

**HEALTH CARE REFORM AND THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
BIOE 5750 / HCMG 2500 / HCMG 8500**

*Mondays & Wednesdays from 3:30-5:00pm
Steinberg 351*

Faculty

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with a rigorous understanding of the current American health care system and how it is likely to evolve over the next decade. The course will focus on six topics: 1) the development of the current health care system; 2) challenges of health care costs, quality, and access; 3) lessons of previous attempts to reform the system including the Affordable Care Act (ACA); 4) analysis of current policies regarding provider payment, technology, and electronic health records and how various sectors (e.g. public health and hospitals) are evolving in the current system; 5) drug pricing and regulation, and 6) considerations of the long-term outlook in American health care system. Throughout the course, lessons will integrate basic health economics, history, health policy, and politics to elucidate key principles for understanding the health care system. The course will also examine at least one other country's health system for comparison. The course will end with a consideration of the long-term outlook for the structure of the US health system and potential reforms.

This course will consist of several interconnected segments. The first segment will provide an in-depth analysis of the U.S. health care system, which accounts for nearly a fifth of the American

economy. This section will focus on the history, structure, and political salience of the health care sector.

The second segment will consider the failures of this market, including the challenges posed by rapidly rising health care costs, low health insurance coverage, an aging population, and uneven quality. In this segment we will also examine historical attempts at reform.

The third segment will focus on current policies and operations of the health care sector, examining physician and hospital payment reforms, the introduction and adoption of new technologies, the role of electronic health records, and the rise of telehealth and artificial intelligence in health care. In addition, we will examine how various actors, from insurance companies and hospitals to venture capitalists and startups are operating in the current system.

The fourth segment will feature a variety of guest speakers on current topics in health care, including health reform and the courts, demographic changes, and startup opportunities.

The fifth segment will focus on drug pricing and regulation. This segment will consider both the state of U.S. legislation and international drug pricing policies.

The final class of the course will provide a big-picture perspective of where the American health care system is today, as well as predictions for possible long-term outlooks.

COURSE MATERIALS

All information on this syllabus can be found on our Canvas site at
www.canvas.upenn.edu

The Canvas site for this course will be hosted by the University-wide Canvas site, which is accessible to everyone with a PennKey and password. Our Canvas site contains all essential information and readings for this course.

Required materials:

This course relies heavily on Dr. Emanuel's books, *Reinventing American Health Care*, *Prescription for the Future*, and *The Trillion Dollar Revolution*. While we encourage you to purchase these books, PDFs of all readings will be available for download on the course Canvas page.

Other course materials include: policy documents from government agencies and nonprofit research organizations; articles from popular press outlets; and academic articles from health policy, health services, and medical journals. Copies of these materials will be made available to you through our Canvas website as well.

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 readings essential to success.

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. You may wish to periodically read the following websites:

<https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot>
<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/>
<http://kff.org/>
<http://healthaffairs.org/>

<https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/health-policy-center>
<http://www.cbo.gov/topics/health-care>
<https://www.statnews.com/>

OFFICE HOURS

We will have two sets of office hours:

Fridays (in-person): 4-5 pm in SHDH 105

Tuesdays (in-person): 3-4 pm in SHDH 105

REQUIREMENTS & GRADES

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

“Pop” quizzes given at the beginning of class

- There will be nine quizzes.
- Missed quizzes are graded as zeros, and there are no makeup quizzes. However:
- We drop your two lowest grades in calculating your overall quiz average. We have this policy because we understand there will occasionally be a conflict requiring students to miss class.
- 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.
- Each quiz will be three questions, given at the start of class.
- If you arrive late to class, you may still take the quiz during class.
- The content of this course is set within American politics, history, and policy, so there may be small extra credit questions on quizzes related to history, politics, economics, and other facts and concepts you should know, but may not. We aim to educate you as broadly as possible. (Who was the first president to fly in an airplane? And the first president to publicly advocate for universal health coverage?)

Midterm Exam (25% of your overall grade)

Non-MBA midterm exam date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024; during class at 3:30 pm – SHDH351

MBA midterm exam date: Wednesday, October 23, 2024; outside of class at 7:30 pm – SHDH351

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

Homework Assignments (25% of your overall grade)

Homework 1 due date: Monday, September 23, 2024

Homework 2 due date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Homework 3 due date: Monday, November 25, 2024

- HW1: Shopping for Marketplace Insurance Activity
- HW2 and 3: Double-spaced essays that are two pages in length.
- Homework 1 worth 5% of final grade, Homework 2 10%, Homework 3 10%.
- Undergraduate and MBA students will receive different versions of these assignments
- TAs will not read drafts of the homework assignments

- Assignments will be assigned and submitted on Canvas

Final Exam (35% of your overall grade)

Non-MBA final exam date: Monday, December 9, 2024 at 3:30 pm in SHDH 351

MBA final exam date: Monday, December 9, 2024 at 3:30 pm in SHDH 211

- Similar in structure to the midterm exam—multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam is cumulative.
- Final Exam Period: December 12, 2024 – December 19, 2024

Quizzes and exams can only be taken in class and cannot be made-up.

Please do **not** schedule travel for the holidays that may conflict with exam dates. 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.

Final grades are typically curved up at the end of the semester. Note that we will use two separate curves for the MBA and non-MBA sections of this class. The non-MBA and MBA sections of this class may also have different homework assignments and exams.

INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

An ethicist—and some very ethical people—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 dealt with severely under the procedures of the University of Pennsylvania. (Too bad they got rid of the public stocks on Locust Walk. How your instructors pine for days of Benjamin Franklin!)

Generative AI such as Chat GPT is not permitted in this course

The assignments in this course are meant to apply your own understanding of the concepts discussed in class. Homeworks are writing based and are meant to engage your interest in the class. We want to see your individual perspective on the topics in question. In addition, we cannot gauge your understanding of the course materials and adjust accordingly, if you do not produce your own original work.

COURSE RULES

RULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON THE UNIVERSITY'S GUIDANCE

#1 Attendance

We expect you to attend every class. We are designing this course to be engaging and interactive and 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 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. We will update reading list as guest speakers may want to include readings. Be sure to stay on top of updates.

#3 Be Punctual

We will begin each class promptly at 3:30pm. We will be ready and so should you. Consider our class meetings as you would any job or professional meeting.

#4 No Cell Phones and No Laptops

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 you cannot fully participate in class if you are texting or multi-tasking on your computer. **Cell phones are to be away in your bag during class.** They cannot be out on the desk.

Laptops are not permitted in this class. This policy is avoid sending articles to nineteen friends, mindlessly scrolling through Facebook pictures of someone you knew in high school, playing with Instagram filters, and other distractions. Paying attention can make this class a lot easier, and you cannot multi-task and expect to fully engage with the class. This isn't us talking; it's science. Lecture recordings will be available, so there is no need to write down everything we say as we say.

Tablets and notetaking devices like Remarkable are permitted because the act of writing is still being used.

#5 No 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 yet a reporter. You are a student in 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 broadcasting what is going on in class to titillate interlopers.

While classes are recorded, these recordings are available only through the Canvas website. They may not be shared or distributed in any way. Recordings will be archived (i.e. unavailable) after the semester ends.

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