Health Care Economics


Course Goals: This course covers economic theory and research relevant to the economics of health care, one of the most important topics in economic policy in the United States today. Because of the projected trajectory of health care costs, many consider this topic critical to the country’s long term prosperity. We need to understand the United States health care system in some detail with attention to useful international comparison. We will address such issues as health insurance(particularly within the framework of the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Act), and the actions, motivations and role of the “players” in health care: patients, hospitals, pharmaceutical firms and governments.

Evaluation: Your grade in this course depends on 3 things: 1) your preparation for class as evidenced by your participation in class discussion (50%), 2) 2 papers (25% each). There is no final exam in this class.

Mon. March 31 Introduction to the Course

Wed., April 2 History, Demography and the Growth of Modern Medicine
Getzen, Ch. 15

First Paper Assignment Distributed

Fri, April 4 Inequality: the Setting
*The Price of Inequality*, Joseph Stiglitz, Chapters 1, 2

Mon, April 7 Challenges facing the U.S. Healthcare System

Getzen, Ch. 17 (*passim*)
Wed., April 9  **What is special about Health Care Economics?**  

Fri., April 11  **Insurance Markets**  
Getzen, Ch. 4

Mon., April 14  **Insurance Contracts and Managed Care**  
Getzen, Ch. 5

Wed., April 16  **Physicians**  
Getzen, Ch. 6

Fri., April 18  **Medical Education, Organizations and Business Practices**  
Getzen, Ch. 7

Mon., April 21  **Hospitals**  
Getzen, Ch. 8

Wed., April 23  **Management and Regulation of Hospital Costs**  
Getzen, Ch. 9

Second Paper Assignment Distributed

Thurs., April 24  **Guest Speaker: Prof. Tom Buchmueller, University of Michigan**  
The Library Athneum  4PM  
“The Affordable Care Act: 2014 and Beyond”

Article will be provided.

Fri., April 25  no class - Research day
Monday, April 28  **Medicare and Medicaid**

“The Origins, Development and Passage of Medicare’s Revolutionary Perspective Payment System”, Rick Mayes, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 2006. Article will be provided.


Wed. April 30  **Fundamentals of Benefit-Cost Analysis**

Aaron Swoboda, Asst. Prof of Economics,

Getzen, Ch. 3
Boardman, Greenberg, Vining and Weimer, *Cost Benefit Analysis, 4th ed.*, Prentiss Hall, Ch. 1

* First Paper Due: A State Medicaid Study

Fri., May 2  **Long Term Care**

Getzen, Ch. 10

Mon., May 5  Mid-Term Break

Wed., May 7  Joe Harten—visiting speaker

* Topic for Final Paper Due

Fri., May 9  **Pharmaceuticals**

Getzen, Ch. 11


Mon., May 12  **Financing and Ownership of Health Care Providers**

Getzen, Ch. 12
Wed., May 14  **Medical Malpractice**

“Medical Malpractice Tort Limits and Health Care Spending,” Congressional Budget Office Background Paper, April 2006.  

Fri., May 16  **Regional Variation in Health Care Provision**


Article will be provided.

Mon., May 19  **International Comparisons**

Getzen, Ch. 16  
Video: Sick Around the World, Frontline 2008  
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/  
“Quality, Innovation and Value for Money: NICE and the British National Health Service,” Pearson SD, Rawlins MN *JAMA*.  

Wed., May 21  **Role of Government**

Getzen, Ch. 13,14

Fri., May 23  **Ethics and Public Health**

Prof. Alan Rubenstein

Mon., May 26  **Health System Reform in the U.S.: The Affordable Care Act: The Agenda**

Getzen, Ch. 17

Wed., May 28 : **The Affordable Care Act**

Fri., May 30  **The Affordable Care Act**

Getzen, Ch. 18

Wed., June 4 Conclusions

* Final Paper Due