



BOSTON COLLEGE

SUMMER SESSION

ECON3385 Health Economics, 3

Summer Session 1: May 13, 2026 – June 26, 2026

Instructor: Ira Lilian Abraham

BC E-mail: ira.abraham@bc.edu

Office Hours: By appointment (<https://bccte.zoom.us/j/91992013576>)

Communication: You may contact me by email, and I will respond within 24 hours.

Course Delivery: This is an online asynchronous course, which means that we will not meet online at the same time on a specific day and time. Students can access course content and study on their own schedule. However, students are still required to meet submission deadlines throughout the term.

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of health care economics with special emphasis on the pharmaceutical and health insurance industries. We will discuss the historical evolution of health care markets, current legislative changes, and public policy implications. Students will apply the tools learned in their introductory and intermediate microeconomics and econometrics courses to current and past topics in the health care industry. Presentation and discussion of current events and popular press books will familiarize students with recent topics in health care. International systems of health care will also be researched.

Textbooks, Readings and Learning Resources

All articles/handouts will be available in Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Textbooks & Readings (Required)

Health Economics, 1st Edition, Jay Bhattacharya, Timothy Hyde, and Peter Tu, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Multimedia Resources

- Presentations by the instructor

Virtual Classroom (Canvas)

Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. Your course will make significant use of Canvas this semester; you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, please see the Center for Teaching Excellence website.

In the case of technical difficulties or concerns, please contact canvas@bc.edu or 617-552-HELP (4357) for immediate assistance. Canvas requires [particular computer specifications](#) and wifi access. It is important that you plan accordingly.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Comprehend the distinctive nature of challenges encountered in the economic aspects of healthcare.
2. Examine the delivery of health services, commodities, and insurance through the lens of economic analysis.
3. Describe the existing institutional and regulatory framework of the health-care system in the United States.
4. Evaluate the advantages and drawbacks of prevalent strategies employed to tackle healthcare issues.

Assessments and Grading Policy

The overall course score is calculated as a weighted sum of all components, and then translated from 0-100 scale into a letter grade using a curved distribution. All students can access final grades through the Agora Portal after the grading deadline each semester. Students who complete course evaluations can access grades earlier, as they are posted.

Weight	Assessments	Meets Outcome #	Due
85%	Problem Sets	Weeks 1-6	Weekly
15%	Discussion Boards	Week 1-6	Module 1, 6

Below you will find more details about each of these activities or assignments.

Discussion Board Posts

An interactive assignment where students interact with other students through canvas. Additional details will be given on the Canvas website.

Problem Sets

There would be one problem set submission for each module that is designed to improve your understanding of the economic tools and methodologies used in analysing healthcare. These problem sets will be based on the subjects discussed in class and the readings assigned. While collaboration with classmates is allowed, it's essential for each student to submit their own individual responses. Detailed instructions for each problem set will be given when the assignments are provided.

Rubrics

You will find all activity or assignment rubrics in Canvas.

Grading

The course will be graded out of 100 points. A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62; F = 59 and below
Students can access final grades through the Agora Portal after the grading deadline.

Course Assignments

It is expected that you will spend 9 hours per week on coursework in this 6-week, 3-credit Summer Session course. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time, but the average is approximately 9 hours per week over the term.

Course Schedule

Hereafter, the book by Bhattacharya, Hyde, and Tu, is referred to as BHT.

	Weekly Outcomes	Readings and Learning Resources	Assessments and Activities
Week 1	1. Discuss how to represent demand for health from an economic perspective.	BHT Ch. 1, Ch. 2, Ch.3	- Problem Set 1 - Discussion Board Posts

Introduction and Demand for health	2. Describe the Grossman model.	Additional required resources in Canvas.	
Week 2 Supply of Health Care	1. Discuss about the labor market for physicians. 2. Discuss about the hospital industry and the relation between the hospitals and physicians.	- BHT Ch. 5, Ch. 6 - Additional required resources in Canvas	Problem Set 2
Week 3 Insurance Market	1. Discuss the demand for insurance in the presence of uncertainty and risk-aversion. 2. Discuss the market for lemons. 3. Describe Akerlof's model.	- BHT Ch. 7, Ch 8 - Additional required resources in Canvas	Problem Set 3
Week 4 Adverse Selection	1. Describe the Rothschild-Stiglitz model	- BHT Ch. 9 - Additional required resources in Canvas	Problem Set 4
Week 5 Moral hazard and public health	1. Discuss moral hazard and its graphical representation. 2. Discuss Pigouvian taxes and Coase theorem.	- BHT Ch. 11, Ch 20 - Additional required resources in Canvas	Problem Set 5
Week 6 American Healthcare System	1. Discuss the health insurance market in US. 2. Discuss Employer-Sponsored Insurance 3. Discuss Medicare market 4. Discuss Medicaid market	BHT Ch. 18	- Problem Set 6 - Discussion Board Posts

Participation

Participating in class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to participate in and complete all discussions, assignments, and assessments. While this is an asynchronous course, participating in online class discussion boards is an important component of learning. These discussion boards will take the place of our in-class interactions and should be used as both a space to provide opinions and thoughts, while also posing questions or asking for clarification on theories and concepts. Discussion boards count towards 10% of your final grade.

Consistent with BC's commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing the course syllabi and communicating with me at the start of the term regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Submitting Papers/Assignments

All written assignments are to be submitted through Canvas no later than 11:59 PM on the due date. Please submit all documents in either .doc or .docx format.

Late Work Submission Policies

Students must complete an initial discussion board post on Friday by 11:59 PM for the week they are due. If a student fails to submit an initial discussion board post they will receive a zero for that week's discussion board, regardless if they post responses to classmates.

Written assignments submitted after 11:59 PM on the paper due date will lose a letter grade per day. For example, a paper submitted between midnight and 11:59 PM of the following day is worth, at best, a B. This will continue for three days. After three days the paper will no longer be accepted. In the event of illness, emergency, other extenuating circumstances, or school-sanctioned events, please contact the instructor as soon as possible, providing written verification of the excused absence. Makeup/late papers must be completed no later than 5 days after the original assignment due date. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Accommodation and Accessibility

Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodations. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office are required to facilitate this process. Two separate offices at BC coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- [The Connors Family Learning Center \(CFLC\)](#) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
- [The Disabilities Services Office \(DSO\)](#) coordinates services for all other disabilities.

More information about [BC's commitment to accessibility](#).

Scholarship and Academic Integrity

Students must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking the permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work. Please read and become familiar with [Boston College's Academic Integrity Policies](#).

Policy on AI Technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool Usage: AI tools can generate text, images, and other media very quickly. Since a central goal of this course is to help you become independent and critical thinkers, you are discouraged from using AI tools to create text, video, audio, or images that end up in your work (assignments, activities, responses, etc).

If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.