

ECON/HRM 791 — Advanced Topics in Health Economics

Term: Winter 2016

Course Coordinator: Arthur Sweetman

Instructors: David Feeny, Jean-Eric Tarride, Emile Tompa, and Arthur Sweetman,

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Class: Wednesday, 9:00am - 12:00noon, KTH-334 (rescheduling may occasionally be required)

Office Hours: - Feeny: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:00 pm; or by appointment
- Sweetman: Tues. 2:30-4:30pm, or by appointment
- Tarride and Tompa: Because their main offices are off-campus,
please contact them via e-mail to arrange a time to meet.

Pre-requisites: Econ/HRM 788 or permission of the Course Coordinator. The course is intended primarily for graduate students in the Department of Economics, the Health Research Methodology program of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the Inter-Faculty PhD in Health Policy. These students will be given enrollment priority.

Course Description: This course builds on the survey of health economics provided in Econ/HRM 788 to explore advanced topics in the economics of health and health care. The course emphasizes current research issues. It provides a deeper examination of selected issues from Econ/HRM 788 and covers new areas not covered in 788. This year we will examine issues relating to economic evaluation and health technology assessment, the economics of work and health, population health, and health human resources.

By the end of the course it is hoped that students will have acquired:

1. An increased awareness of recent research in selected topics in health economics.
2. An improved understanding of the influences on health and the role of health care, with both a sound understanding of and ability to apply economic concepts to health and the health care sector.
3. An ability to conduct their own research in their chosen area of health economics.

Avenue to Learn: In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

This web-based software will be a key communications tool for the course and will be used to disseminate information, assignments and the like. Please see <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>.

Lists of the readings, as well as course notices and other material are posted on Avenue. Be sure to check Avenue frequently.

Important Alert: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Readings: Each week a set of readings will be assigned pertinent to the session topic. You can expect roughly 2-4 required readings (articles/chapters) per week. Required readings are listed on Avenue. In addition, optional suggested readings are often listed. These readings are not required but provide greater depth or greater context and background for a session. If you have any questions about the material for a session please contact the instructor for that session. It is important that you read and digest the assigned readings *in advance* of each session.

Evaluation: The final grade for the course will be based on the following.

Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	5%
Assignment 3	10%
Participation	20%
Research paper	55%

Assignments: All three assignments focus to a large degree on work preliminary to the research paper. Due dates are listed on the schedule at the end of this outline. Further details for Assignment 1 are posted on "Avenue to Learn" (Avenue).

Assignment 1 focuses on understanding the diverse and interdisciplinary health economics literature(s). Part of this assignment is a study of the “rhetorical structures” of various styles of health economics papers and another part is a preliminary survey of the research literature relevant to a potential topic for the course research paper. Some students may change their topic after undertaking the preliminary literature review. This is understandable but having done assignment 1 on a topic other than that for the research paper does not obviate the need to undertake a substantial literature review for the research paper.

Assignment 2 is a brief (approximately two-page double spaced, with page numbers and “nice” formatting) proposal of the research topic for your research paper. You should choose a well-defined (and not too broad/large) question relating in some way to an issue discussed in the course. If requested, the course instructors may be able to provide suggestions for research ideas. Time constraints mean that the proposal is due before we will have had a chance to discuss many issues in class; therefore it is imperative that you think about what interests you, look at future sessions to see what literature may be relevant, discuss possible questions with the instructors of the course, and begin the work as early in the term as possible. The proposal should specify the research question and key background literature, the methods and data (if relevant) to be used, and the scope of the investigation. It is possible to change topics following the submission of this proposal, and some deviation from this initial proposal is common, but a major change of topic would normally require a new proposal to be written. Students should approach one (and occasionally more than one) course instructor to discuss the topic of their proposal prior to submitting this assignment; it is each student’s responsibility to approach course instructors. Students may also approach course instructors regarding their preferences for supervision.

If the research requires access to the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre (RDC – many Econ/HRM 791 projects employ RDC data) or other sources of data with access protocols, then fulfilling the requirements for RDC access, or the access requirements for other data, comprises part of Assignment 2 in conjunction with the above. Similarly, although not common for this course, if research ethics is required for a research project then completing the relevant ethics application is also part of Assignment 2.

The proposal is to be submitted as a PDF formatted email attachment to the course coordinator. The research question and approach for the research paper must be approved by the course coordinator. Each student will be matched with one of the instructors or, in unusual circumstances, another faculty member who will supervise the research paper.

Assignment 3 has two parts. The first is an update of your research proposal as well as a draft of the literature review, data (if relevant) and methodology sections of your research paper. The second part is a 20 minute presentation to the class on the progress to date for your paper. Both will be due on a date to be announced, but normally near the end of the exam period or beyond the end of the exam period.

Participation is an essential element of this course and requires students to thoughtfully read the assigned material prior to each class. The course is seminar style, with a mixture of lecture and discussion. Participation will be judged on the basis of your preparedness for each session (Did you do the readings? Were you prepared to address the questions posed? Did you formulate your own questions about the readings?) and your contribution to in-class discussion. At their discretion, instructors may require brief written “mini-assignments” to ensure that students are thoughtfully

reading the assigned material in advance of class. If required of students, such mini-assignments will form part of the participation mark.

The **Research Paper** should be approximately 5,000 words in length (not including tables, figures and references). This paper should NOT “look like” an undergraduate essay. Rather, it should normally be styled as a paper for submission to an academic journal (journal submissions do not look like final published papers – see the journal submission guidelines for the journal you have selected); however, it may take the format of a formal working paper (e.g., NBER or IZA), a research-oriented think tank report, a Statistics Canada research paper or something similar. Some journal styles are quite cryptic with insufficient description of the institutions, data, and analytical methods relative to what is optimal for the pedagogical purposes of this class. In this case appendices are required to accommodate the inclusion of such material. You should identify an appropriate “style” (the ideal being to identify a particular academic journal) and any required appendices in consultation with your advisor. Keep the relevant audience and format in mind as you undertake your research and compose your paper. It is expected that you will write at least two drafts of your paper – revision is a common road to excellence. (Your supervisor need only read the final version, but it is recommended that students in the class read and comment on each other’s draft papers. This is a useful learning exercise and an exercise in collegial behaviour.)

The final version must be submitted by email to both your primary supervisor and the course coordinator. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 1.5 percentage points of the grade on the paper per 24-hour period for the first 5 business days and 3% of the grade for each day thereafter. Each paper will normally be graded independently by both the paper supervisor and one other instructor. All instructors normally meet to determine the final grades for the course.

All papers must include appropriate referencing of all works cited with full acknowledgment of others’ ideas. If the paper or portions of it are to be, or have been, submitted as course requirements for another course, prior approval of instructors from both courses is required.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and results in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty), and/or suspension or expulsion from the University. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically clauses 17 and 18 and Appendix 3, located at: [Link to Academic Dishonesty](#)

E-mail Policy: Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. When e-mailing a course instructor, please put “Econ 791” in the subject heading.

Econ/HRM 791 Session Schedule — Winter 2016

Session	Topic
Week 1: Jan 6	AS: Course introduction, and selected econometrics for health economics
Week 2: Jan 13	AS: Methods and Health Human Resources
Week 3: Jan 20	AS: Methods and Health Human Resources
Week 4: Jan 27	AS: Methods and Health Human Resources *** Assignment 1 (Literature) Due in class Wed, Jan 27***
Week 5: Feb 3	DF: The Assessment of Health-related Quality of Life
Week 6: Feb 10	DF: The Determinants of Population Health, Part 1
Feb 17:	Winter Recess: No Class
Week 7: Feb 24	DF: The Determinants of Population Health, Part 2 *** Assignment 2 (Proposals) Due on Wed, Feb 24 ***
Week 8: Mar 2	JET: Introduction to Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
Week 9: Mar 9	JET: Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
Week 10: Mar 16	JET: Cost-Utility and Cost-Benefit Analyses
Week 11: Mar 23	ET: Insurance and Regulatory Mechanisms for Occupational Health and Safety
Week 12: Mar 30	ET: Overview of Work and Health Policy and Issues
Week 13: Apr 6	ET: Studies of the Broader Work and Health Relationship *** Assignment 3 (Presentations & drafts) end of or beyond exam period *** *** Final Papers Due by Thurs, Jun. 30; early submission is allowed. Adjustments to this date may be made for good reasons (e.g., for students writing comprehensive exams). ***

DF = David Feeny; JET = Jean-Eric Tarride; ET = Emile Tompa; AS = Arthur Sweetman