Aging and Health Policy
HSTD 35301 / PPHA 42401 / SSAD 49022
Spring Quarter 2010 – Tuesdays 3:00-5:50 BSLC 202

Faculty
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Course Website
Chalk.uchicago.edu: HSTD 353.

Overview
This course is a seminar in aging and health policy and the relationships between policy, financing, access to care, and quality of care for the elderly. The focus is on health care systems and policy as opposed to demography and biological aspects of aging. Specific topics include Medicaid and Medicare policy; long-term care insurance and financing; workforce issues; dementia and end-of-life care; the culture change movement; work and retirement as it relates to health policy; and cross-national comparisons of health policy toward the elderly. Students will engage in an ongoing discussion of policy options and learn to evaluate their potential to improve quality and ensure access for the elderly to health care and long-term care.

Required Texts:
There are no required texts. All reading materials will be posted on the course website.

Course Requirements
All readings must be completed prior to class. The quality of class discussions will largely determine the success of the course; therefore it is essential for students to come to each session well-prepared. Prior to each session, students will post 1-2 potential discussion questions each. Each student may be expected to lead the discussion for one or more sessions.

Two short papers are required, and each will be presented to the class. The first paper will be a short policy brief (approximately 5 pages) suggesting an approach to financing long-term care in the US. Economic, political, philosophical, and clinical obstacles and ramifications should be considered. The second paper (approximately 10-15 pages) will be a review of the literature or an empirical investigation on a topic of the student’s choice related to aging and health policy, preferably a topic not covered in depth in class. It may be part of a larger ongoing research project, but must be an original contribution to that larger project. A one-page proposal for the paper will be due halfway through the course.

Evaluation
Class participation and preparedness 30%
Minor Assignments/discussion questions 15%
Policy brief 25%
Final Paper 30%
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Mar 30  Session I: Introduction
       No readings

Session II: Is Demography Destiny?

April 6  Session I: An Overview of Medicare

Session II: Current Issue in Medicare: Prescription Drug Benefit

Assignment: Choosing a Medicare Part D plan

April 13 Session I: Medicaid and Long-Term Care
       ▪ Stone, RI. Emerging Issues in Long-Term Care, Chapter 22 in Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences, RH Binstock and LK George, editors, 2006.

Session II: Home- and Community-Based Care

April 20 Session I: Quality of Care
- Mor, V. Improving the quality of long-term care with better information. Milbank Q. 2005;83(3):333-64.

Assignment: Choosing a Hospital and Nursing Home
Paper proposals also due this week.

Session II: Innovative Payment and Care Delivery Models
country other than the US, Germany, Japan, France, Denmark, or the UK.

May 4  Session I: Presentation/Discussion of Student Policy Briefs

Session II: Culture Change
  - Video: “Almost Home”

May 11  Session I: Culture Change
    o Thomas
    o Kehoe and Heesch
    o Rader & Semradek

Session II: Elderly Mental Health Policy

May 18  Session I: End of Life Care and Palliative Care

Session II: Disparities

May 25  Session I: Workforce Issues
- Institute of Medicine. Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce.

Session II:
- Health care reform in the US: What does it mean for the elderly?

June 1  Student Paper Presentations