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

Professor: Lawrence Casalino  M.D., Ph.D.
Department of Health Studies

PLEASE NOTE: The Law School will begin its quarter on January 2; the rest of the University on January 3. Martin Luther King Day (January 16) is a University holiday. We will hold the first meeting of this class on January 9. We will try to find a mutually compatible time to schedule an “extra” class early in the quarter, so that we may have 10 class meetings.

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. Depending on space, fourth year medical students may be admitted, again with permission of the instructor.

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Course Instructor:

Lawrence Casalino, M.D., Ph.D.,
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Grading:

1. class participation: 30%
2. presentation of paper/work-in-progress: 25%
3. paper: 45%

Paper requirements:

1. Length: 12-18 pages, double spaced (approximately 3,600-5,400 words), not including figures, tables or references.

2. Topic: may be drawn from any of the three main areas covered in class. It is helpful to discuss your proposed topic with Dr. Casalino.

3. Your paper is likely to be easier to write, and better, if you center it on answering one or two questions that you explicitly state.

4. You should do some reading (though not necessarily a great deal) in addition to the assigned reading as necessary to write your paper.

5. Types of paper acceptable (note that the intention is for you to choose a format and write your paper in the mode of the format you choose, not that your paper will be ready for publication in that format):
   
a) a law review article (albeit briefer than most)

b) a think piece that clearly lays out a problem, alternative solutions, and your preferred solution, and that incorporates key ideas and evidence available (use as a model think pieces in the main journals in your academic field)

   c) a research proposal that states one or more research questions, reviews the evidence available to answer these questions, and proposes in some detail how you would go about investigating the questions.
d) a policy briefing report written for a legislative committee or regulatory agency or for a corporation or coalition of corporations defining a problem and alternative solutions/courses of action that the committee/agency/corporation or coalition might take, with your suggestion as to the appropriate one. For this paper, you should specify the type of organization at which the report is aimed (e.g. congressional committee, CMS, the Washington Business Group on Health . . . )

e) a legal summary about a specific problem written for a judge.

f) a business plan for a health plan, medical group, or hospital that specifies a problem, discusses alternate strategies that the firm might adopt, gives pros and cons of each, and recommends one and gives the reasons why.

g) other types of papers may be acceptable – please discuss with me.

**Presentation requirements:**

1. Presentations will take place during weeks 8-10.

2. Presentation should last approximately 25 minutes, with 15 more minutes allocated to class discussion.

3. Presentation need not be highly formal: purpose will be to present your work in progress and get feedback from other students and from the instructor.

**Readings for Topics in U.S. Health Economics, Sociology, and Policy**

- **Week 1 (January 9): Introduction; Quality And Variation In U.S. Medical Care; Key Features Of The Organization Of The System**

  A. Mediocre Quality and Unexplained Variation


B. Key Features of the Organization of the System

1. Background Brief on Costs (2 pages)

2. Medicare Fact Sheet (2 pages)


Week 2: Problems With Measuring And Rewarding Quality In Health Care


Week 3: Is There A Business Case For Quality In Medical Care?


**Week 4: Medical Malpractice: Origins Of The Problem; Limited Vs. Sweeping Proposals For Reform (I)**


**Week 5: Medical Malpractice: Limited Vs. Sweeping Proposals For Reform (Ii)**


**Week 6 Administrative Waste Or Cost Of Using The Market? (I)**

1. Reinhardt UE, Hussey PS, Anderson GF. U.S. Health Care


Week 7: Administrative Waste Or Cost Of Using The Market? (II); First Student Presentations Of Work In Progress


Weeks 8-10: Student Presentations Of Work In Progress
An additional resource are web sites such as the following:

Health Affairs  [www.healthaffairs.org](http://www.healthaffairs.org)

Center for Health Policy, Law and Management  [http://www.hpolicy.duke.edu/](http://www.hpolicy.duke.edu/)


Improving Chronic Illness Care  [http://www.improvingchroniccare.org/](http://www.improvingchroniccare.org/)

Disease Management Association of America  [http://www.dmaa.org/](http://www.dmaa.org/)


Midwest Business Group on Health  [http://www.mbgh.org](http://www.mbgh.org)

the Leapfrog Group  [http://www.Leapfroggroup.org](http://www.Leapfroggroup.org)


Bridges to Excellence  [http://www.bridgestoexcellence.org/bte/](http://www.bridgestoexcellence.org/bte/)

Foundation for Accountability  [http://www.facct.org/facct/site/facct/facct/home](http://www.facct.org/facct/site/facct/facct/home)

National Quality Forum  [http://www.qualityforum.org](http://www.qualityforum.org)

National Committee for Quality Assurance  [http://www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org)


Pursuing Perfection  [http://www.ihi.org/IHI/Programs/PursuingPerfection/PursuingPerfection.htm](http://www.ihi.org/IHI/Programs/PursuingPerfection/PursuingPerfection.htm)

Rewarding Results  [http://www.leapfroggroup.org/RewardingResults/index.htm](http://www.leapfroggroup.org/RewardingResults/index.htm)

Physician Insurers Association of America  http://www.thepiia.org/public_home.asp

Managed Care Litigation  http://www.managed-care-litigation.com/

Risk Management Foundation  http://www.rmf.harvard.edu/default.asp?v=flash