

HHS 20556: U.S. Healthcare System in Perspective

Spring 2024

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:15pm in 117 Haggar Hall

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Evans (they/them)

Email: aevens23@nd.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays from 1:00pm-2:00pm in 219C O'Shaughnessy Hall

Course Description:

This course seeks to answer two questions: 1) What the structure of the US Healthcare System? 2) What impact does the healthcare system have on patients? Question (1) can be broken down into several more specific questions: How has the system evolved over time? What are the major institutions of the healthcare system? How does healthcare funding work in the US? Question (2) can also be expanded upon: What power dynamics are at play between clinicians and patients? What happens when someone cannot pay for care? This course will be an opportunity for you to learn about the healthcare system and how it relates to society. This is a core course in the Health, Humanities, and Society minor.

Learning Goals:

By the end of this course, you will be able to...

- Critically discuss the history and trajectory of the US healthcare system.
- Reflect upon the interaction between the healthcare system and society, and how the healthcare system impacts patient experience, including your own.
- Conduct independent research on the healthcare system, and organize it into a coherent narrative.

Grade Scale:

A 93%-100%	A- 90%-92.5%	B+ 87%-89.5%	B 83%-86.5%
B- 80%-82.5%	C+ 77%-79.5%	C 73%-76.5%	C- 70%-72.5%
D 60%-69.5%	F 0%-59.5%		

Point Distribution:

Reflection paper 1	30 points
Reflection paper 2	30 points
Research project proposal	10 points
Research project poster	50 points

Main point and question assignments (MPQs)	60 points (5 points each)
Total	180 points

Reflection Papers 1 and 2:

There will be two reflection papers for this class. For each paper you will be given a prompt which will ask you to discuss some of the main ideas from the course and then reflect upon the ways that the healthcare system impacts patient experience. Part of the assignment might be to reflect upon your own experience as a patient, or as a potential future healthcare provider. More information will be made available about these assignments a few weeks before they are due.

Research Project:

A major part of this course will be completing an independent research project. Your project will be on a topic that you choose, but you will need to get the topic approved from me before you begin. There are two separate grades for the project: 1) the research project proposal in which you will explain your topic and the research you plan to conduct, 2) the final product itself, which will take the form of an informational poster. **As part of your grade for the project poster, you are required to attend and present your poster at the Reilly Center Undergraduate Symposium, which will take place on April 24. Please take note of this date to make sure you are available—since it is outside of our normal class meeting time.** We will discuss the research project in detail throughout the semester, and I will provide some time in class to work on it. Also, in a class leading up to the symposium, we will hold a presentation workshop in which you will practice presenting your poster to your fellow classmates.

Main Point and Question Assignments (MPQs):

Each week you will complete an MPQ. I will provide a template for what an MPQ should look like. The requirements are that you explain the main point for each of that week's readings, you ask a question that you had about the readings, and then you write out an answer to that question. It is your job throughout the Tuesday and Thursday classes to get your question answered. At the end of class on Thursdays you will turn in your completed MPQ, which is worth 5 points.

Late Work Policy:

Reflection paper 1 and the research project proposal can be turned in up to one week past the due date and will be docked 10%. After one week of being late, please discuss with me to see if it will be possible to still turn in the late work. In general, MPQs, the research poster, and reflection paper 2 cannot be turned in late.

Exceptional and Extreme Circumstances:

Regarding any late work or missed class, if you are having trouble turning things in on time or attending class, please talk with me. Exceptions can always be made for illness, an emergency, or some other extenuating circumstance. Talk with me about it and we will come to a solution.

Academic Misconduct:

Do not plagiarize or cheat in any way. Follow the university's policies on academic misconduct. If I discover that you have broken the university's policies on academic misconduct, I am required to report it. Punishments range from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university.

[Undergraduate Academic Code of Honor](#)

Inclusion:

It is my goal to make this class a safe space for people of all ages, races, national origins, ancestries, political affiliations, disability statuses, medical conditions, gender identities, gender expressions, sexes, sexual orientations, marital statuses, veteran statuses, and other forms of difference. No discrimination will be tolerated. Especially when participating in class discussions, everyone should make sure to be respectful. It is important to maintain a safe environment for learning to occur in. Please let me know via email if there are any inclusion-related considerations that I should be aware of (e.g., pronouns or if you use a name that is not listed in the system).

Accessibility and Accommodations:

Regarding accessibility, I will do everything I can to ensure that accommodations will be made when needed.

Any student who has a documented disability and is registered with Sara Bea Accessibility Services should speak with me as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students who are not registered should contact the Sara Bea Accessibility Services as soon as possible since accommodation typically needs to be arranged in advance.

[Accessibility Support](#)

Mental Health:

Diminished mental health can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of mental distress might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with other parts of your life can also contribute to decreased academic performance. The University Counseling Center (UCC) provides cost-free and confidential mental health services to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your emotional or academic well-being.

Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do — for yourself and for those who care about you. For more resources, please see ucc.nd.edu or studenthealth.nd.edu.

The UCC is located on the third floor of Saint Liam Hall Phone: 574-631-7336. Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm.

24/7 crisis intervention services are available by calling the UCC at 574-631-7336. Crisis Services are available 24/7 except during the week that the University is closed over the winter break.

<https://ucc.nd.edu/counseling-services/crisis/>

Title IX:

The University of Notre Dame provides services for those who have been affected by sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking and any conduct that creates a hostile environment. For help and further information including contact information for on and off-campus resources, please consult <https://titleix.nd.edu/support-resources>.

Other Helpful Resources:

[Writing Center](#)

[University Health Services](#)

[LGBTQ Resources](#)

Communication:

The best way to communicate with me is email. I am usually able to respond to an email within 48 hours. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns you have. I will hold office hours on Thursdays from 1:00pm-2:00pm in 219C O'Shaughnessy Hall. I am also available to schedule meetings outside of my office hours.

Technology Policy:

You are permitted to use a laptop, tablet, or other electronic device for notetaking in class. However, I do ask that when you are in class, you focus on what is being discussed and not browse the web or do anything else non-class related on your device. I understand that you may need to contact someone during class, but I ask that you please leave the room to call or text.

Difficult Content:

Some topics we discuss could be potentially triggering or upsetting. If there is something that you think would be difficult for you to read or view, then it is okay to skip it. Just let me know that you need to skip it and we will decide on something else you can read or view instead. If a particular reading, video, or class discussion seems like it would be potentially triggering or upsetting, I will do my best to warn you ahead of time. If you have any thoughts or questions about any of this please feel free to reach out to me.

Please Note:

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. If I do so, I will always give you notice ahead of time.

Schedule:

Date and Topic	Readings and Assignments
<i>The US healthcare system throughout time</i>	
Tuesday January 16	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus
Thursday January 18	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pagano (2016) “A Brief History of U.S. Healthcare”
Tuesday January 23	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stidstone Gronim (2006) “Imagining Inoculation: Smallpox, the Body, and Social Relations of Healing in the Eighteenth Century”
Thursday January 25	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pernick (1983) “The Calculus of Suffering in Nineteenth-Century Surgery” Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MPQ 1
Tuesday January 30	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooper Owens & Fett (2019) “Black Maternal and Infant Health: Historical Legacies of Slavery”
Thursday February 1	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenny (2013) “The Development of Medical Museums in the Antebellum American South” Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MPQ 2
Tuesday February 6	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walzer Leavitt (1992) “‘Typhoid Mary’ Strikes Back Bacteriological Theory and Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Public Health”
Thursday February 8	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moseley (2008) “The U.S. Healthcare Non-System: 1908-2008” Browse:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS U.S. Healthcare Chart <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 3
Tuesday February 13	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlandi (2019) “Why doesn’t the United States have universal health care? The answer has everything to do with race” from New York Times Magazine <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection paper 1
Thursday February 15	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quadagno (2004) “Why the United States Has No National Health Insurance: Stakeholder Mobilization Against the Welfare State, 1945-1996” <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 4
<i>Today’s healthcare system</i>	
Tuesday February 20	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tikkanen et al. (2020) “Commonwealth Fund International Health Care System Profiles- United States” <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Structure & Cost of US Health Care: Crash Course Sociology #44 <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 5
Thursday February 22	No class today, nothing is due
Tuesday February 27	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tikkanen & Abrams (2020) “U.S. Healthcare from a Global Perspective: Higher Spending Worse Outcomes?” <p>Browse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare System Tracker- United States

Thursday February 29	Browse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunn et al. (2020) “A dozen facts about the economics of the US health-care system” from Brookings Listen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wu “The Everlasting Problem” podcast from NPR Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 6
<i>Different perspectives on the US healthcare system</i>	
Tuesday March 5	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crash Course “Which Healthcare System is Best? Crash Course Public Health #7” video • Washington Post “What experts say about who has the world’s best health-care system—Opinion” video
Thursday March 7	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rumbold (2017) “Universal Health Coverage, Priority Setting, and the Human Right to Health” • Goldstein & Bowers (2015) “The Patient as Consumer- Empowerment or Commodification?” Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 7
Tuesday March 12	Mid-term break
Thursday March 14	Mid-term break
Tuesday March 19	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vox “The real reason American health care is so expensive” video • Manhattan Institute “The Fallacy of Single-Payer Healthcare” video
Thursday March 21	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heineman & Froemke (2012) <i>Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Health</i> documentary (you should be able to access

	<p>this online through the Hesburgh Library system)</p> <p>-or-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS (2021) <i>The Healthcare Divide</i> documentary <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 8
Tuesday March 26	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gawande (2017) “The Heroism of Incremental Care” from The New Yorker <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research project proposal
<i>Patient experiences</i>	
Thursday March 28	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nyquist Potter (2019) “Voice, Silencing, and Listening Well: Socially Located Patients, Oppressive Structures, and an Invitation to Shift the Epistemic Terrain” <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 9
Tuesday April 2	<p>Time in class to work on research project</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saks (2007) <i>The Center Cannot Hold</i> Prologue and Chapter 11
Thursday April 4	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays from Maloney (2022) <i>The Cost of Living</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “A Note About This Book” ○ “The Cost of Living” ○ “I Stalked My Psychiatrist” ○ “Some Therapy” ○ “Sick” ○ “A Brief Inventory of My Drugs and Their Retail Price” <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 10

Tuesday April 9	<p>Time in class to work on research project</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays from Maloney (2022) <i>The Cost of Living</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Three Deaths” “Heartbroke” “Soft Restraints”
Thursday April 11	<p>Emily Maloney visiting class</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays from Maloney (2022) <i>The Cost of Living</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “For Pain” “Something For Pain” “After” <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MPQ 11
Tuesday April 16	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuila (2016) “Poor and Uninsured in Texas” from <i>The New Yorker</i>
Wednesday April 17	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research project poster
Thursday April 18	<p>Research project presentation workshop in class</p>
Tuesday April 23	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piatt (2015) “Navigating Veronika: How Access, Knowledge, and Attitudes Shaped My Sister’s Care”
Wednesday April 24	<p>Reilly Center Undergraduate Research Symposium—you are required to present your research project poster at this event</p>
Thursday April 25	<p>No class today, nothing is due</p>
Tuesday April 30	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jain (2023) “2024: Healthcare Insiders Predict the Future” from <i>Forbes</i>

	Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPQ 12
Tuesday May 7	No class today (finals week) Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection paper 2