

Health Systems and Policy (20:834:581) [3 credits]

Course Description

This course introduces students to the history, organization, financing, and regulation of medical and health services in the United States. It is designed to facilitate students' understanding of the fundamentals of the U.S. health care delivery system and health policy. The curriculum explores human and financial capital, as well as the information technology utilized in delivering health care today. The course content also examines the determinants of health and outcomes of the health systems and how those outcomes are addressed through policy. Next, the course delves into topics associated with health policy processes, including policy formulation, agenda setting, policy implementation, policy modification, and policy reform. The course covers the theoretical, conceptual, and practical foundations of the macro aspects of the health policymaking process and health care organizations. The course concludes with insights into the future of health service delivery.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Be well versed in current debates in health and health care policy and their economic, political, and social perspectives.
- Develop a good understanding of the health care financing, delivery, and regulatory systems and describe the components of the health care system.
- Explain determinants of health outcomes in terms of health behaviors and environment and describe policies and programs designed to improve these factors.
- Describe approaches to defining and measuring quality of health care and methods of quality improvement.
- Describe how health policy is formulated, developed, implemented, and modified.

Requirements

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- Assigned weekly readings from the textbook or other sources.
- Class discussions and case studies in health systems and policy.
- Community health analysis that encourages students to apply their professional knowledge to community health issues.
- A final paper or project in which students assess real issues in the health care system and suggest policy recommendations.

Schedule / Outline of Topics

- Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- Week 2: Overview of U.S. Health Care System
- Week 3: Health Status and Its Determinants
- Week 4: Health Disparities
- Week 5: Health Service Providers
- Week 6: Medical Technology
- Week 7: Health Care Financing and Insurance
- Week 8: Midterm
- Week 9: Primary Care, Managed Care, and Hospitals
- Week 10: Long-Term Care
- Week 11: Cost, Access, and Quality
- Week 12: Overview of Public Policy Making Process
- Week 13: Policy Formulation and Agenda Setting

- Week 14: Policy Implementation and Modification
- Week 15: Health Policy Reform and Emerging Issues
- Week 16: Final Project and Presentation

Texts / Materials / Resources

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

- Shi, L., & Singh, D. (2022). *Essentials of the US Health Care System*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Bodenheimer, T., & Grumbach, K. (2020). *Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach*. McGraw Hill.
- Meacham, M. (2020). *Health Policymaking in the United States*. Health Administration Press.
- LaVeist, T. A., & Isaac, L. A. (2012). *Race, Ethnicity, and Health: A Public Health Reader*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Makary, M. (2013). *Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won't Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Health Care*. Bloomsbury Press.