

# HDF 318G - Grand Challenge: Health and Wealth

Summer 23 - May 22 / June 24

Online / Asynchronous

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**Office Hours:** Zoom appointment

## Course Overview

This course aims to help students develop a deep and critical understanding of relevant issues related to health and wealth outcomes. These two topics are closely linked in modern societies and will be studied under an interdisciplinary lens. This course will consider the roles of governments, markets, and consumers in shaping the current health and financial landscape in the United States.

## Student Learning Outcomes:

This course fully covers the Social and Behavioral Science and Information Literacy outcomes in the new General Education program. It is also a “Grand Challenge” course. Here are the course objectives, presented in the context of each of these respectively:

### General Education Outcome: Social and Behavioral Sciences Outcome

- Identify key facts and terms relevant to improve health and wealth.
- Recognize key concepts for improving health and wealth.
- Collect appropriate information from original research reports to answer focused research questions.
- Apply relevant theories and research findings to real life events with health and wealth implications.
- Ask specific questions and answer them using reliable information sources.

### General Education Outcome: Information Literacy Competency

- Examine a policy issue and make recommendations the intersection of wealth and health markets and/or behaviors.
- Identify new words and jargons used in health and financial markets.
- Analyze multiple sources of information for evidence of slant or political bias of the source.

- Develop a group project presentation that summarizes findings and recommendations and accessible to a non-expert audience.
- Access relevant and credible sources of information to evaluate topics of concern to policy-makers and consumers.
- Understand and practice APA (American Psychological Academy) citation and format style.

## **Grand Challenge**

This is an interdisciplinary general education course: *A Grand Challenge*. It should therefore facilitate your exploration of multiple perspectives on areas of contemporary significance, and include their ethical implications. Here is how it meets these criteria:

### **Inclusion of complex issues of contemporary significance.**

Health and wealth are closely linked in today's society. At the macro level, the United States spends the highest GDP per capita in healthcare than any other developed nations while still lagging in key health indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality. At the micro level, a significant number of households struggle with health issues (i.e. childhood obesity) and personal finance issues (i.e. retirement savings), sometimes with challenges in both areas. These topics are also particularly important in the current conjuncture with the advent of universal care from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the challenges faced by the Social Security Administration's Retirement and Medicare programs.

### **Interdisciplinary approach**

This course will draw from the disciplines of economics, public policy (and public health), and consumer behavior to offer a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of health and wealth in American society. Economic concepts such as supply and demand, information asymmetries, and externalities will be reviewed and applied. Theories of consumer behavior and economic theory will be used to identify strategies to affect positive behavioral change in both the personal finance and personal health fields. From public policy and public health, we will review the role of the government in the healthcare and financial markets. We will also plan to bring an expert in public health to discuss Medicare and/or the ACA.

### **Recognition and Application of Ethical Principles**

An important ethical question posed is the right level of government and other political institutions intervention to help vulnerable populations in the health and financial domains. Programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Security Income are examples of programs of a welfare state. We will discuss the ethical challenges that arise from the distribution of limited resources to health and income policies.

1. To describe and synthesize theory and research about the connections between wealth and health in both institutional and individual/familial settings.
2. To remember and to understand factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) about the healthcare and the financial system issues faced by individuals, families, and the society.

3. To recognize the role of government and other political institutions in overseeing the healthcare and financial markets to protect vulnerable populations and consumer in general.
4. To apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions about personal health and financial choices and behaviors.

**Communication:** Brightspace is the primary communication tool for this course. All assignments and announcements will be posted there. Please check the site regularly. Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Feel free to reach me by email (nilton\_porto@uri.edu) anytime; I will try to answer all emails within 24 hours during weekdays.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors.

**Classroom Conduct:** Please respect your fellow students and your instructor. Most importantly, show respect for the opinions of others. Discussion and disagreement are very appropriate in a college environment. However, dialogue should be courteous. We want to preserve an atmosphere where students are eager to state their views without being embarrassed or ridiculed. Do your best to come to class on time; if you are late, please come in quietly and sit where you do not have to disturb others. Please turn off you cell phones and any other interactive devices. If you are expecting an emergency call, please set your phone to vibrate and leave the classroom to converse.

Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published “Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulation” which can be accessed in the University Student Handbook.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability Services for Students Office at 302 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, [www.uri.edu/disability](http://www.uri.edu/disability) or 239 Shepard Building, Feinstein Providence Campus, 401-277-5221.

**Hardship Support:** Are you or someone you know experiencing a hardship, such as at risk for going hungry or no place to live? If so, URI has resources to provide confidential help. Rhody Outpost provides URI students who are food insecure with emergency food services and resources. Rhody Outpost is housed at St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church on 15 Lower College Road. Contact them at [rhodyoutpost@gmail.com](mailto:rhodyoutpost@gmail.com), or 401-874-2568. Please contact the Office of Vice President for Student Affairs at 401-874-2427 for help with emergency housing.

**Religious Holidays:** It is the policy of the University of Rhode Island to accord students, on an individual basis, the opportunity to observe their traditional religious holidays. Students desiring to observe a holiday of special importance must provide written notification to each instructor.

**Absences due to University Sanctioned Events:** 8.51.12 Students who expect to be absent from classes or examinations for University sanctioned events shall discuss this with the appropriate instructor(s) at least one week in advance of the sanctioned event(s). The instructor(s) concerned shall then offer the student an alternative listed in section 8.51.11. For these purposes University sanctioned events shall be those events approved for class excuses by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, a Vice President, a Dean, or the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. No event shall be regarded as University sanctioned until the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs has been notified. Disagreements over the validity of an event being categorized as University sanctioned shall be mediated by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. If agreement cannot be reached, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall decide the matter and that decision shall be final.

**Academic Enhancement Center** This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Enhancement Center is a great place to do this. At the AEC you can work alone or in groups, tutor and professional learning specialists are available to help you learn, manage your time and work, and study well. On the Kingston campus, it is open Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 9 p.m. and Fridays until 1 p.m. All services are free (the coffee is free as well!), and no appointment needed. You can call for complete information at 874-2367, or just stop by the center on the fourth floor of Roosevelt Hall. In Providence, the Academic Skills Center (ASC) is at 239 Shepard Building, (401) 277-5221; hours are posted each semester here. In addition, the Saturday Skills for Success program offers workshops and tutoring from 10 am - 1 pm during fall and spring semesters.

# Course Requirements

**Textbook:** There will be no required textbook for this course.

**Brightspace:** There is a Brightspace site for this class. PowerPoint slides for each lecture will be posted. The slides are only outlines of the material covered, thus it is important that you attend class each day. The Brightspace site will also include other readings, course resources, discussions and communications. It is important to check the course site frequently.

## Graded Work:

This course will include weekly online discussions, weekly quizzes, weekly practices, and a take-home final exam as a case study. All class assignments must be uploaded to Brightspace by their due dates.

1. **Forum discussion (5 forums, 50 points total, 10 points each):** Weekly discussion questions will be posted in Brightspace. Your answers should demonstrate an understanding of the course material and all required questions are clearly answered. In addition, you have to post a response to **two (2) of your colleague's postings**. Forum discussion will be available from Monday afternoon until Thursday evening. Late submissions will not be accepted.
2. **Quizzes (5 quizzes, 100 points total, 20 points each):** The purpose of quizzes is to check your understanding of the assigned readings. The quiz questions will cover contents of the assigned chapters and other readings. Quizzes will be available at the end of each week of class, from Friday morning to Saturday evening. **You will have 30 minutes to answer 20 multiple choice questions.** Late submissions will not be accepted.
3. **Weekly Report (5 practices, 100 points total, 20 points each):** Five reports applying concepts from the class to policy issues. Reports will be due every Sunday by 11:55 PM. Late submissions will be accepted but will receive a 2 (two) point deduction per day.
4. **Extra Credit:** Introduction Forum (4 points)

**Grading Policy:** Grades are points out of a possible 250 - listed are the minimum points for each letter grade.

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| • A: 186  | • B: 166  | • C: 146  | • D: 120       |
| • A-: 180 | • B-: 160 | • C-: 140 | • F: Below 120 |
| • B+: 176 | • C+: 156 | • D+: 136 |                |

## Schedule of Classes - See Brightspace for details

**Week 1: Public Policy / Health / Financial Markets**

**Week 2: Consumer Behavior Theories / Economic Concepts**

**Week 3: Market Failures**

**Week 4: Market Solutions / Government Interventions**

**Week 5: Life Choices**