Aging and Health Policy
HSTD 35301 / PPHA 42401 / SSAD 49022
Spring Quarter 2008 – Tuesdays 3:00-5:50 BSLC 324

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 20%
Assignments/discussion questions 15%
Policy brief 25%
Paper presentations 10%
Final Paper 30%
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

April 1  Session I: Introduction
No readings

Session II: Is Demography Destiny?


April 8  Session I: An Overview of Medicare
Guest Speaker: Katie Merrell, Social and Scientific Systems


Session II: Current Issue in Medicare: Prescription Drug Benefit


Assignment: Choosing a Medicare Part D plan

April 15  Session I: Medicaid and Long-Term Care

- Grabowski DC, Feng Z, Intrator O, Mor V. Recent Trends In State Nursing Home Payment Policies. Health Aff (Millwood). 2004 Jun 16;

Session II: Quality of Care

- Mor, V. Improving the quality of long-term care with better information. Milbank Q. 2005;83(3):333-64.
April 22  Session I:  Elderly Mental Health Policy (guest speaker: Robyn L. Golden, LCSW, Director of Older Adult Programs, Rush University Medical Center)


Session II:  Home- and Community-Based Care


April 29  Session I:  Long-Term Care Insurance

- Norton EC. Long-Term Care in Handbook of Health Economics (focus on LTC Insurance section).

Session II:  International Perspectives


Assignment: Research and describe how elderly health care and LTC are financed for a country other than the US, Germany, or Japan.

May 6  Session I: Presentation/Discussion of Student Policy Briefs

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

May 13  Session I: Culture Change

- Fagan RM
- Thomas WH
- Kehoe MA and Van Heesch B
- Barkan B
- Boyd CK
- Rader J and Semradek J
- Reynolds WE

Session II: Rural Health Policy
Guest Moderator, Emily Cook, University of Chicago Law School

May 20  Session I: Disparities 1

Session II: Disparities 2


Assignment: Review and comment on the paper.

May 27 Session I: End of Life Care


Session II: Workforce Issues

- Konetzka, RT. Paraprofessional Workforce for an Aging Population.

June 3 Student Paper Presentations