

## PADP 8610: Economics of Health Policy

**Professor:** Emily Lawler

**Office:** Baldwin Hall 280B

**Email:** [emily.lawler@uga.edu](mailto:emily.lawler@uga.edu)

**Classes:** Tuesdays, 6:30-9:15pm, Baldwin Hall 102

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2-4pm, or by appointment

University of Georgia

Public Administration and Policy

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### **Description**

This course provides an overview of the role of economics in health, health care, and health policy. We will survey major topics in health economics including the economic determinants of health, the market for medical care, the market for health insurance, the role of the government in health care, and health care reform. Students completing this course will have an understanding of the basic tools in economics relevant to health policy.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the basic features of a market for health care and insurance.
- Describe the basic organization and financing of the US health care system.
- Explain the role of government in improving health and providing access to health care.
- Discuss factors behind the rising costs of health care and approaches to health reform.
- Evaluate the intended and unintended effects of policies from an economic perspective.

### **Required Text**

The Economics of Health and Health Care, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, by Sherman Folland, Allen C. Goodman, and Miron Stano. Routledge (“FGS”)

Other required readings are noted in the course schedule and available on the course website.

## Grading

Class attendance is not required, though there is little prospect of success without it.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1. Weekly Reading Questions	5
2. Group Article Presentation and Discussion	10
3. Problem Sets	15
4. Midterm Exam	25
5. Final Exam	25
6. Policy Memo	20
TOTAL	100

### **Assignment Descriptions**

#### **1. Weekly Reading Questions (5%)**

In preparation for class, students will prepare two questions based on the assigned reading for that day. One of these questions can request clarification on a concept or pose a question for class discussion. For the other question, students should create an exam question based on the reading and answer it. This exam question can be a) true/false, explain, b) short answer, or c) multiple choice. You will receive a grade on a 0-2 point scale: 0 if not turned in on time; 1 if turned in but do not demonstrate engagement with the reading; 2 if questions are thoughtful (as judged by the instructor). Questions are due in eLC at 11:59pm the day before class. Your lowest grade in this category will be dropped.

#### **2. Group Article Presentation and Discussion (10%)**

Each group will have responsibility for leading the discussion of one of the academic articles in class. Prior to the group's assigned week, the group should come to class prepared to 1) present a brief summary of the article and 2) lead a discussion of the article with the rest of the class. The summary of the article need not be comprehensive for multi-topic review papers. It is fine to choose 2-3 of the topics to present and discuss. The presentation of the paper and discussion should last around 20 mins total.

#### **3. Problem Sets (15%)**

Take-home problem sets will be assigned throughout the semester. These problem sets are designed to test your understanding of class material and prepare you for midterm and final exams. Problem sets will typically be 2-3 short questions covering and building on theoretical and statistical concepts covered in class and assigned readings. Unless otherwise stated, you are encouraged to work in small groups of up to 3 people on these assignments. Turn in only one assignment for the group, with everyone's names clearly listed. Problem sets are due by the beginning of class the week after they are assigned. Late assignments will not be graded except

in extreme cases with prior approval from the instructor. Your lowest grade in this category will be dropped.

**4. Exams (25% each)**

There will be two in-class exams, each counting for 25% of the course grade. Exams will cover content in lectures and required readings. These will assess both your knowledge of specific facts/concepts and your ability to apply concepts in different contexts. Some of the questions will require calculations, so bring a calculator. Any known scheduling problems should be brought to my attention as soon as possible. If you miss the midterm exam without a pre-approved excuse or medical emergency, you will receive a zero. If you have an approved absence, then the final exam will count for 50% of the course grade. No make-up exam will be given.

**5. Health policy memo (20%)**

This paper will count for 20% of the course grade. The goal of the assignment is to provide a short (3 pages, single-spaced) economic evaluation of some existing or proposed *health* policy. More detailed information on the assignment will be provided separately.

**Academic Integrity**

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. Any form of cheating, including plagiarism without a clear citation, will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the assignment or exam, and possible additional action. The potential penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

**Email**

You are welcome to email me whenever you have a question or need clarification about something related to class. Note that you are expected to abide by professional standards in all written and spoken communications, including email; I will not respond to emails without a subject line or appropriate salutation. Please allow sufficient time (24 hours) for a response. I will do my best to reply as soon as possible but oftentimes I might be traveling, in day-long meetings, or engaged in other activities that take me away from email.

## Course Schedule Overview

The following is a tentative schedule of the topics to be covered in each class.

January 7	Introduction		Ch. 1 & 5
January 14	Demand for health & health care	Group 1	7
January 21	Supply of health care – hospitals	Group 2	6 & 14
January 28	Supply of health care – non-profits	Group 3	13
February 4	Supply of health care – labor	Group 4	15 & 16
February 11	Supply of health care – pharmaceuticals	Group 5	17
February 18	Insurance – supply & demand	Group 6	8 & 11
February 25	Insurance – problems and solutions		10 & 12
March 3	<i>Midterm exam</i>		
March 10	Spring Break – No Class		
March 17	Government intervention in health		19
March 24	Social Insurance	Policy memo proposal due	20
March 31	Health System Reform		22
April 7	Comparative health systems		21
April 14	Health Economics of Bads		24
April 21	TBD	Policy memo due	
April 28	Monday class schedule – No Class		
May 5	<i>Final exam</i>		