

Introduction to Health Economics



Instructor: Professor Gaëlle Simard-Duplain

The goal of this course is to give students an understanding of key topics in health economics; specifically, the demand and supply of health and health care, and the role that market and non-market institutions play in that respect.

The course will be broadly divided in three parts. First, we will study individuals' decision to invest in their health in order to improve their well-being and their productivity. We will also investigate how this decision-making is influenced by people's characteristics (e.g., education, income) and by policy, and how it can lead to certain health behaviours, like smoking. Second, we will explore two defining aspects of health care systems everywhere: how health care is financed and how providers are paid.

We will consider both public and private approaches to the financing and delivery of health care, and explore the important role that health insurance plays in that context. Finally, we will study specific actors involved in the supply of health care, including physicians, hospitals, and the pharmaceutical industry.

Throughout the semester, we will draw on economic principles to compare different health care systems, with a particular emphasis on the Canadian system and some of the challenges it faces.

Prerequisite: ECON 1001 or ECON 1000 or FYSM 1003.