

# ECON 5190/6190 – HEALTH ECONOMICS SYLLABUS

## COURSE INFORMATION

<b>Instructor:</b> Kelsey Carlston	<b>Pre-requisites:</b> None
<b>Department:</b> Economics	<b>Credit Hours:</b> 3
<b>Email:</b> kelsey.carlston@utah.edu	<b>Semester:</b> Spring 2021
<b>Office:</b> Zoom or Econ Department	<b>Dates:</b> January 10 to April 25
<b>Office Hours:</b> Email me to schedule an appointment.	<b>Meeting Time:</b> M/W 3:00 to 4:20
<b>Final Exam:</b> December 17 at 10:30am	<b>Meeting Location:</b> GC 5750

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### Course Summary

Healthcare is a very important sector of our economy. Healthcare accounts for almost one-fifth of the GDP, and many people have their lives upturned by medical expenditures. The US has a different healthcare system than anywhere in the world. The healthcare market also has many attributes that distinguish it from other markets and mean that normal economic theory does not apply.

The goal of this class is to explore a number of facets of the healthcare system, problems with the current health system, and ideas of how to fix it. We will use lecture, discussions, documentaries, popular books, etc. to get as full a view as possible of how economists view healthcare and how problem-solving is done. This course is aimed at anybody interested in healthcare at a college level, not just economics students.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, we will have talked about the following questions in depth and from a variety of perspectives. One thing you will notice – there are no easy or “correct” answers!

What are the basic theories of economic markets? What makes the healthcare market different? What makes it the same?

How does health insurance work? Why do people buy it?

How do payment structures affect the actions of patients/physicians/hospitals/etc.?

Healthcare in the US is very expensive. Why? What does healthcare in other countries look like?

What is the ACA? Medicare? Medicaid? And what do ideas that people talk about, like “Medicare for all” or “single-payer system” mean?

How does rhetoric from the media and politicians relate to economics and healthcare? (Freedom, human rights, etc.)

What is the difference between health and healthcare? What role does healthcare play in health? What else plays into health?

How can we use economics to make decisions about the healthcare system?

If we have time, we will also cover: Pharmaceuticals, Behavioral Economics, Bias in medicine, Cost benefit analysis

### **Required Materials**

There is no textbook associated with this course. Course readings will come from a variety of sources including, but not limited to: peer-reviewed health economics and health policy journals, medical journals, reports, and newspaper articles. All of these readings will be posted on Canvas.

There is one full-length documentary which you will be required to purchase – it is available on most streaming platforms for \$4 or less.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

I believe the best way to learn is with a variety of tools and levels of learning. You will be given papers, videos, lectures, assignments, and discussions which allow you to explore topics thoughtfully. As this is a summer course administered over a short amount of time, you will have a large amount of demand put on your time and be expected to learn material quickly.

I want success for all of my students, and if you are struggling with the content, the course structure, or things outside of the course which are affecting your ability to participate, contact me promptly so I can help. One of my favorite parts about teaching is one-on-one interaction, so don't be afraid to reach out.

### **Canvas Time Zone Information**

To ensure you are viewing due dates and times correctly, as well as events in the calendar, set your student Canvas time zone to your current location by following this [guide \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

If you do not change your time zone, all due dates and times listed in Canvas default to Mountain Time.

Content written by instructors, such as office hours written in the syllabus, are in Mountain Time, unless stated otherwise.

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## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### **Instructor Expectations**

Your course instructor is an expert in the topics you will learn about this semester. Your instructor is your mentor and facilitator of the classroom experience and is committed to the following expectations for this course:

- The instructor will design the course to include lectures, readings materials, and assignments that will challenge students and will provide them with opportunities to learn and practice course content.
- Your instructor will be engaged through class time, feedback on assignments, email, announcements, etc.
- The instructor will respond to emails in a timely fashion. “Timely” in this instance means within 48 hours, not including weekends and holidays. The preferred method of communication is before or after class time over Zoom, but the instructor understands that sometimes things need to be addressed between class periods.
- The instructor will be available for individual consultation via virtual meetings, email, or phone. Students will not be required to come to campus in order to meet with the instructor.
- The instructor will provide feedback on the assignments in a timely manner.
- The instructor will follow all official University of Utah policies regarding conduct in the classroom, incompletes, and accommodations. Accommodations will be considered on an individual basis and only with required documentation.

### **Student Expectations**

Though the online format allows students greater flexibility to complete their work, this course does have a structure and timeline, including due dates for course assignments. As such, the following is expected of all students in this class:

- Students may be expected to work with classmates; however, students are not expected to interact with their classmates in person. A good alternative to

meeting in person would be online video conferencing, which allows students to find a time to meet that works best for their schedule.

- **Students will regularly check course announcements.**

The [Announcements](#) area is the instructor's official means of communication when distributing information to the entire class. The instructor may also announce things in class, so it's important to pay attention.

- Students will update their Canvas settings to ensure they receive timely notifications from the course.
- If students have any questions, are struggling with course materials, or need further assistance from their instructor, they will take the initiative to contact their instructor via the **Inbox** feature in Canvas or via email.
- Email isn't perfect; sometimes, messages sent to instructors are lost before they are read. If you do not hear back from your instructor 3 days after sending a message, please contact your instructor again.
- Students will engage with the course, students, and the instructor in a respectful and professional manner at all times.
- Students will carefully check all of their submissions for correct grammar or spelling. If a student is not confident in editing themselves, they can use campus resources like Grammarly or first write their submissions in Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Students understand they may receive penalties for grammar or spelling mistakes.

## Netiquette

Students are expected to follow the [core rules of netiquette \(Links to an external site.\)](#) at all times while participating in the class, interacting with other students, and communicating with the course instructor and teaching assistants. Many of the discussions involve topics that can be personally challenging, and everybody is expected to listen and engage recognizing this. If someone has a different point of view from you, ask questions rather than making statements.

## COVID Expectations

Recommendations for COVID safety are consistently evolving. Your safety and mine are a priority for me, so I will adjust the classroom setting depending on current conditions. For the start of the semester, the precautions I will take are:

- Encouraging everyone to wear masks in the classroom and get vaccinated - I will wear one and would appreciate you wearing one too
- Hosting the class on Zoom so students can stay home if they fall ill or have been exposed
  - As a note: this is *not* a requirement for me, and in fact is something that the department would probably frown upon. For this reason, I prioritize the in-person students, and if you want to have the best discussions and interaction, you should probably physically attend.

# EVALUATION AND GRADING

## Semester Grading Scheme

Homework Assignments and Discussions 30%

In-Class Assignments 25%

Podcast/Video/In-Class Presentation 10%

Paper 20%

Final Exam 15%

**Homework Assignments and Discussions:** These activities will be done outside of class. Some of them might be to give you more time for reflection or more practice with a concept, while others could be quizzes to ensure that you read or watch material or understood what we talked about in class. They will always be due on Sundays, and there will be a homework assignment most weeks.

**In-Class Assignments:** These assignments will be due by midnight the day following class. While I call them "in-class", I understand that sometimes you cannot make it to class, and so you can do them after you watch the class video on your own time. However, it is easiest to do them while I give you the opportunity during class time. These assignments will be graded for completion, not correctness. We will usually have one of these each week.

**Podcast/YouTube Video/In-Class Presentation:** For this assignment, you will make a 10-minute podcast or YouTube video, or do a 10-minute presentation in class, discussing a topic which you will choose in the first week. You will work in groups of 2. The due date for these will vary through the semester depending on your topic. As a part of this, you will also be required to listen to or watch each of your classmates' projects and write a short evaluation.

### **Paper:**

5190 – You will write a policy paper, which is a short, non-academic paper that tries to persuade the audience towards a specific policy prescription for a given problem. You will be able to choose your own policy. You will have an outline due about 2/3 of the way through the semester, and the final paper will be due near the end of the semester.

6190 – You will either write a 10-page position paper, or an academic paper on the topic of your choice. I will set up a meeting with each of you halfway through the semester to discuss this. A position paper presents a debate on an arguable issue, in which you analyze all sides of the issue and make an argument for why your own opinion is well-founded and defensible. You will be able to pick your own topic. The due date will be near the end of the semester.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be in-class, closed notes. I will post a study guide for the final a week before classes end. The final will be on the last day of class; however, if

we get behind we might use the scheduled exam time from the university, May 3 at 3:30pm.

### University of Utah Grading Scale

A	100%–93%	A-	92.9%–90%		
B+	89.9%–87%	B	86.9%–83%	B-	82.9%–80%
C+	79.9%–77%	C	76.9–74%	C-	72.9%–70%
D+	69.9%–67%	D	66.9%–63%	D-	62.9%–60%
E	59.9%–0%				

## COURSE POLICIES

### Technology Issues and Tech Help

Your instructor has invested time before the start of the semester to ensure that the technologies used in this online class will operate smoothly. Nevertheless, technology doesn't always do what we want it to do! As such, this course has the following expectations regarding tech problems:

- Students are **required** to contact the instructor immediately when they notice broken links or inaccessible files in the course. Links and files are assumed to work, unless students indicate otherwise. Points lost on assignments, due to inaccessible links and files, **cannot** be made up if students did not notify the instructor of the problem prior to the assignment due date.
- The instructor is committed to fixing broken links and inaccessible files as soon as possible after being notified by the students. In the case that there will be a significant delay before these items can be fixed, the instructor will post an announcement to let the class know about the problem and to describe any alternate files/links or alternate due dates for assignments, if applicable, that students should be aware of.
- Students are responsible for submitting all assignments and activities by their due dates. In the very rare case that technical problems prevent a student from submitting an assignment, students are required to—
  - Immediately contact their instructor via email or the Canvas **Inbox**, to let them know about the problem and to submit a copy of their assignment as an attachment (where possible).
  - Then, immediately contact the Canvas help desk to troubleshoot and resolve the problem.
  - Submit an email updating the instructor on whether the problem was resolved and of any additional steps the student or instructor needs to take to get the assignment properly submitted to Canvas.

- It is **not** appropriate to send an email to your instructor informing them about tech problems after an assignment due date.
- Students are expected to read all assignment instructions and to submit work in the required file formats. Work submitted as improper file formats will **not** be considered to have been handed in on time. The instructor will only grade work submitted using the proper file format.
- It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the appropriate help desk to troubleshoot and resolve tech problems in the course,

24/7 help is available to all students via the *Help* button in the far-left Canvas menu.

For more detailed information about getting tech help, please review the information on the [Tech Help](#) page of the course.

### **Late Assignments**

You are expected to be prepared and start assignments before the day they are due. Late assignments are highly discouraged, since this is a fast-paced course. This will alleviate stress on you and help you keep on track. However, I will allow late assignments, though they will be docked 20% for each day late they are (though if you are just a few minutes late, I will not worry about it). The only exception is the final exam, which you **MUST** complete during the period allotted.

## INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

All students and instructors are expected to adhere to the following university policies:

[Expand AllPanels](#) [Collapse AllPanels](#)

[The Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[University Safety Statement](#)

[Addressing Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Drop/Withdrawal](#)

[Plagiarism/Cheating](#)

[Wellness Statement](#)

[Veterans Support Center](#)

[LGBT Resource Center](#)

[Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language](#)

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ABOUT THE U

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

## CSBS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Not every online student comes to campus, but some do. Familiarize yourself with the [CSBS Emergency Action Plan \(Links to an external site.\)](#) before you come to campus.

## COURSE OUTLINE

The course is organized into 15 week-long modules. Fall break is October 10-17, and Thanksgiving Break is November 25-28.

## SYLLABUS CHANGES

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be posted to Canvas under [Announcements](#).