

**SPPH 546 Introduction to Health Economics**  
**School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia**

**Instructor:** Dean Regier, PhD (he/him), email: [dean.regier@ubc.ca](mailto:dean.regier@ubc.ca)

**Class:** Thursdays 9am to 12pm, SPPH B108

**Office hours:** By appointment via email

**Background:**

Healthcare is the largest component of government spending in Canada and in many parts of the world. Issues related to healthcare permeates almost all aspects of society, from government announcements on spending priorities and wait times, to national news and interest groups advocating health system change.

This course will help students gain a broad understanding of the health system and health system change from an *economics* perspective. It will focus on why and how the healthcare system is structured and on the relationships between payers and providers. We have structured the course to be a comprehensive *Introduction to Health Economics*, focusing on economic concepts underlying the delivery, organization, and regulation e.g., pharmaceutical approval and pricing in healthcare markets within the context of the Canadian healthcare system. The course will overview concepts related to the production of health, demand and supply of healthcare services, and economic efficiency.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand policy issues in healthcare by focusing on fundamental concepts of economics related to health, healthcare and health policy
2. Apply economic principles as a lens to understand and critically assess the healthcare system
3. Explain economic theory related to the behaviour of economics agents, markets, and government policies.
4. Understand the economic and non-economic factors affecting health status, the healthcare market, and the role of institutions and public policy

### Course Format

The learning strategy for this class will be the use of lectures supplemented by student-led discussion. Lecture sessions will be used to introduce key themes and will represent a starting point for students to engage in self-directed study. Through class participation and individual student presentations, student-led class learning is encouraged and will be used to stimulate critical discussion of the class material.

### Course Delivery

We will be using Canvas for the course. Assignments should be submitted on Canvas. Lectures will be delivered in person.

### Textbook

This course will be based on the following textbook:

- Hurley JE, Health Economics. First Edition. McGraw-Hill Ryerson; 2010.
- Available as a printed copy or as an e-textbook at <https://campusstore.mcmaster.ca/> Search textbooks and select: “Health Economics” under Step 1.) Select an Option “Ongoing” under Step 2.) Term “Health Economics – Jeremiah Hurley” under Step 3.) Course “All” for Step 4 and Step 5

### Student Evaluation

Class participation	20%
Two Assignments	30%
Project presentation	10%
Individual Project	40%

The individual project is a critical assessment about an assertion related to the economics of healthcare that is found in an article, book, or report (10 pages recommended). The topics covered during the course provide examples of possible sources and topics. The critical assessment need not be on a topic relating to the Canadian healthcare system specifically. Each student will give a 10 minute presentation outlining their chosen topic, including the economic ideas behind the topic. These presentations will be given in-class. To facilitate student-led learning, each presenter should provide the class with an electronic copy of their presentation or a ½ - 1 page summary of the topic. This overview should be uploaded onto Canvas. The critical assessment is due **Monday, December 11, 2023**. The penalty for late assignments (including the project) is 3% per day of delay.

**Policy on Generative AI:** The use of Chat GPT or other generative AI tools is NOT permitted in this course. Students should avoid using AI tools for assignments. Failure to follow this policy will be considered a violation of UBC's policy on academic misconduct. If I change this policy during the course of the term you will be notified via canvas.

### **Respectful Environments**

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access, including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

SPPH is committed to providing a positive education experience free from discrimination. If you have had an experience in this course where you feel unsafe, have been mistreated or have witnessed mistreatment, please let me know. If you want to raise this beyond the course instructor the School recommends the following. You may contact your academic supervisor, the [education manager for your program](#) or the [Associate Director-Education](#). You may also report your concerns to the Faculty of Medicine Office of Respectful Environments, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) at <https://mistreatmenthelp.med.ubc.ca/>. Both SPPH and the REDI Office have procedures in place for recording and acting on reports of mistreatment in the educational environment.

**Date Lecture Title/Description**

**Week 1** Introduction and Overview. September 7, 2023 **Regier**

- Introduction to health economics
- Scope of sub-discipline
- Course overview

**Week 2** Economic concepts. September 14, 2023 **Regier**

Hurley Chapters 2 and 3

- Opportunity Cost
- Efficiency

**Week 3** Market structure. September 21, 2023 **Regier**

Hurley Chapter 3

- Demand, Supply, and Price

**Week 4** Economic evaluation 1. September 28, 2023 **Regier**

Hurley Chapter 4

- Welfarism & extra welfarism
- Types of economic evaluation

**Week 5** Economic evaluation 2. October 5, 2023 **Regier/Krebs**

Hurley Chapter 4

- Decision modelling
- Uncertainty

**Week 6** No class October 12, 2023

***Assignment 1 due on Canvas by October 12 11:59pm***

**Week 7.** Indigenous-Partnered Research & the Silent Genomes **Regier, Ehman,**

Project October 19, 2023 **Montour**

- Research in *a good way*
- Qualitative approaches to preferences

<p><b>Week 8</b> . Individual Demand for Health October 26, 2023 Hurley Chapter 5, parts of Chapter 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health capital framework that economists use to analyze individual-level demand for health</li> <li>• Predictions from the human capital framework regarding the impact of factors such as age, income and education on their demand for health</li> </ul>	<b>Regier</b>
<p><b>Week 9</b> Demand for Health Care November 2, 2023 Hurley Chapter 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health status and preference</li> <li>• Supplier induced demand</li> </ul>	<b>Regier</b>
<p><b>Week 10</b> Insurance markets and health Hurley Chapter 9 November 09, 2023 Hurley Chapter 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand (supply) for health care insurance Risk Pooling</li> </ul>	<b>Regier</b>
<p><b>Week 11</b> Healthcare financing November 16, 2023 Hurley Chapter 11, 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care systems and financing</li> <li>• Public subsidies, private subsidies, taxation</li> <li>• Funding remuneration</li> </ul>	<b>Regier</b>
<p><b>Week 12</b> Class presentation. November 23, 2023</p>	
<p><b>Week 13</b> Class presentation. November 30, 2023</p>	
<p><b>Week 14</b> Regulatory Pathway of Pharmaceuticals December 7, 2023 Hurley Chapter 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory decision-making in Canada</li> <li>• Safety and efficacy regulations</li> </ul>	<b>Regier</b>