Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Epidemiology 9576T
Health Economics Research Methods
Winter 2018

Time:
Monday: 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Thursday: 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Room K116

Instructor: Sisira Sarma
Office Hours: Monday 3:30 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.
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Teaching Assistant: Steven Habbous
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Office Hours: TBA

Course Information

Prerequisite: 9574S or equivalent

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from the Graduate Chair to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus

This course is designed to provide students with advanced theoretical and empirical methods to evaluate health interventions from an economics perspective. More emphasis will be placed on advanced methods to evaluate health programs, policies and interventions in the field of modern health economics. The topics to be covered are: decision-analytic models, Markov models, probabilistic sensitivity analysis, Monte Carlo simulation and analysis of health care costs using regression models. If time permits, selected special topics on treatment effects using observational data will be considered. This course will also provide students with a hands-on experience in conducting empirical health economics evaluation using TreeAge Pro and STATA software packages.

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this term, students should be able to:

- understand advanced decision-analytic models to conduct cost-effectiveness analysis;
- extract effectiveness data from the clinical/epidemiological literature to populate decision-analytic models;
- design and conduct health economics analysis in the field of health and medicine using most appropriate technique;
- conduct applied health economics analysis using TreeAge and STATA software packages, including Monte Carlo simulations;
- conduct health care cost analyses using appropriate regression models;
- conduct economic evaluation using patient-level data; and
- undertake treatment effects analysis using observational data (if time permits).

Software:
We will be using TreeAge Pro 2017 and STATA 13 software packages. STATA 13 is available on Epidemiology & Biostatistics Computer Lab (Room # K7). Students in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics are eligible to claim reimbursement of the cost of the TreeAge Pro 2017 Student Version (@ US$45) upon submission of receipts. A group session will be organized with Sarah Guerrero for the expense claim reimbursement process.

Please Note: TreeAge Pro 2009 and STATA 13 available on Epidemiology & Biostatistics Computer Lab are for teaching purposes only and the licenses do not permit for research. This means you are required to purchase student versions of software packages for your thesis research.

Course Materials

Textbook:
There is no assigned textbook for this course. We will instead focus on selected materials from several books, journal articles and handouts. This course will cover core health economics evaluation topics and selected advanced topics depending in part on the interests of students and availability of time.

Useful Texts:

Health Economic Evaluation:


Analysis of costs and Healthcare Resource Utilization:

Treatment Effects Estimation:

I. Modelling in Health Economic Evaluation
Gray et al., Chapters 8-11
Briggs et al., Chapters 2-4
TreeAge Pro Suite 2017 User’s Manual, Chapters 32-36. Williamstown (MA): TreeAge Software Inc.

a. Markov Models and Microsimulation Models

Additional journal articles may be assigned.

b. **Obtaining Probabilities from Clinical/Epidemiological Studies**


Moser BK, McCann MH. Reformulating the hazard ratio to enhance communication with clinical investigators. *Clinical Trials* 2008;5(3):248-252.

Buyse M. Reformulating the hazard ratio to enhance communication with clinical investigators. *Clinical Trials* 2008;5(6):641-642.


Hoyle MW, Henley W. Improved curve fits to summary survival data: application to economic evaluation of health technologies. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2011 Oct 10;11:139. (Note: the authors supplied an excel sheet)

Guyot P, Ades AE, Ouwens MJ, Welton NJ. Enhanced secondary analysis of survival data: reconstructing the data from published Kaplan-Meier survival curves. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2012 Feb 1;12:9. (Note: the authors provide their R codes)


II. **Analysis of Costs and Healthcare Resource Utilization:**

Deb et al.
Glick et al., Chapters 5-6
Jones et al., Chapters 3, 11-12


Additional journal articles may be assigned.

**III. Economic Evaluation Using Patient-level data and Uncertainty**

Glick et al., Chapters 7-9

Drummond *et al.* Chapter 8

Gray et al., Chapter 4


Additional journal articles may be assigned.

**IV. Treatment Effects using Observational Data**:


Selected journal articles may be assigned.
Methods of Evaluation
In order to really understand applied health economics analysis, you need to have the experience of doing it by yourself. Assignments during the term will include problem solving exercises. Some problems will involve use of TreeAge Pro and STATA software packages to find solutions. You will be practicing the necessary steps to learn how to ask your software package for what you want and then how to interpret and explain the results.

The assignments will be based on lecture material, assigned readings from the textbooks, journal articles and all other assigned course materials. You are allowed to work together with your fellow classmates on the assignments, but the answers and interpretation of the results and analysis should be your own. The course assessment will be based on class participation and presentation, four assignments, and a final project.

The course requirements and their weights in the final grade are as follows:

- 5% - Regular class attendance, class participation and presentation
- 20% - Two Assignments: March 12, April 5 (dates are subject to change)
- 25% - Final Project: April 30, 2018

Your final project should have the following components:

- The study rationale: clinical and/or economic significance must be clearly written upfront.
- A comprehensive review of the previous literature, including any relevant meta-analysis.
- If your project involves cost-effectiveness analysis, you must use a decision-analytic model as your analytical framework. If your project does not involve cost-effectiveness analysis, you need to use an alternative modelling framework (you are encouraged to discuss the project with the instructor in advance).
- The model assumptions must be stated clearly and must acknowledge any limitations and its implications in the discussion section.
- Conduct relevant deterministic and probabilistic sensitivity analyses as relevant to your project.
- The final project report, including discussion and policy implications should be written clearly.
- The final project should be prepared in the journal article style with the detailed results & syntax provided in an Appendix and e-mail to the instructor.

Project Milestones:
Project Proposal and Literature Review (25% weight): 9574S
Proposed Methodology and Analysis Plan (20% weight): 3rd Week of March
Class Presentation (10% weight): 1st Week of April
Final Project Report (45% weight): April 30, 2018
Policy on Accommodation for Medical and Non-Medical Absences
For assignments worth 10% or more, refer to Western University’s Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm.

All non-medical absences must be approved in advance. In the case of an unexpected absence on compassionate grounds, documentation may be requested. If documentation is required by the instructor for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean’s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

Statement on Academic Offences
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Support Services
As part of a successful student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca/, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate or undergraduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.
Department & Faculty Offices
The Epidemiology & Biostatistics main office is located in K201 in the Kresge Building on Main campus.

For undergraduate academic counselling assistance, students will need to speak with the Bachelor of Medical Sciences Office: http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/bmsc/general-counselling.

Technology Requirements
You are responsible for all required course materials and announcements posted to the course’s OWL website. Please ensure after the first class that when you log in you are able to access the course site. A copy of the course outline will be available on both OWL and the departmental website.