

University of Vermont  
Department of Community Development and Applied Economics



Fall 2008

# Health Care Policy

PA 325



**Instructors:** Steven Kappel, M.P.A.  
522-0986 (work)  
sjkappel@policyintegrity.com

Meg H. O'Donnell, M.A., J.D.  
847-2473 (work)  
meg.odonnell@vtmednet.org

**Classes:** Mondays 5:45 – 8:30 p.m.  
September 8 – December 15  
Old Mill Annex A202

**Office Hours:** The instructors will be available by appointment.

SAMPLE

## **Course description**

This course addresses policy issues affecting structure, performance and change in the U.S. health care system. Historical, comparative, environmental, economic and policy perspectives are considered, as well as recent and current reform efforts. The focus is on policy challenges relevant to health care managers, policy makers, providers and consumers. The course is intended to benefit students with an interest in health services as well as those wishing to improve their understanding of how the health care system affects other settings and systems.

## **Course objectives**

Upon completing this course, students will:

- ◆ Have developed an understanding of the components of the health care system and how they function.
- ◆ Have improved their fluency on the language of health care and health policy so as to be more effective in examining, discussing and presenting the subject.
- ◆ Better understand and recognize the challenges faced in health care policy and in exercising leadership in the field.

## Course methods

This course is a seminar-style graduate course that will entail a variety of teaching methods, including lectures by the instructors, general class discussions, student-facilitated discussions of articles of current interest, student presentations, and guest presentations as appropriate.

## Course requirements and evaluations

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- ◆ **Discussion of selected article** — 10%

At the end of each class, a *short* current newspaper or journal article will be assigned, in addition to other reading. At the beginning of the next class, two students will be asked to lead a brief discussion of the article. The discussion should last no more than 10 to 15 minutes.

- ◆ **Presidential health proposals project (October 6)** — 20%

Students will be divided into small groups in early September, each of which will be responsible for researching the health reform proposals of one presidential candidate. Each group will make a brief (10- to 15-minute) presentation of their candidate's proposal, including its pros and cons, as compared to the current system.

- ◆ **Book review (November 10)** — 20%

Early in the semester, after consulting with the instructors, each student will select a book relevant to health care policy. The book may be a "classic" or an example of contemporary writing. The book should be more "substantive and scholarly" than "light and recreational." Instructors can suggest book titles if needed. Students will submit a review and analysis of the book, which should include a summary of the central elements and arguments of the book, the student's critique of the author's work, and the student's commentary placing the book in the context of overall health care policy. Students are encouraged to locate published reviews of the selected book and to reference or incorporate those views in the critique section of their paper. Papers should be no more than 15 pages, double-spaced.

In addition to the written review, students will prepare a poster presentation on the book for the November 10 class.

- ◆ **Final project – International systems - team presentation (December 8)** — 25%

A final project will take the place of a final examination. Students will be divided by the instructors into three or four teams. Each team will select a country and examine its health care system, including organization, public and private roles, methods of financing, and comparative outcomes. Each team member will be expected to participate in the presentation. If PowerPoint is used, the team will be required to e-mail the presentation to the instructors no later than the morning of

December 8, and will be responsible for bringing hard copies of the presentation for distribution to the class.

◆ **Final project – individual paper (December 15)** — 25%

In addition to the team presentation, each student will submit an individual paper offering a comparison of the selected country's system with the U.S. system. The paper should emphasize your personal opinions about which system is better, and **why**. The paper should also include a brief discussion about what the U.S. can learn from your country and what your country can learn from the U.S.

Papers should be double-spaced. While there is no requirement as to pages, we would expect most papers to be from 10 – 15 pages in length. We encourage not only clear thinking, but clear writing (including spell-checking and correct grammar).

***Papers must be submitted to the instructors by e-mail by no later than 7:00 on December 15. An unexcused failure to meet this deadline may result in a reduction in the final grade for the class.***

In the instructors' discretion, the final grade may also be affected by attendance and participation, as follows:

- Regular class attendance is expected. Attendance will be taken. Students who are unable to attend class should notify the instructors as soon as possible. Unexplained or unexcused absences may result in the reduction of the earned grade by one step (for example, from a B to a B-, or from an A- to a B+).
- Regular class participation is also expected. The topics covered by this course are ones that affect virtually everyone, and generally we find that participation is not an issue. Participation involves not only offering your own reactions to materials under consideration, but thoughtful listening to and respect for others' views. While this will not be a separately-graded component of the final grade, the instructors reserve the right to add one step to a student's final earned grade for active participation (for example, from an A- to an A).

## ***Required Texts***

Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. (1983).

Other required readings, consisting mainly of health care-related articles from health journals and newspapers, will be made available in advance of class via e-mail or through your Blackboard account. For more information about how to use Blackboard, go to <https://bb.uvm.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> or contact [blackboard@uvm.edu](mailto:blackboard@uvm.edu) for assistance.

## ***Class Schedule and Assignments***

**September 8, 2008: Introduction and Overview**

**September 15, 2008: History and Determinants of Health Care**

***Teams for the October 6 presentations on presidential candidates' proposals on health care reform will be announced at this class.***

Required readings in Starr:

Introduction — “The Social Origins of Professional Sovereignty”  
Chapter 1 — “Medicine in a Democratic Culture, 1760 – 1850”

“Class – The Ignored Determinant of the Nation’s Health,” Stephen L. Isaacs, J.D., and Steven A. Schroeder, M.D., *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* Vol. 351, No. 11, pp. 1137 – 1142

“Economics and Social Factors,” *Vermont State Health Plan 1999* (Vermont Department of Health, 1999), pp. 66 – 83

“Life at the Top Isn’t Just Better, It’s Longer,” Janny Scott, *The New York Times* (May 16, 2005)

**September 22, 2008: Forces in Health Care: Economics and Ethics, Policy and Politics**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 2 — “The Expansion of the Market”

“Doctors Have Patients, Governors Have Citizens,” Richard D. Lamm, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sept./Oct. 2000)

“Using and Misusing Anecdote in Policy Making,” John E. McDonough, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2001), pp. 207 – 212

“Introduction to Health Economics for Physicians,” Martin I. Meltzer, *The Lancet*, Vol. 358 (Sept. 22, 2001), pp. 993 - 998

“The Celestial Fire of Conscience – Refusing to Deliver Medical Care,” R. Alto Charo, J.D., *NEJM* Vol. 352, No. 24 (June 16, 2005), pp. 2471 – 2473

**September 29, 2008: Politics and Health Care Reform**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 5 (Book Two) — “The Coming of the Corporation”

“Health of the Nation — Coverage for All Americans,” Shattuck Lecture, *NEJM* Vol. 359, No. 8 (Aug. 21, 2008), pp. 777 – 780

“Health Care Reform in Massachusetts: Expanding Coverage, Escalating Costs,” Robert Steinbrook, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 358, No. 26 (June 26, 2008), pp. 2757 – 2760

“Catamount Health” information (<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/HealthCare/catamount.htm>)

“Vermont Health Care Reform Aims for More Coverage, Less Expense, and Better Care,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 148, No. 10 (May 20, 2008), pp. 797 – 800

**October 6, 2008: Team Presentations on Presidential Proposals****October 13, 2008: Health Care Systems**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 3 — “The Consolidation of Professional Authority, 1850 - 1930”

“U.S. Health System Performance: A National Scorecard,” Cathy Schoen *et al.*, *Health Affairs* - web exclusive, W457 – W474 (Sept. 20, 2006)

“What Is a Health System? Why Should We Care?,” William C. Hsiao, Harvard School of Public Health (August 2003)

“Overview,” from *World Health Report 2000 – Health Systems: Improving Performance*, World Health Organization (2000), pp. xi - xix

**October 20, 2008: Financing and Payers**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 4 — “The Reconstitution of the Hospital”

Chapter 5 — “The Boundaries of Public Health”

“The Concentration of Health Care Expenditures, Revisited,” Marc L. Berk and Alan C. Monheit, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (March/April 2001).

“The Sad History of Cost Containment as Told in One Chart,” Drew E. Altman and Larry Levitt, *Health Affairs*, web exclusive (Jan. 23, 2002)

“Public and Private Roles in Health Care,” Philip Musgrove, World Bank Discussion Paper No. 339 (1996)

**October 27, 2008: Financing and Payers (continued)**

***Final date for approval of choice of book for book report (due November 10).***

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 6 — “Escape from the Corporation, 1900 – 1930”

“High and Rising Health Care Costs, Part 1: Seeking an Explanation,” Thomas Bodenheimer, M.D., *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 142, No. 10 (May 17, 2005), pp. 847 – 854

“High and Rising Health Care Costs, Part 2: Technologic Innovation,” Thomas Bodenheimer, M.D., *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 142, No. 11 (June 7, 2005), pp. 932 – 937

“High and Rising Health Care Costs, Part 3: The Role of Health Care Providers,” Thomas Bodenheimer, M.D., *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 142, No. 12 (Part 1) (June 21, 2005), pp. 996 – 1002

“High and Rising Health Care Costs, Part 4: Can Costs Be Controlled While Preserving Quality?,” Thomas Bodenheimer, M.D., and Felicia Fernandez, M.D., *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 143, No. 1 (July 5, 2005), pp. 26 – 32

**November 3, 2008: Health Care Professions**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 1 (Book Two) — “The Struggle for Medical Care”

“Aiding and Abetting: Nursing Crises at Home and Abroad,” Sreekanth Chaguturu, M.D., and Snigdha Vallabhaneni, B.A., *NEJM*, Vol. 353, No. 17, pp. 1761 – 1763 (Oct. 27, 2005)

- "British Pharmacists Blurring Lines with Doctors," *USA Today* (April 6, 2008)  
 "Doctors Do Know Things Patients Don't Know," Kent Sepkowitz, M.D., *The New York Times* (May 10, 2005)  
 "Medicare, Graduate Medical Education, and New Policy Directions," John K. Iglehart, *NEJM* Vol. 359, No. 6 (Aug. 7, 2008), pp. 643 – 650  
 "Piecework," Atul Gawande, *The New Yorker* (April 4, 2005)  
 "Where Have All the Doctors Gone?," Joseph B. Martin, *Boston Globe* (May 27, 2008)

**November 10, 2008: Health Care Facilities and Institutions**

***Book reports (see "Evaluations and Course Requirements") are due before the end of class. Electronic copies must be made available no later than 12:00 noon on November 11 so they can be posted on the class's Blackboard site.***

***Students should also bring poster presentations of their books to this class. The presentations will be set up around the classroom and time set aside to circulate and review them.***

***Teams for the final project (see "Evaluations and Course Requirements") will be announced at this class.***

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 2 (Book Two) — "The Triumph of Accommodation"

- "Could U.S. Hospitals Go the Way of U.S. Airlines?," Stuart H. Altman, *et al.*, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 11 – 21 (Jan/Feb 2006)  
 "Specialty Hospitals: A Problem or a Symptom?," Stuart Guterman, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 95 – 105 (Jan/Feb 2006)  
 "The Pricing of U.S. Hospital Services: Chaos Behind a Veil of Secrecy," Uwe E. Reinhart, *Health Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 57 – 69 (Jan/Feb 2006)

**November 17, 2008: Government, Law and Regulation**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 3 (Book Two) — "The Liberal Years"

- "Disclosing Harmful Medical Errors to Patients," Thomas H. Gallagher, *et al.*, *NEJM*, Vol. 356, No. 26, pp. 2713 – 2719 (June 28, 2007)  
 "The Intimidation of American Physicians – Banning Partial-Birth Abortion," Michael F. Greene, M.D., *NEJM* Vol. 356, No. 21 (May 24, 2007), pp. 2128 – 2129  
 "The Legislation of the Value of Pi," Robert J. Whitaker, *The Physics Teacher* Vol. 31 (April 1993), pp. 212 – 213  
 "Should Public Policy Seek To Control The Growth Of Health Care Spending?," Henry J. Aaron, *Health Affairs – web exclusive* W3-28 - 36 (Jan. 8, 2003)  
 "Too Hard to Take," Sandra G. Boodman, *The Washington Post* (Sept. 5, 2006)

**November 24, 2008: THANKSGIVING BREAK (no class)**

**December 1, 2008: Quality**

Required readings in Starr:

Chapter 4 (Book Two) — “End of a Mandate”

“Change in the Quality of Care Delivered to Medicare Beneficiaries,” Stephen F. Jencks, *et al.*, *JAMA*, Vol. 289, No. 3, pp. 305 – 312 (Jan. 15, 2003)

“Escape Fire: Lessons for the Future of Health Care,” Berwick, Donald M., MD, The Commonwealth Fund (2002)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 1: Quality of Care – What Is It?,” David Blumenthal, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 12, pp. 891 - 894 (Sept. 19, 1996)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 2: Measuring Quality of Care,” Robert H. Brook, Elizabeth A. McGlynn and Paul D. Cleary, *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 13, pp. 966 - 970 (Sept. 26, 1996)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 3: Improving the Quality of Care,” Mark. R. Chassin, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 14, pp. 1060 - 1063 (Oct. 3, 1996)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 4: The Origins of the Quality-of-Care Debate,” David Blumenthal, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 15, pp. 1146 - 1149 (Oct. 10, 1996)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 5: Payment by Capitation and the Quality of Care,” Donald M. Berwick, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 16, pp. 1227 - 1231 (Oct. 17, 1996)

“Quality of Health Care, Part 6: The Role of Physicians in the Future of Quality Management,” David Blumenthal, M.D., *NEJM*, Vol. 335, No. 17, pp. 1328 - 1331 (Oct. 24, 1996)

“The Urgent Need to Improve Health Care Quality,” Mark R. Chassin and Robert W. Galvin, *JAMA*, Vol. 280, No. 11, pp. 1000 – 1005 (Sept. 16, 1998)

**December 8, 2008: Final Project (team presentation)**

**December 15, 2008: Final Project due (individual paper) – NO CLASS**

SAMPLE