



HCMG 1010: HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

Fall 2023

Contact Information

Diane Alexander

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Office hours: by appointment. Please feel free to email the TAs or me about any course questions, and we will set up a time to meet.

TAs:

Eda Algur (ealgur@wharton.upenn.edu); Office hours: Tues., 3-4pm, Colonial Penn Center Faculty Lounge

Aidan Crowley (aidan.crowley@penntestmed.upenn.edu); Office hours: Wed., 1:30-2:30pm, Colonial Penn Center Faculty Lounge

Lectures

Class meeting: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-1:30pm, JMHH F85

Course description

This course introduces and examines the main features of the financing and delivery of health care in the United States. It covers health care spending, the relationship between health and health care, private and public health insurance, providers and services, provider reimbursement, health care reform, and factors affecting health policy. The course pays close attention to the economic incentives facing institutions and individuals and to the economic context of important health policy issues.

Course Format

- Lecture/presentation by instructor
- Readings and podcasts
- Presentations and discussions with guest speakers
 - If you want to introduce one of the guest speakers, send me an email the week before. This would involve preparing a 1-2 minute brief introduction and presenting it at the beginning of class.

Course Materials

Slides and readings form the core material of the course and are provided through the Canvas website (<http://canvas.upenn.edu>).

Slides: Slides will be posted on Canvas prior to class. For guest speakers, slides may be made available after class.

Readings: There will typically be 2-3 relevant articles for each class. **Students are expected to read these in preparation for the class.** Required readings and podcasts are marked with an asterisk, and additional optional readings are also provided for each topic.

Optional textbook: Paul J. Feldstein, Health Policy Issues: An Economic Perspective, 7th ed., available at the PENN Bookstore.

- The 7th edition has two new chapters versus the 6th edition. The 6th edition does not reflect recent changes in the health care system and has older data. The 5th edition has the same chapter numbers as the 6th edition and very old data.

Grading

- In class exam 1 (**October 10**): 35%
- In class exam 2 (**December 7**): 35%
- Writing assignment (**due November 21**, class discussion **November 28**): 15%
- Guest speaker write-ups: 15%

Exams: There will be in class exams on **October 10** and **December 7**

Makeup tests will be given without penalty ONLY in the event of an excused absence when the instructor has been notified before the evaluation is given. Acceptable excuses for missing an examination are death, serious illness, court appearance, or personal crisis. Documentation (e.g., notification via online Course Absence Notice) must be provided before the class in which the evaluation is administered.

Writing assignment: You are required to write reaction/opinion/analysis of an article or blog post dealing with health care in the form of a “letter to the editor.” Candidate articles/posts will be posted to Canvas during the semester, along with more details about the assignment. The assignment will be graded based on substance (what you say) and exposition (how you say it).

Guest speaker write ups: Students must submit three guest speaker write-ups during the semester. Write ups should include three specific things discussed in the class that you found interesting, and should not exceed 400 words. You can choose to write-ups any three guest speakers. Submit the write ups on Canvas under assignments. **These are due four days after the guest lecture by 11:59 pm. Late write ups will not be accepted.**

Re-grades: any re-grade request **must be done within seven days after the exam or exercise is returned to you.** The request for a re-grade **must be done over email.** The request must include a description of what the problem is and why you think the exam or exercise should be graded differently. In these cases, the **entire exam or exercise will be regraded**, not just the question identified. A regrade can result in an increase, decrease, or no change in points.

Classroom Guidelines and Policies

- Attendance: Your on-time attendance for each class session is expected, as is your active participation.
- Generative AI: You may use generative AI programs (e.g., tools like ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant Penn policies.
- Academic Honesty: All students should familiarize themselves with the University's guidelines on citations, plagiarism and academic dishonesty, which are found at:
http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html
Any violations of this policy will result in significant consequences, including but not limited to, grade deductions and reporting to the University.

Recording Policy

By taking this course, students acknowledge that:

- They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate Wharton course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.
- They will not share links to Wharton course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.
- Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights

Tentative Course Outline

Please see below for a tentative course schedule. This schedule is subject to change; the most up to date schedule will be on Canvas and will be announced through Canvas announcements.

- Overview
 - Aug. 29-31: Health and health care overview
- Insurance and insurers
 - Sept. 5-Sept. 7: Key concepts in health insurance
 - Sept. 12: Behavioral economics and health incentives (Guest speaker: Dr. Kevin Volpp, Perelman & Wharton)
 - Sept 14-Sept. 19: Medicare and Medicaid
 - Sept 21: The uninsured and the Affordable Care Act
 - Sept. 26: Mental health and mental health care
 - Sept. 28: Behavioral health (Guest speaker: Prof. Molly Candon, Psychiatry)
 - Oct. 3: Private insurance
- Topics
 - Oct. 5: The opioid epidemic
- Oct. 10: Test 1
- Health determinants
 - Oct. 17: Health and the environment
 - Oct. 19: Social determinants of health (Guest speaker: Dr. Atheendar Venkataramani, Medical Ethics and Health Policy)
- Providers and producers
 - Oct. 24: Physicians and reimbursement
 - Oct. 26: Nurses and nursing (Guest Speaker: Prof. Karen Lasater, Nursing)
 - Oct. 31: Hospitals
 - Nov 2: Digital health (Guest speaker: Dr. Anish Agarwal, Perelman)
 - Nov 7: Pharma and biotech (Guest speaker: Sean McElligott, Head of HE&OR at Novartis)
 - Nov. 9: Maven Clinic (Guest speaker: Will Porteous, Chief Growth Officer, Maven Clinic)
 - Nov. 14: Quality of care and medical liability
 - Nov. 16: Medical devices (Guest speaker: Prof. Alon Bergman, Medical Ethics and Health Policy)
- Topics:
 - Nov 21: US health care history

- Nov 28: Writing assignment discussion
 - Nov 30: Comparative health care systems (Guest speaker: Prof. Claudio Lucarelli, Health Care Management)
 - Dec 5: Health reform/policy looking forward
- Dec. 7: Test 2