



EMORY

ROLLINS
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC
HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Health Policy and Management

COURSE NUMBER: 500

SECTION NUMBERS: 001 and 002

CREDIT HOURS: 2

SEMESTER: Spring 2021

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to the US Health Care System

COURSE HOURS AND LOCATION:

Section 001: Friday 8:00-9:50 am on Zoom

Section 002: Tuesday 5:30-7:20 pm in CNR Auditorium

INSTRUCTOR NAME: Robert Merritt, MA, FAHA

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

EMAIL: rmerrit@emory.edu

PHONE: 678-640-0447

SCHOOL ADDRESS AND MAILBOX LOCATION: 6th Floor, Grace Crum Rollins Building, 1518 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30322

OFFICE HOURS: Virtual/Online by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Assigned Section</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>
Chase Barham	chase.barham@emory.edu	Tue	Thu 11:00a –12:00p
Lauren Griffin	lauren.griffin2@emory.edu	Fri	Wed 11:00a –12:00p
Madison Hardee	madison.hardee@emory.edu	Fri	Mon 3:00p – 4:00p
Camila Ortiz	maria.camila.ortiz@emory.edu	Fri	Wed 10:00a –11:00a

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aim of this course is to provide students with an overview of the United States (US) health care system, its components, and the policy challenges created by its organization. Special attention will be given to the status and implementation of health reform legislation at the state and federal levels and to the budgetary implications of health care spending more broadly. The course will focus on the major US health policy institutions and important issues that cut across institutions, including private insurers and the federal/state financing programs (Medicare and Medicaid/SCHIP).

The course strives to explain how the US health care system really works. With a focus on basic principles of health policy, it is hoped that students will come away with a clearer, more systematic way of thinking about health care in the United States, its problems, and the alternatives for managing these problems. Most of the principles also apply to understanding health care systems in other nations.

This core course is required of all MPH and MSPH students and may be taken in either the Fall or Spring Semesters.

DISCLAIMER:

The content and opinions expressed in this course are those of the instructor and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

MPH /MSPH/PHD FOUNDATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH KNOWLEDGE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities

MPH/MSPH FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES:

- Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings
- Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
- Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
- Apply “systems thinking” for resolving health policy problem

CONCENTRATION COMPETENCIES (MPH in Health Policy):

Common:

- Describe how the organization and financing of healthcare influences access, quality and costs
- Apply management principles to planning, organizing, leading and controlling health care enterprises
- Apply principles of health economics in analyzing the behavior of healthcare market stakeholders
- Utilize public finance theory to assess the efficiency and equity of proposals to reform the financing and delivery of healthcare services

Unique:

- Communicate evidence-based alternatives for public health policies, both in writing and through oral presentation

Foundational Competencies Assessed	Representative Assignment(s)
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings.	Assessment 1
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.	Exercise 1-2; Assessment 3
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.	Exercises 1-2; Assessment 3

22. Apply “systems thinking” for resolving health policy problems.	Exercises 1-2; Assessment 3
HPM Concentration Specific Competencies (Common)	Representative Assignment(s)
Describe how the organization and financing of healthcare influences access, quality and costs	Assessments 1-3
Apply management principles to planning, organizing, leading and controlling health care enterprises	Exercises 1-2; Assessments 1-3
Apply principles of health economics in analyzing the behavior of healthcare market stakeholders	Assessments 1 & 3
Utilize public finance theory to assess the efficiency and equity of proposals to reform the financing and delivery of healthcare services	Exercises 1-2; Assessment 3
HPM Concentration Specific Competencies (Unique)	Representative Assignment(s)
Communicate evidence-based alternatives for public health policies, both in writing and through oral presentation	Assessments 2 & 3

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the private, governmental, professional and economic contributions to the development and operation of the health care system.
- Describe the types and interrelationships of health care facilities, services, and personnel.
- Understand important challenges of public sector health policy making.
- Understand the major ethical, economic, professional and legal issues confronting providers, insurers, and consumers.
- Identify and describe the quality control activities of the current health care system and relate service provider behaviors to legal, ethical, and financial considerations.
- Describe the values and assumptions that underlie the changing priorities in health planning, resource allocation and reform.

EVALUATION

Grading Scale:

Possible letter grades are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, F. RSPH does not have C+ or C- as a grade option. Here are the numerical cut points for each grade:

Numerical	Letter	Meaning	Grade Point Score
93-100	A	Exceptional work	4.0
90-92	A-	Excellent work	3.7
87-89	B+	Good work	3.3
83-86	B	Acceptable work	3.0
80-82	B-	Less than acceptable work	2.7
70-79	C	Marginal work	2.0
Below 70	F	Failure	0.0

Assignments:

1. **Class Participation (10%):** Your active participation is expected and will be evaluated. Methods of evaluation will include, but are not limited to, participation in session breakout sessions and group activities, Canvas analytics, and Zoom analytics.
2. **Exercises (30%):** There will be two (2) graded exercises during the semester. These are intended to foster the analysis, reflection and discussion of a relevant public health issue through a policy memorandum (see Assessments A1 & A2 below). ***Please note, these are graded activities with an assigned partner.*** Exercises utilized this semester are:
 - **Policy Memo Proposal (E1) (20 points):** Working with your partner, you will answer a list of questions that help you to craft your policy memo. The questions will build the foundation of what a policy memo is comprised of and get you thinking about your issue and proposed intervention. Expect to complete a decent portion of your background research and resource gathering prior to completing this assignment. One of the partners must submit the answers to the discussion questions for a grade through Canvas. Your group will receive feedback from a TA on this assignment.
 - **Policy Memo Draft (E2) (10 points):** Working with your partner, your group will submit a draft of your policy memo. While drafts are not graded for accuracy, we still require a complete and well-researched policy memo. Your group will receive feedback from a TA on this assignment.
3. **Assessments (60%):** There will be three (3) graded assessments during the semester. These are intended to assess your application and understanding of relevant public health issues. As with the exercises, submit your responses through Canvas. Assessments utilized this semester are:
 - **Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video (A1) (25 points):** You and your partner will complete a 1-2 minute PSA video using the same topic for your policy memo. Be creative as you like! You are welcome to record a skit of yourselves, conduct a voiceover over images, or whatever you can come up with. This will be due at the same time as your policy memo (see detailed instructions on Canvas). Apple Keynote, Google Slide, Microsoft Powerpoint or similar presentations are not acceptable for this assessment. ***Please note, this is a graded activity with an assigned partner. This assignment will include a peer (partner) evaluation.***
 - **Policy Memorandum (A2) (100 points):** This is a written policy memorandum designed to assess your knowledge and understanding of major concepts and themes discussed during the entire semester.

It will ultimately gauge your understanding of current health policy issues including their impacts upon a population and stakeholders (see detailed instructions on Canvas). ***Please note, this is a graded activity with an assigned partner. This assignment will include a peer (partner) evaluation.***

- **Final Assessment (Reading Reflection) (A3) (50 points):** This is a written reading reflection on one of the supplemental texts listed below (Brill, Dawes, Reid or Rosenthal). The question prompts for this reflection are generic and are not specific to the book or topic (see detailed instructions on Canvas). ***Please note, this is not a group activity and should be completed individually.***

COURSE STRUCTURE

Web Platform: The web platform for the course is Canvas (<http://classes.emory.edu>). The Canvas site will contain the syllabus, assignments, announcements, lecture slides, and other useful information for the benefit of all members of the class. CHECK REGULARLY FOR UPDATES.

Textbooks:

1) Required Text:

- Bodenheimer, Thomas and Grumbach, Kevin. Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach, Eighth Edition. New York: McGraw Hill Lange, 2020.

Please Note: This book is available online for free from the Emory University Library. Use this link: <https://accessmedicine-mhmedical-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/book.aspx?bookid=2853>

2) Supplemental Text (Pick One):

- Brill, Steven. America's Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System. New York: Random House, 2015.
- Dawes, Daniel E. The Political Determinants of Health. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020.
- Reid, TR. The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.
- Rosenthal, Elisabeth. An American Sickness: How Healthcare Became Big Business and How You Can Take It Back. New York: Penguin Books, 2018.

Please Note: The supplemental book choices listed above (Brill, Dawes, Reid and Rosenthal) are NOT available online for free and must be purchased. There are new and used paperback, ebook, or audiobook copies from most online book outlets (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books A Million, etc.) or local bookstores.

Reading Assignments: Readings should be completed before the class session for which they are assigned. Lectures will presume familiarity with the material and there is an expectation that students will be prepared to discuss them. In the Course Outline below, the reading assignments are notated by chapter from the required text (Bodenheimer & Grumbach will be notated as "B&G.") and any web links to scholarly articles, reports or other relevant material (including audio and video). These should all be considered required for the assigned session during the course. You are responsible all materials assigned from the textbooks and the online Canvas resources.

Session Logistics: Class will start promptly at 8:00 am on Fridays and 5:30 pm on Tuesdays. Since our session only runs 1 hour 50 minutes, there will not be a scheduled break. You are welcome to exit the session at any time for any reason. However, you

will be responsible for obtaining any missed information due your late arrival or departure from class. I will not repeat missed information during class time for those not present. Our class sessions on Zoom and our in-person class sessions will all be audio visually recorded for students in the class and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live.

Please note, it is virtually impossible to cover all the content of every assigned reading or slides during each class session. It is your responsibility to come prepared and keep up. I will focus on what I feel is most important and will answer and clarify any questions you have during class. As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Equity and Inclusion, 404-727-9877.

COURSE POLICIES

Teaching and Learning during the Pandemic: I want our classroom community to thrive no matter the classroom delivery method or your individual methods of participating in class. I cannot guarantee an identical experience for students who cannot be physically in the classroom or an experience that is identical to pre-pandemic semesters, but my goal is to treat all students equitably and to ensure grading is clear, consistent, and fair for all of you.

This semester is unusual in that there is a pandemic. There are two sections of this course: one taught in-person (Tuesday) and one taught remotely (Friday). The in-person class may have to shift to remote learning at some point this semester if the University deems it necessary. Additionally, some students in this class may need to be off campus for some portion of the semester. My goal is for all students to receive a high-quality experience to the extent possible. To that end, I participated in Emory University's workshops on online teaching methods, and I am prepared to teach my in-person class remotely as needed.

Due to the unusual nature of the semester, communication is important. I commit to responding to emails within 48 hours of receipt, and my intention to respond faster than that most of the time. I will likely be slower on weekends. Likewise, if your situation changes regarding health, housing, or in any other regard with respect to your ability to participate in the class, please contact the appropriate Emory student support organization first and then me as soon as feasible. It is easier for me to address your needs if I know about them as soon as they arise. This does not mean I can successfully respond to every request for consideration, but I emphasize that my goal is to treat you all equitably and do what I can to help you succeed in this course.

Attendance: This semester due to the pandemic, some students might be sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you are sick, understand that I will be flexible about attendance. Please make sure to email me so that we can discuss your individual circumstances. For students in quarantine who are well, we have provided ways that

Course: HPM 500-001 & HPM 500-002

you can keep up with your schoolwork, whether our class is delivered online or in person. Please also contact me via email if you are in quarantine.

Accessibility and Accommodations: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. I want every student to succeed. The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. It is your responsibility to request accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must register with the DAS at <http://accessibility.emory.edu/students/>.

Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied so you need to contact DAS as early as possible and contact me as early as possible in the semester to discuss the plan for implementation of your accommodations.

For additional information about accessibility and accommodations, please contact the Department of Accessibility Services at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu.

Health Considerations: At the very first sign of not feeling well, *stay at home* and reach out for a health consultation. [Please consult the campus FAQ for how to get the health consultation](#). As you know, Emory does contact tracing if someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19. A close contact is defined as someone you spend more than 15 minutes with, at a distance less than 6 feet, not wearing facial coverings. This typically means your roommates, for example. However, your classmates are *not* close contacts as long as we are following the personal protective equipment protocols in the classroom: wearing facial coverings, staying six feet apart. As your instructor, I may be following different PPE guidelines which have been judged to be equally safe by Emory's Environmental Health and Safety Office. Due to the necessity of keeping your PPE on, eating and drinking is strictly forbidden in the classroom.

Class session recording: Our class sessions on Zoom and our in-person class sessions will all be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to the information, and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live.

Lectures and other classroom presentations presented through video conferencing and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students enrolled in the course. The release of such information (including but not limited to directly sharing, screen capturing, or recording content) is strictly prohibited, unless the instructor states otherwise. Doing so without the permission of the instructor will be considered an Honor Code violation and may also be a violation of other state and federal laws, such as the Copyright Act.

Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image.

Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and

Course: HPM 500-001 & HPM 500-002

communicate exclusively using the “chat” feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Please read the [Rules of Zoom Engagement](#) for further advice on participating in our Zoom class sessions.

Honor Code: You are bound by Emory University’s Student Honor and Conduct Code. RSPH requires that all material submitted by a student fulfilling his or her academic course of study must be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or a lack of integrity in academic ethics. *Academic dishonesty refers to cheating, plagiarizing, assisting other students without authorization, lying, tampering, or stealing in performing any academic work, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.*

The RSPH Honor Code states: “Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one’s own work the expression, words, or ideas of another person whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer’s work should be regarded as his/her own property.”

(http://www.sph.emory.edu/cms/current_students/enrollment_services/honor_code.html)

COURSE CALENDAR

(Subject to change)

Session	Friday Section (001)	Tuesday Section (002)	Topic(s)	Assignment Due Dates (All Due by 5:00 pm ET)
1	January 29	January 26	Introduction	
2	February 5	February 2	Health Policy	
3	February 12	February 9	Private Health Insurance	
4	February 19	February 16	Medicare	
5	February 26	February 23	Medicaid	
6	March 5	March 2	Long-Term Care	
7	March 12	March 9	SCHIP, WIC, SNAP etc.	E1
Reading Day	March 15	March 15	No Class/Assignments	
8	March 19	March 16	Access, Cost & Quality	
9	March 26	March 23	Paying Providers, Managed Care & Integrated Organizations 1	
10	April 2	March 30	Paying Providers, Managed Care & Integrated Organizations 2	
11	April 9	April 6	Healthcare System 1: Inpatient	E2
Reading Days	April 13 – April 14	April 13 – April 14	No Class/Assignments	
12	April 16	April 20	Healthcare System 2: Outpatient	
13	April 23	April 27	Healthcare System 3: Workforce	
14	April 30	May 4	Healthcare & Special Populations	
Last Day of Class	May 5	May 5	Assessments A1 & A2 Due at 5:00 pm ET	A1 & A2
Final Exam Period	May 6 – May 12	May 6 – May 12	Final Assessment A3 Due No Later Than 5:00 pm ET on May 10 for graduating students and 5:00 pm ET on May 12 for non-graduating students	A3

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to change)

Selected Session. Topic and Readings

- Session 1 Introduction & Overview of US Health Care Delivery
- B&G Preface
 - B&G Chapter 1
 - B&G Chapter 11
 - *New Yorker* “Is Health Care a Right?”
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/02/is-health-care-a-right>
 - Freakonomics Podcast: How Do We Know What Really Works in Healthcare: <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/how-do-we-know-what-really-works-in-healthcare-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>
- Session 2 Politics & Policy: Domestic & International Perspectives
- B&G Chapter 14
 - B&G Chapter 15
 - B&G Chapter 16
 - PBS *Frontline* “The Virus: What Went Wrong?”:
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-virus/>
- Session 3 Paying for Health Care: Private Health Insurance
- B&G: Chapter 2
 - Kaiser Family Foundation “Employer Health Benefits 2019 Summary of Findings”: <https://www.kff.org/report-section/ehbs-2019-summary-of-findings/>
 - Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “Why Workers Continue to Face High Health Costs Despite Slowing Employer Cost Growth”:
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2016/dec/why-workers-continue-face-high-health-costs-despite-slowing-employer>
- Session 4 Paying for Health Care: Public Health Insurance (Medicare)
- Kaiser Family Foundation “An Overview of Medicare”:
<https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/an-overview-of-medicare/>
 - Kaiser Family Foundation “Medicare and Medicaid at 50”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9NUCvrrRz4>
- Session 5 Paying for Health Care: Public Health Insurance (Medicaid)
- Kaiser Family Foundation “Medicaid Pocket Primer”:
<http://files.kff.org/attachment/Fact-Sheet-Medicaid-Pocket-Primer>
 - Vox “Medicaid, Explained”: Why It’s Worse to Be Sick in Some States Than Others”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOo_aw-xqHQ
 - Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “Medicaid’s Latest Successes and Challenges”:

<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2015/jul/medicaid-latest-successes-and-challenges>

- Session 6 Long-Term Care
- B&G Chapter 12
 - CBS *Sunday Morning* “Aging in America: Stuck in the Middle”: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/aging-in-america-stuck-in-the-middle/>
 - PBS *Frontline* “Being Mortal”: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/being-mortal/>
- Session 7 State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) & Other Programs
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) “Children’s Health Insurance Program”: <https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/index.html>
 - Medicaid & CHIP in Georgia: <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-overviews/stateprofile.html?state=georgia>
 - Georgia PeachCare for Kids: <https://dch.georgia.gov/peachcare-kids>
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>
- Session 8 Cost, Access & Quality
- B&G Chapter 3
 - B&G Chapter 8
 - B&G Chapter 9
 - B&G Chapter 10
 - B&G Chapter 13
 - Canvas: CBS *60 Minutes*: The Health Wagon
 - PBS *NewsHour* “Memphis Midwives Work to Reduce Racial Disparities in Care”: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/memphis-midwives-mothers-race-pregnancy>
 - Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “From Coverage to Care”: <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2015/may/coverage-care>
- Session 9 Paying Providers, Managed Care & Integrated Organizations, Part 1
- Session 10 Paying Providers, Managed Care & Integrated Organizations, Part 2
- B&G Chapter 4
 - B&G Chapter 6
 - Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “The Next Generation of Incentives to Help Doctors Improve Quality and Efficiency of Care”: <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2014/oct/next-generation-incentives-help-doctors-improve-quality-and>

- Freakonomics Podcast “The Most Ambitious Thing Humans Have Ever Attempted”: <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/atul-gawande/>
- Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “State Scorecard Finds Progress Reducing Hospital Readmissions”:
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2015/dec/state-scorecard-finds-progress-reducing-hospital-readmissions>

Session 11 Healthcare System, Part 1: Inpatient

Session 12 Healthcare System, Part 2: Outpatient

Session 13 Healthcare System, Part 3: Workforce

- B&G Chapters 5
- B&G Chapters 7
- *New York Times Magazine* “Life in Obamacare’s Dead Zone”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/06/magazine/life-in-obamacares-dead-zone.html>
- Commonwealth *New Directions in Health Care* “Why More Practices Are Merging Behavioral Health and Primary Care”:
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2015/jan/why-more-practices-are-merging-behavioral-health-and-primary-care>
- Freakonomics Podcast “Nurses to the Rescue!”:
<http://freakonomics.com/podcast/nurses-to-the-rescue/>

Session 13 Healthcare & Special Populations

- B&G Chapter 17
- TBD