COURSE INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the contributions of health care to population health outcomes
2. Identify a set of broad criteria to evaluate health system performance
3. Evaluate the current performance of the U.S. health care system in comparison with other national health systems
4. Understand the key elements of global health governance and their role in population health improvement
5. Identify the social values and political interests that shape health systems development and reform efforts
6. Explain how action outside the health sector is essential for preventing noncommunicable diseases, reducing health care costs, and improving population health and well-being

COURSE DESIGN AND ASSIGNMENTS

The course is designed as an independent study, allowing students considerable flexibility in scheduling the work and reporting the lessons learned. All readings and other materials are available in portable, electronic format (except for Module 6). The intellectual approach is highly interdisciplinary, encouraging students to examine health systems from the perspectives of philosophy, history, sociology, demography, epidemiology, economics, and politics as well as clinical medicine.

The course is organized as a collection of six modules:

Module 1—International Health System Performance
Module 2—Health Systems in the Context of Global Health Needs
Module 3—Health in All Policies: The New Paradigm for Population Health Improvement?
Module 4—The Politics of Health System Development and Reform
Module 5—Health Systems and Policies in High Income Countries
Module 6—International Health Systems and Policy Book Club
Each module includes a required set of materials and a written assignment. Students need not cover every source with equal depth; rather, they should review each and consider which sources require more in-depth study for preparing the written assignments.

**To satisfactorily complete the course, students must select three of the six modules and write a short paper (6-8 double-spaced pages) for each module addressing the questions posed in the written assignment.**

Students should submit papers through the Canvas course website. All papers must be submitted by May 4, the last scheduled day of classes for the term. If there are problems, please notify Professor Oliver via e-mail (troliver@wisc.edu) and, if necessary, send papers directly to him as e-mail attachments.

In the course of their reading and preparation of writing assignments, students may consult with Professor Oliver via e-mail, phone, or meetings at his office.

**EVALUATION**

Upon completion of the written assignments for three of the six modules, students will earn a letter grade for the course. It is necessary to complete all three papers to earn a passing grade. Each paper counts equally toward the final course grade.

Grades for written assignments will be based on: 1) the comprehensiveness of the analysis in identifying appropriate concepts, literature and applications; 2) the logic, accuracy, and overall persuasiveness of the arguments; and 3) the quality of the writing style (including basic grammar, punctuation, and proofreading).

**MODULE 1
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE**


Written Assignment for Module 1 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)

- Which dimension of health system performance—effectiveness, equity, or efficiency—is most important in your view?
- Based on the cross-national evidence, is there an obvious tradeoff between equity and efficiency? Or does greater efficiency appear to go hand in hand with greater equity?
- How does the U.S. health system compare with other nations in basic measures of performance? What are its greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses? How much progress is it making following the adoption of the Affordable Care Act in 2010?
- To what extent are poorer than expected health outcomes in the U.S. attributable to its health system, relative to other factors?

MODULE 2
HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL HEALTH NEEDS


**Written Assignment for Module 2 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)**

- Why is global health—as opposed to the health of individuals, communities or nations—a critical issue in the 21st century?
- Who has responsibility for global health protection and improvement? What are the chief governance challenges for global health?
- Why is justice considered by many to be a critical element of global health governance and population health improvement?
- How important is adequate health care, and the funding needed to provide it, to population health?
- Where do prevention and primary care fit into health financing needs? Where do they fit into current health financing priorities? What must change to achieve a proper balance and better population health outcomes?

**MODULE 3**

**HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES: THE NEW PARADIGM FOR POPULATION HEALTH IMPROVEMENT?**

* Please note that students are not expected to comprehensively review and use all of the materials for this module in preparing the written assignment. Selected parts of most sources will provide adequate background and information for developing the analysis.

*Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*. Statement from the First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, Canada, 21 November 1986.


Written Assignment for Module 3 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)

- What is the difference between governance of health and governance for health? Why is intersectoral action—that is, action outside of health care systems and agencies—considered essential to address the twin challenges of noncommunicable disease and rising health care spending in nearly all countries?
- What are the European origins and principles of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to population health improvement? How does the HiAP approach affirm or update the 1986 Ottawa Charter and its commitment to “healthy public policy”?
- Where are some of the most promising HiAP approaches occurring today? In your judgment, what are the most promising structures or organizational tools for advancing the HiAP approach (health lens, health impact assessment, joint committees, joint budgets, etc.)? How does the U.S. National Prevention Strategy compare with the most promising approaches?
- Choose a specific problem in population health. How would the HiAP approach work and how would it alter existing approaches to that problem?

**MODULE 4**

**THE POLITICS OF HEALTH SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM**


**Written Assignment for Module 4 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)**

- What is the general relationship between social inequalities and population health outcomes? In the U.S. in particular, how has race influenced our perceptions of health disparities and our commitment to reducing them?
- How do political traditions and party ideology shape systems of health and social services, and with what outcomes? In particular, how do social democratic parties contrast with parties in the liberal political tradition? How have authoritarian or totalitarian regimes affected health outcomes?
- What social values and political interests have priority in contemporary European health systems as compared with the U.S. health system?
- What has changed in American society, politics, and health care to undermine the traditional influence of organized medicine and organized labor in debates over health system reform? In your judgment, how did these shifts in power affect the political battle over health care reform in 2008-10?
MODULE 5
HEALTH SYSTEMS IN HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES: HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, FINANCING, AND DELIVERY


Prologue: A Moral Question
Chapter 1: A Quest for Two Cures
Chapter 2: Different Models, Common Principles
Chapter 3: The Paradox
Chapter 12: The First Question
Chapter 13: Major Surgery


http://www.commonwealthfund.org/interactives/2017/july/mirror-mirror/


Written Assignment for Module 5 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)

• Assess the four basic models for national health care systems discussed in T. R. Reid’s book, The Healing of America (as illustrated in the real-world systems of the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Taiwan, Switzerland, and the United States). The additional reports and articles provide a fuller profile of each health system and key performance measures.
• Your assessment should include what you find are the primary strengths and weaknesses of each model from the perspective of a) physicians; b) patients; and c) the society at
large. You might consider a number of issues, among them: how do the different systems compare in terms of comprehensiveness of coverage (who is covered, what is covered); financial burden and protection (combined taxes and out of pocket contributions for premiums and services); choice of providers (including access to specialists); administrative simplicity; timely access to needed care; provider compensation? Try to separate simplistic rhetoric from the evidence about different system features and performance.

- How much does a country’s historical path dictate its future? To put it differently, is major system reorganization possible? What challenges do all systems face, regardless of the primary model they employ?

MODULE 6
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS AND POLICY BOOK CLUB

Read one of the following:


**Written Assignment for Module 6 (6-8 double-spaced pages not including references)**

- Summarize the main issues and arguments of the book and the strength of the evidence presented to substantiate those arguments.
- At what level(s) of health systems and policy are the book’s analysis and lessons are most applicable: local, regional, national, or international? What is the most important audience for this book?
- Assess how the book reinforces or, possibly, contradicts key lessons from other modules in this course.
- How does this book make you think about health systems and policy in a new and lasting way?