

## **Health Care and Health Care Policy**

SOCY 28

Fall 2013

Tuesday/Thursday 10 am – 12 noon

X Hour Wednesday 3-4:15 pm

**Instructor:** Valerie Lewis

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**Office hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 8:45-9:45

### **Course Description**

This course explores the policy issues and implications associated with health care in the United States. We will explore the social, economic, organizational and institutional contexts of health care and medicine to answer questions such as, who is healthy in American society and who is not? Why are some healthy and others not? How is our health care system organized? And why is it different from most other industrialized nations? How does the organization of medical care affect the quality and cost of that care? Our goal will be to gain a deeper understanding of the organization and delivery of health care in the U.S., and to appreciate some of the relevant policy issues.

### **Course Requirements**

*Class participation.* Students are expected to read and reflect upon the assigned readings before coming to class and to participate in class.

*Short reflection papers.* Students are required to write two short papers (3-4 pages). Further details will be given in class. These papers will be due in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> weeks of the term.

*Exams.* We will have an in-class mid-term exam and a final exam that are based on the readings and material covered in class. I will provide review guides to help you prepare for these exams.

**Final Course Grades** are based on:

Class attendance and participation – 10%

Short paper 1 – 10%

Short paper 2 – 10%

Midterm exam – 30 %

Final exam – 40 %

### **Required Reading**

The following materials are required.

1. Bodenheimer, Thomas and Kevin Grumbach. 2012. *Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach*. McGraw-Hill.

2. Gawande, Atul. 2002. *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*. New York: Picador.
3. Sweet, Victoria. 2012. *God's Hotel: A Doctor, A Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine*. New York: Riverhead Books.

**Additional required readings are available on the course Blackboard site under the Assigned Readings button.**

### **Important notes**

*Attendance.* Participation counts as 10% of your course grade. If you do not attend class, you will not be able to participate and your grade will suffer.

*Accommodations.* Students with learning, physical or psychiatric disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Disability Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

*Writing and academic assistance.* For individual peer tutorial assistance with papers, research, and new media projects, students may use RWIT, the Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology. Make appointments online at [www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit), or drop by the Center in Baker-Berry Library, Level One, from 4 to 6 pm and 7 to 10 pm, S-Th. \*\*\*

*Honor Principle and work in this course.* I will follow and enforce the Academic Honor Principle described in the Dartmouth College Student handbook. Students must do their own work, including writing your own papers and taking your own exams.

## Course schedule and readings

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Week 1 – Background and introduction on American health care</b>		
Tu Sep 17	Introduction and background on US health care system	
(X HOUR – W Sep 18)		
Th Sep 19	What is health? What is health care?	Health Policy book Chapter 1, 3, 16 Becker, “On Becoming a Marijuana User” Aronowitz, “Lyme Disease: The Social Construction of a New Disease”
<b>Week 2 – Access: Who pays for health insurance in the United States?</b>		
Tu Sep 24	Private insurance: Employer sponsored health insurance and exchanges	Health Policy book chapter 2 Blumenthal D. “Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance in the United States – Origins and Implications.” NEJM, 355(1), 2006: 82-88.
(W – Sept 25)		
Th Sep 26	Public insurance programs: Medicare, Medicaid, and uncompensated care	Kaiser Family Foundation fact sheets on Medicare, Medicaid, dual eligible Baicker, Kate. 2013. “The Oregon Health Insurance Experiment”
<b>Week 3 – Who provides health care? Health care organizations</b>		
Tu Oct 1	Health care organizations	Cockerham, “The Hospital in Society” Health policy book chapters 5 and 6
(W Oct 2)		
Th Oct 3	Physicians and their roles	TBA <i>Complications</i> , Part 1 (3-108) Wear, “On white coats and professional development: the formal and hidden curricula” Branch, “Deconstructing the White Coat”
<b>Week 4 – Who provides health care? Health care providers</b>		
Tu Oct 8	Nurses, nurse practitioners, medical assistants, physician assistant	Chap 7, Health Policy book NY Times series on Nurse Practitioners
(W Oct 9)		
Th Oct 10	Class cancelled	
<b>Week 5 – Disparities and vulnerable populations in health care</b>		
Tu Oct 15	The health care safety net	Gawande, “The Hotspotters” Lutfey, Karen and Jeremy Freese. diabetes clinic article, <i>AJS</i> Watch the Kaiser tutorial <a href="http://www.kaiseredu.org/Tutorials-">http://www.kaiseredu.org/Tutorials-</a>

(W Oct 16)		
Th Oct 17	Health disparities and health care Guest lecturer: Samir Soneji, PhD, Assistant Professor of the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice and the Norris Cotton Cancer Center	Link, BG and J Phelan. 1995. "Social Conditions as fundamental causes of disease." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 80-94. Williams, DR and C Collins. 1995. "US Socioeconomic and Racial Differences in Health: Patterns and Explanations." Marmot et al. 1991. "Health Inequalities among British Civil Servants: The Whitehall II Study."
<b>Week 6 – Midterm</b>		
Tu Oct 22	Midterm review	
(W Oct 23)		
Th Oct 24	Midterm	
<b>Week 7 – How are physicians and health care providers paid for their work? Payment systems and health care costs</b>		
Tu Oct 29	Health care provider reimbursements	Health Policy book chapter 4, 8, 9 Brill, Steven. "Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us" <i>Time</i> . 4 March 2013.
(W Oct 30)		
Th Oct 31	Rising health care costs	Gawande, "The cost conundrum" <i>God's Hotel</i> , chapters TBA
<b>Week 8 – Variation in practice, care, and costs</b>		
Tu Nov 5	Cost containment	<i>God's Hotel</i> , chapters TBA
(W Nov 6)		
Th Nov 7	Variation in medical practice	<i>God's Hotel</i> , chapters TBA
<b>Week 9 – Issues in costs and quality</b>		
Tu Nov 12	Other cost issues: Pharmaceuticals and medical malpractice	Chandra, Amitabh, et al. "The Growth of Physician Medical Malpractice Payments." <i>Health Affairs</i> . 2005. p240-249. Gawande, Atul. "The Malpractice Mess; Who pays the price when patients sue doctors?" <i>The New Yorker</i> , November 14, 2005. TBA on pharmaceuticals
(W Nov 13)		
Th Nov 14	How can the quality of health care be improved?	Health Policy book chapter 10 Bataldan, P.B. and F. Davidoff. "What is Quality Improvement?"
<b>Week 10 – Reform</b>		
Tu Nov 19	Payment and Delivery system	RAND, "Payment Reform: Analysis of

reform

Models and Performance  
Measurement Implications”  
Fisher, “A National Strategy to Put  
Accountable Care into Practice”

(W Nov 20)

Th Nov 21

The future of US health care; course  
wrap up and final review

*Complications*, Part 3