COURSE SYLLABUS

This introductory course in the Health Policy and Management program explores core topics in the study of health and health care delivery in the United States. We will discuss the distribution of health and disease in society, the organization of the U.S. health care system and roles and behaviors of its key actors, the historical context for developments in public health and medicine, the quality and accessibility of health care services, and current events in health care reform. We will examine major themes in health care policy and practice using an interdisciplinary approach that employs sociological, political, economic and ethical perspectives on health and disease, characteristics of health care in the U.S., and the complexity of achieving high quality and affordability given the varied (and sometimes conflicting) motivations of policy-makers, payers, providers and patients. Students will also consider the U.S. health care system in an international context to provide a comparative lens on its nature and performance versus those of other industrialized nations. The objective of this course is to build understanding of fundamental ideas and problems in the areas of health and medical care and thereby to provide a strong foundation for future studies and careers in the health care field.

BOOKS AND READINGS

Students should arrive to class prepared to participate in the discussion of these themes based on their critical analysis of assigned readings. Three books are required. The primary textbook, *Health Care Delivery in the United States* (Kovner and Knickman, eds.), describes the organization and performance of the U.S. health care delivery system. The collection of readings in *The Nation’s Health* (Lee and Estes, eds.) complements the textbook with focused insight into specific issues confronting the public health and medical care systems. *The Sociology of Health and Illness* (Conrad, ed.) provides a sociological perspective on health and health care delivery. Additional required readings on the syllabus are designed to supplement these materials and may be downloaded from Blackboard.
REQUIRED BOOKS


ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS

Assigned readings not included in the required books will be posted on Blackboard.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

In addition to assigned readings, I encourage students to browse recent issues of well-respected journals such as *Journal of the American Medical Association, New England Journal of Medicine, American Journal of Public Health* and *Health Affairs*. The list of relevant web sites at the end of Kovner and Knickman’s book (Appendix C) may also be helpful.

COURSE SESSIONS

A. PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF HEALTH AND DISEASE IN SOCIETY


- Introduction to the course
- Overview of the state of public health and medical care in the U.S.
- Definitions of health and illness
- Relationship between health status and health care

*Health Care Delivery in the United States*


*The Nation’s Health*

The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives

Blackboard

Week 2. September 20: Epidemiologic Measures and the Distribution of Disease
- Descriptive versus analytic methods
- Measurement and assessment of health status
- Relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and health
- Predictors of morbidity and mortality

Health Care Delivery in the United States

The Nation’s Health

Blackboard

Optional Reading: For an exploration of social factors as predictors of morbidity and mortality, see The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives, Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 7.

Week 3. September 27: Public Health and Medicine
- Public health infrastructure
- Achievements in public health
- Public health versus medicine
- Ethics of resource allocation

REMINDER: FIRST BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY

Health Care Delivery in the United States
- Leviton, L., Rhodes, S. and Chang, C. “Public Health: Policy, Practice, and Perceptions.” Ch. 4,
The Nation’s Health


B. ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

Week 4. October 4: Overview of the U.S. Health Care Delivery System

- Characteristics and historical origins of the U.S. health care system
- International comparison of U.S. health care system versus other developed nations
- Brief modern history of health reform efforts

Health Care Delivery in the United States


Blackboard


Monday October 11 – Columbus Day (No Class)

Week 5. October 18: Financing of Health Care in the U.S.

- Flow of funds in the U.S. health care system
- Payers – Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP and private insurance

Updated October 14, 2010
- Rise of managed care organizations (MCOs) and managed care backlash
- Spending growth and cost containment efforts
- Practical and ethical complexity of rationing as a cost control strategy

**REMINDER: PAPER 1 DUE TODAY**

*Health Care Delivery in the United States*
- Finkler, S. and Getzen, T. “Costs and Value.” Ch. 17, pp. 479-506.

*The Nation’s Health*

*The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives*
- Introduction to “Rationing Medical Care.” pp. 493-494.

**Blackboard**

**Week 6. October 25: Provider Organizations and the Provision of Health Care Services**
- Acute and ambulatory care delivery
- Organization of health care services
- Accountable health care systems

**REMINDER: SECOND BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY**

*Health Care Delivery in the United States*

**Blackboard**
Week 7. November 1: Dynamics of the Health Care Workforce
- Historical and emerging roles for physicians and health professionals
- Health care labor markets
- Professionalization and power in organized medicine

*Health Care Delivery in the United States*

*The Nation’s Health*

*The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives*
- Conrad, P. and Schneider, J. “Professionalization, Monopoly, and the Structure of Medical Practice.” Ch. 16, pp. 194-199.

Week 8. November 8: Patient Behavior and Decision-Making
- Patient as consumer and co-producer of care outcomes
- The provider—patient relationship
- Consumer-directed care and patient demand for and use of information

*Health Care Delivery in the United States*

Blackboard

C. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES AND DEBATES

Week 9. November 15: Adapting to a Changing Burden of Disease
- Care delivery for chronic disease
- Long-term care

Updated October 14, 2010
REMINDER: THIRD BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY

Health Care Delivery in the United States
- Anderson, G. and Knickman, J. “Chronic Care.” Ch. 8, pp. 221-237.
- Feldman, P. et al. “Long-Term Care.” Ch. 9, pp. 239-265.

The Nation’s Health

Blackboard

Week 10. November 22: Managing Technological Innovation
- Growth in use of high-cost drugs and medical technologies in health care
- Treatment benefits versus monetary costs associated with medical innovation
- Commercialization of medical treatment and implications for providers and patients

Health Care Delivery in the United States
- Strongin, R. et al. “Pharmaceuticals.” Ch. 11, pp. 299-318.

Blackboard

Week 11. November 29: Quality of Care
- The state of quality and safety in U.S. care delivery
- Quality measurement, monitoring and enforcement
- Complexity of quality improvement and error reduction in health care
- Quality improvement frameworks and interventions

Health Care Delivery in the United States

Updated October 14, 2010
• Kropf, R. “Information Management.” Ch. 13, pp. 357-409.

The Nation’s Health

Blackboard

Week 12. December 6: Access to Care and the Uninsured
• Barriers to care for vulnerable patient populations
• The uninsured and underinsured in the U.S.
• The Patient Protection and Affordability Act of 2010 and implications of health reform

REMEMBER: FOURTH BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY

Health Care Delivery in the United States
• Billings, J. and Cantor, J. “Access to Care.” Ch. 16, pp. 445-476.

Blackboard

Week 13. December 13: Health Care Reform in the U.S.
• Current developments and debates in health reform
• Future of the U.S. health care delivery system
• Competing philosophies on and agendas for health care system change
• Course wrap-up

Blackboard

Updated October 14, 2010


**REMINDER: PAPER 2 DUE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15**
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to attending and participating in classes, students are required to submit two papers and three short written exercises. These requirements are described briefly below and details of each assignment will be posted on Blackboard.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% Final Grade</th>
<th>Date(s) Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>December 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Complete 3 of 4: 9/27, 10/25, 11/15, 12/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Paper 1** – Students will prepare a policy memo on trends in diabetes based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics. This assignment will allow students to demonstrate their ability to understand, interpret and discuss quantitative data. Class readings will also be useful in preparing this memo. (No more than 3 double-spaced pages in 12-point font).

**Paper 2** – Students will develop a thoughtful and well-organized discussion of a provocative concept in Health and Medical Care using course materials. This paper will allow students to engage in critical reflection on course readings and discussion and should result in a carefully-structured essay with well-supported opinions and ideas. Footnoted references to course materials are required to demonstrate synthesis of course content. (5-7 double-spaced pages in 12-point font).

**Blackboard Assignments** – Each student must answer three of the four questions (posted under “assignments” on Blackboard). The response should be in the form of a concise one-page essay. These essays should be based on course materials, relevant data and ideas from peer-reviewed journals, media or websites, and/or your own experiences. Students are also asked to respond to at least one classmate’s essay on three of the four questions.

**Class Participation** - Classroom discussion and debate are essential to this course. Student performance will be evaluated on engagement in the classroom and constructive contribution to class discussions.