

**HEALTH POLICY: THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT AND
THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**
BIOE 575 / HCMG 250 / HCMG 850

Tuesdays & Thursdays from 4:30-6:00pm Stiteler B6

Faculty

Dr. Ezekiel J. Emanuel
Vice Provost for Global Initiatives
Diane V.S. Levy and Robert M. Levy University
Professor

Dr. J. Sanford Schwartz
Leon Hess Professor of Medicine, Health Care
Management, and Economics
schwartz@wharton.upenn.edu

Teaching Assistants & Administrative Staff

Brenna Dee Kelly, JD,
MPH
Brenna.dee@gmail.com

Andrew Steinmetz
andrewps@law.upenn.edu

Katie Chockley
Department of Medical Ethics
and Health Policy
kchock@upenn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The objective of this course will be to provide students with a rigorous understanding of the health care system in the United States. The course will focus on the challenges of cost, quality, and access, the relationship between market failure and the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and the expected and potential impact of the ACA on the organization, structure, delivery and outcomes of the health care system.

This course will consist of three interconnected segments. The first segment will provide an in-depth analysis of the current U.S. health care system and the factors underlying the failure of this market. The course will begin with an overview of the history and of the structure of the U.S. health care sector, which accounts for nearly a fifth of the entire American economy. Then we will explore challenges posed by rapidly rising health care costs, declining health insurance coverage and uneven quality.

The second segment of the course will review the history of attempts to reform the US health care system and how and why they failed. It will also cover the politics of reform and the story of how the ACA ultimately passed through Congress. Finally, this segment will serve as a dissection of key provisions of the ACA's ten titles to illuminate the content and goals of the legislation.

The third segment will focus on the likely effect of the ACA on cost, access, and quality, and on several sets of stakeholders, including health insurers, health care providers, medical suppliers, employers, and workers and organization of health care services and systems. The course will then examine the ACA's effects on the U.S. economy. The course will summarize the major criticisms of ACA, important political challenges, and unintended consequences of the legislation. Finally, the course will consider the possible long-term impacts of the ACA, that is, the "Megatrends" that will spur the evolution of the US health care system.

COURSE MATERIALS

All information on this syllabus can be found on our Canvas site at
www.upenn.instructure.com

The Canvas site for this course will be hosted by the University-wide (Penn Libraries) Canvas site, which is accessible to everyone with a PennKey and password. The Wharton Canvas platform is a different site. We are not using the Wharton Canvas platform for this course. Our Canvas site contains all essential information for this course. Readings, lecture slides, and lecture recordings can be found in the "Modules" section.

Required materials:

1. This course relies heavily on Dr. Emanuel's book, *Reinventing American Health Care*. We encourage you to purchase this book, as many assigned readings will be drawn from it. You can find it on [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com), with many used options available.

Other course materials include: policy documents from government agencies and nonprofit research organizations; articles from popular press outlets; and academic articles from health care journals. Copies of these materials will be made available to you through our Canvas website. Note that in some cases it may be necessary to access the electronic files from a University of Pennsylvania IP address (or through the UPenn Libraries website).

We do not assign superfluous readings. *You should read and learn all assigned readings in advance of lectures.* Due to the amount of information covered in this course, the pace of lectures tends to be quick; in the past, students have found advanced preparation of assigned readings essential to success in the course.

Health policy is a constantly evolving field. As such, you would do well to keep up with current events, which we will often discuss during lectures. We recommend that you periodically read the following websites:

<http://www.vox.com/authors/sarah-kliff>
<http://healthreformgps.org/>
<http://chirblog.org/>
<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/>
<http://kff.org/>
<http://healthaffairs.org/>

http://www.urban.org/health_policy/index.cfm
<http://www.cbo.gov/topics/health-care>
<http://www.rwjf.org/en/topics/rwjf-topic-areas/health-policy.html>
<http://thehill.com/blogs/healthwatch/>
<http://blogs.wsj.com/health/>

REQUIREMENTS & GRADES

In-class Quizzes (15% of your overall grade)

- We drop your three lowest grades in calculating your overall quiz average
- Quizzes will cover the assigned readings and lectures from previous un-quizzed class sessions *and* the required readings due on the day of the quiz

Midterm Exam (25% of your overall grade)

- One midterm exam that consists of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions
- Cumulative

Homework Assignments (30% of your overall grade)

- Three one-paged, double-spaced essays

Final Exam (30% of your overall grade)

- Similar in structure to the midterm exam—multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions
- Cumulative

Quizzes and exams can only be taken in class and cannot be made-up. Please do **not** schedule flights for the holidays that may conflict with exam dates. Our final exam is scheduled for If you become aware of a genuine exam conflict, such as another final exam scheduled at the same time as ours, please make us aware of this as early as possible, so that we can work with you to make accommodations.

Of course, if you are hospitalized or if you encounter a significant and documented medical difficulty, we will consider potential accommodations for your situation. For instance, we may allow you to come in on a stretcher and will find some way to accommodate your IV pole to take the final exam.

INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

Ethicists are teaching this course. We take the virtue of integrity very seriously. We want you to talk about the readings and about the larger topic of health policy with your fellow classmates, family, and friends. We all learn by engaging with the ideas and one of the best ways to engage is to discuss and argue about the ideas. Please do that. However, the work you submit for the quizzes, homework assignments, and examinations must be your work and your work alone. Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be severely dealt with under the procedures of the University of Pennsylvania. (Too bad they got rid of the public stocks.)

COURSE RULES

#1 Attendance

We expect you to attend every class meeting. We are designing this course to be engaging and interactive. A significant portion of the learning will occur in the classroom as we discuss the lecture topics and readings. Missing those interactions will significantly diminish your understanding of health policy.

#2 Do the Reading

We expect you to do all the required readings before class. You should come prepared to discuss all required readings and engage fully in discussion. We will randomly call on people in class to discuss various parts of the readings or extend the principles discussed in the readings to a novel scenario. We take class preparation very seriously.

#3 Be Punctual

We will begin each class promptly at 4:30pm. We will be ready and so should you. Consider our class meetings as you would any job or professional meeting. If you arrive late or leave early you will disrupt the flow of the class and you might miss a quiz, which cannot be made up.

#4 No Cell Phones

We work hard to prepare for class. We expect you to be prepared and to thoughtfully participate. We do not want the time disturbed by a ringing phone and we do not want people running out to answer their phones. It disrupts the class. Accordingly, do not merely set your phone to silent or vibrate—turn it completely off for an hour and a half. Who knows, it may just feel like a small vacation.

Laptops may be used for taking notes, if this is your preferred method. However, do not use them for other purposes, such as emailing BuzzFeed articles to nineteen friends, mindlessly scrolling through Facebook pictures of someone you knew in high school, playing with Instagram filters, and other similar distractions. You cannot multi-task and expect to fully engage with the class. This isn't us talking; it's science. If we find you engaging in any of these behaviors, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

#5 No Blogging, Texting, Tweeting, Facebooking, or other public commenting on this course.

We want this class to be about learning and engaging with difficult material. This class is not a public performance and you are not an Internet health policy blogger. You are a student and this is a learning environment. As teachers, we will sometimes be intentionally provocative and challenging. We want you, as students, to take intellectual risks, think creatively, and push your own limits. This requires an environment of safety and respect, which is not compatible with publicly broadcasting what is going on in class to titillate unknown interlopers.

***By registering for this course you are agreeing to abide by these rules.
This is informed consent.***

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Course Introduction/The Tax Exclusion/History/Structure of the System

Thurs Aug 27th

Week 2A: Structure of the System – Delivering Health Care

Tues Sept 1st

Week 2B: Problems: Health Care Spending and Cost Growth

Thurs Sept 3rd

Week 3A: Problems: The Uninsured and Access to Health Care

Tues Sept 8th

Week 3B: Problems: Adverse Selection, Moral Hazard, and Quality of Care

Thurs Sept 10th

Week 4A: NO CLASS – ROSH HASHANA

Tues Sept 15th

Week 4B: Problems: Medical Malpractice

Thurs Sept 17th

Class Dinner

Week 5A: NO CLASS – YOM KIPPUR

Tues Sept 22nd

Week 5B: Pre-ACA Quality

Thurs Sept 24th

Review Session

Monday, September 28th, exact time TBD

Week 6A: History of Reform

Tues Sept 29th

Review Session

Wednesday, September 30th, exact time TBD

Week 6B: MIDTERM

Thurs Oct 1st

Week 7A: Enacting the Affordable Care Act

Tues Oct 6th

Week 7B: NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Thurs Oct 8th

Week 8A: ACA and Access – Mandates and Exchanges

Tues Oct 13th

Week 8B: ACA and Access – Market Reforms and Medicaid Expansion

Thurs Oct 15th

Week 9A: ACA and Cost: Payment Reform

Tues Oct 20th

Possible Class Dinner

Week 9B: Supreme Court Decisions

Thurs Oct 22nd

Week 10A: ACA and Innovation, Comparative Effectiveness Research and PCORI

Tues Oct 27th

Week 10B: Investors and VCs

Thurs Oct 29th

Guest Lecturer:

Week 11A: Progress Report on the ACA

Tues Nov 3rd

Possible Class Dinner

Week 11B: Practicing Physicians' Perspectives

Thurs Nov 5th

Guest Panelists: John Srandio and others

Week 12A: ACA Spawned Innovation Startups

Tues Nov 10th

Guest Lecturer: Oliver Kharraz, ZocDoc President & Founder

Week 12B: Health Insurance Industry

Thurs Nov 12th

Guest Lecturer: Vivian Riefberg, Director of Public Sector Practice, McKinsey

Week 13A: ACA's Impact on Hospitals

Tues Nov 17th

Guest Lecturer: David Feinberg, CEO of Geisinger Health Systems

Week 13B: Interactive Case Discussion - TBD

Thurs Nov 19th

Week 14A: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving

Tues Nov 24th

Week 14B: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving

Thurs Nov 26th

Week 15A: Megatrends I

Tues Dec 1st

Class Dinner

Week 15B: Megatrends II

Thurs Dec 3rd

Week 16A: Alternative Perspective on the ACA

Tues Dec 8th

Guest Lecturer: Doug Holtz-Eakin, President of the American Action Forum

Review Session

Tues Dec 15th

FINAL EXAM

Wed Dec 16th

Time: 6-8pm

Location: TBD