students must meet with their academic advisors to drop courses during the first quarter. Undergraduate upper-class and graduate students may use BannerWeb to drop courses; no approvals are required for upper-class and graduate students.

Students drop a course for the term in which they are enrolled by using BannerWeb for students. Approval of the instructor is not required to drop a course (but is required to withdraw from a course).

For “accelerated courses,” which normally last five weeks, the drop period is limited to the first week of the course. Thus, for accelerated courses given during weeks one through five of the regular term, the drop period is week one; for accelerated courses given during weeks six through ten of the regular term, the drop period is week six (of the regular term).