Topics in U.S. Health Economics, Sociology, and Policy

Health Studies (HSTD) 35401
Law (LAWS) 97002
Sociology (SOCI) 50038
Public Policy (PPHA) 35400

Winter Quarter, 2006
Mondays, 3-5:30 PM
Room G in the Law School

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This seminar course will explore three related topics: (1) should quality be evaluated and rewarded in health care? if so, how should this be done? (2) does the U.S. medical malpractice system facilitate or obstruct efforts to improve quality and reduce medical errors? (3) U.S. medical care has high costs of administrative complexity. Compared to a single payer system, these costs result from using the market to provide health care. To what extent does this complexity generate benefits as well as costs? What modifications, if any, might reduce the costs of complexity without losing benefits? We will approach these topics by drawing from debates in the literatures of health policy, law, and organizational and institutional sociology and economics.

Each student will write a paper related to one of the above topics and will give a presentation in class that presents his or her work in progress on the paper. There will be no exams. Class size will be limited to 12. Admission to the course is by permission of the instructor (may be obtained in advance or at the first class). The course is intended for graduate students in law, business, sociology, economics, and public policy, as well as for physicians involved in fellowships in the medical school.