

THE WHARTON SCHOOL  
University of Pennsylvania

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COMPARATIVE HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS (HCMG 859/HCMG 204)

SPRING 2018

Monday/Wednesday 1:30-3:00pm, Spring 2017

Jon M. Huntsman Hall 270

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**OVERVIEW**

This course examines the structure of health care systems in different countries, focusing on the design and financing of public and private insurance; organization of care delivery systems; reimbursement of physicians, hospitals, pharmaceuticals and devices; and adoption of new technologies and expenditure controls.

We study the relative roles of private sector and public sector insurers and providers, and the effect of system design on cost, quality, efficiency and equity of medical services.

Some issues we address are normative: Which systems and which approaches to combining public and private sectors are better at achieving efficiency and equity? Other issues are positive: How do these different systems deal with the tough choices, such as decisions about new technologies? We will cover some mature systems, including Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan, which represent prototypical system designs, and Italy and Singapore, which illustrate other interesting approaches. We also look at middle and low income countries with emerging systems –including Chile, Brazil, India and China – and at major cross-cutting issues such as life-expectancy and infant mortality rates, pay for performance and service quality. We will draw lessons for the US from foreign experience and vice versa.

**READINGS**

All course readings are required unless marked as optional. You should just focus on the main concepts and design features of each country's system of financing and reimbursement, including important changes over time. Details on specific dates, names, or minor statistics are not required.

- A.) All readings that are available without copyright fees are posted in the Files section of Canvas in lecture-specific folders. You can view or print the readings on your own from Canvas: <https://canvas.upenn.edu/>.
- B.) All copyright protected readings require payment of a copyright fee. These must be ordered through Study.Net, which may be accessed via Canvas using the link on the course home page or in the left column. Non-MBA students must pay this fee to Study.Net. For MBA students, it is already collected through tuition.

We recommend that you read the assigned articles for each lecture in the order indicated on the syllabus, which reflects changes over time for each country.

## **CANVAS ACCESS**

Students who have a Wharton account will automatically have access to Canvas once they register for the class. Students who do not yet have a Wharton account can create one at <http://accounts.wharton.upenn.edu>. If you have problems, contact the Wharton courseware consultants at the WCIT office, online, or via email ([courseware@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:courseware@wharton.upenn.edu)). Class handouts, any changes to the schedule or readings, and other materials will be posted on Canvas.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class attendance and contributions to in-class discussion are important. Fifteen percent of the final course grade is allocated to class participation. **Please bring a name card to each class to help us learn your name and assure that you receive credit for your contributions.**

## **TERM PAPER AND PRESENTATION**

Students will write a brief (about 10 pages) paper related to the health care system in one or more countries. You may work in groups of up to four students, or individually. Possible topics include: how a particular country has dealt with a costly technology or service, such as cancer drugs, long term care or electronic medical records; the role of private vs. public sector in insurance or service provision or medical education; specific health issues, such as smoking etc. We will provide a list of possible topics early in the semester, but encourage you to think of a topic of specific interest to you. The US should NOT be the main focus of the paper, although it may be used for comparison. The paper should also not replicate material covered in class or in the assigned readings. The **paper is due in class April 11th** (NO EXCEPTIONS). In addition to the hard copy submitted in class, please submit an electronic copy of your paper via Canvas. The papers will be presented and discussed in class.

## **CASE WRITE-UP**

Students should come to class prepared to discuss all the assigned cases. In addition, each student is required to write up ONE of the three cases.

## **QUIZZES**

We will have short 10-minute quizzes at the beginning of some lectures. The quizzes will cover the assigned readings for that day and the material covered in the previous class.

## **FINAL EXAM**

A final exam is scheduled on the University exam date. Students may instead take the optional make-up exam on December 8<sup>th</sup>, during the last class period. The final will include a choice of several short essay questions and several short-answer/quiz questions. A sample exam will be posted on Canvas.

## **GRADING**

Paper	30%
Quizzes	10%
Final exam	35%
Case write-up	10%
Class participation	15%