I. Objectives

This is a second year graduate course in Health Economics. It is designed to provide students with a thorough overview of selected topics in the field. The course will focus on empirical work with an emphasis on methodology, although we will discuss some theory at various points as well. The primary objective of the course is to acquaint graduate students with both classic and frontier work in the field with the ultimate aim of preparing them for serious research in health economics and, more broadly, empirical micro-economics.

II. Readings

The readings will primarily be from journal articles. These articles should all be available from the library’s electronic resources. However, some others will be available on the web as working papers. Links will be provided on this syllabus when possible.

Some books will also be useful such as:


The Adda/Cooper book provides an excellent and digestible introduction to the empirical application of dynamic programming. For students who may want to go in a structural direction, it is a must. The Newhouse book is a terrific discussion of the economics of health care.

III. Grading

Your grade will be determined by (1) an in-class presentation (30%), (2) a term paper (40%) and (3) a problem set (30%).
IV. Course Structure

Section 1: Causal Pathways between Health and Wealth, August 20, 22, 27 and 29


Section 2: Health Responses to Economic Shocks, September 5, 10, 12 and 17


Section 3: Health, Labor Supply and Retirement Decisions, September 19, 24, 26 and October 1 and 3

Selected chapters from the Adda and Cooper Book


Section 4: Treatment Effects and Instrumental Variables, October 8, 10, 15, 17 and 22


Wooldridge Chapter 18

Section 5: Health Measurement, October 24


Presentations begin October 29

Section 6: Health Insurance and the Market for Health Care, Dates TBA

Selection from the Newhouse book


