

**PH 116: Introduction to the U.S. Health System  
LAST UPDATED 1-15-2021**

**Spring 2021**

**T/TH 9:40-10:55  
Hutchinson Hall 141  
Hybrid /Flex Course**

**Instructor:** Mical Raz, MD, PhD

Office Hours: Zoom only, Thursdays 2-3pm or by appointment  
email: [micalraz@rochester.edu](mailto:micalraz@rochester.edu)

Teaching Assistants:

Chinmayee Katragadda [Chinmayee\\_Katragadda@URMC.Rochester.edu](mailto:Chinmayee_Katragadda@URMC.Rochester.edu)

The TAs are your primary point of contact for questions and concerns.  
You will be divided into two groups on blackboard for discussion board involvement.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

PH 116 (Intro to the US Health Care System): This course examines the organization, financing and functioning of the United States health care system, utilizing primarily a historical perspective. Among the topics covered are the economics and organization of health systems, racial disparities in access to care and quality of care, historical understandings of social determinants of health, U.S. health policy and politics including the historical struggle for health reform, the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and its transformation under the Trump administration.

The course textbook will be Donald Barr's *Introduction to US Health Policy: The Organization, Financing, and Delivery of Health Care in America*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (2016) but will also incorporate investigative journalism articles, primary and secondary historical sources, and videos and documentary films. Paul Starr's book *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* is also a very valuable resource, now available through our library as an e-book.

The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 2 periods of 75 minutes each week. Students enrolled in PH 116 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups, and to preparing for their assignments and review sessions.

**EVALUATION:**

Short essay responses to films and their larger context: 5 pts each X 4 =20 pts

Two MCQ Quizzes (in class, on blackboard) 10 pts each X 2 =20 pts  
Two in-class exams (short essays, on blackboard, during class time) 30 pts each X 2 =60 pts  
Participation, thoughtful contributions in class and on the discussion board- up to 5 pts.  
Total is 105 possible points.

Grade scale is as follow:

A = 93-105  
A- = 90-92  
B+ = 87-89  
B = 83-86  
B- = 80-82  
C+ = 77-79  
C = 73-76  
C- = 70-72  
D+ =67-69  
D = 63-66  
D- =60-62

#### COVID STATEMENT:

Covid has disturbed our lives and learning in so many ways. I want to acknowledge that everything you are doing as students is hard, and harder than you expected. I hope you find that a deep dive into how our healthcare system functions (or doesn't), helps each of you make sense of these crazy times. While there are certain educational goals and requirements that are necessary for an academic course, in general, I want you to succeed and thrive. Please know that I am here to help you, accommodate you when needed, and supported your learning and your personal wellbeing.

ATTENDANCE: Given the pandemic and its unique adjustments, I will not be checking attendance regularly. However, attendance is required and important for success. All zoom sessions will be recorded per university requirements and can be watched at later date. Quizzes and exams should be taken at the scheduled time, barring extreme circumstances that are pre-approved by the instructor.

#### ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>. For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's 'Defining Plagiarism,' <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism.>" If there is any question or concern please contact the instructor for clarification.

#### STATEMENT OF ACCOMMODATION:

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

**University of Rochester COVID-19 regulations:** The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire community – students, faculty and staff. For this reason, it is mandatory that everyone wear a mask in University buildings and observe appropriate social distancing, including classrooms. Masks have been provided to students, faculty and staff and classrooms have been specifically assigned to allow for social distancing to support these requirements. You must wear a mask appropriately (e.g. over nose and mouth) if you are attending class in person, and you must do this for every class session and for the entire duration of each class session. If you fail to do this, you will be politely reminded of the requirement and then asked to leave if you do not comply.

If you do not want to wear a mask, you may consider taking the course remotely (online).

Students who refuse to adhere to requirement for mask wearing or social distancing the course will be in violation of the COVID-19 Community Commitment and will be referred to the Student Conduct system through a COVID-19 Concern Report. Such referrals will lead to student conduct hearings and may result in disciplinary action.

Students who feel unable to wear a mask may contact the Office of Disability Resources to explore options for accommodations. Students requiring accommodations may be asked to participate in the course through synchronous or asynchronous learning as part of this accommodation.

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to change topics and assignments on the syllabus at any point in the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

#### LIBRARY RESOURCES:

Stephanie Barrett is the librarian for this course. She is a resource for questions regarding the library website, research, citations, and more. You can email her at [sbarrett@library.rochester.edu](mailto:sbarrett@library.rochester.edu) or you can schedule a zoom appointment with her at <http://libcal.lib.rochester.edu/appointments?u=31920>.

**IMPORTANT DATES :**

**Quizzes Feb 18 ;April 8**

**Exam A March 11**

**Exam B May 6**

**All reflection essays are due on blackboard same day, a week later at 9am (you have a full week to submit, please do a thoughtful job!)**

**Schedule of Lectures**

**PART I Historical Foundations of the US Health Care System:**

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Introduction, History of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Medical Profession, Past as Prologue

Reading: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/dec-14-1799-excruciating-final-hours-president-george-washington>

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Educational Reform, The Flexner Report, The Rise of the Medical Profession

Read:

Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 112-134

Barr, Chapter 4 81-111

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Hospitals – an Evolution

Paul Starr, “The Reconstitution of the Hospital,” in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, p. 145-179

Thursday, February 11, 2021

September 10 Bacteriological Revolution and the Rise of Public Health

Gawande, *Better*, 13-28; Nancy Tomes, “The Making of a Germ Panic, Then and Now” *AJPH* Feb 2000.

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

**Asynchronous** watch film “The Most Dangerous Woman in America” and submit reflection (due Tuesday Feb 23 at 9am)

Thursday, February 18, 2021- **In class quiz** (15 mins for 10 MCQ)

Health, Illness, and the Risk of Disease: A Transformation.

Aronowitz, "The Converged Experience of Risk and Disease," *Milbank Q.* 2009 Jun; 87(2): 417–442

**PART II Social Determinants of Health – Historical Understandings**

**Textbook for entire section** Barr, 336-350

Tuesday, February 23, 2021- Historical Understandings of SDoH Part 1

Thursday, February 25, 2021- Historical Understandings of SDoH Part 2

Tuesday, March 2, 2021 Maternal Health in America

Read:

<https://www.propublica.org/article/nothing-protects-black-women-from-dying-in-pregnancy-and-childbirth>

Thursday, March 4, 2021 **Asynchronous**

Read: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/us/coronavirus-fauci-aids-hiv.html>

Watch: United in Anger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrAzU79PBVM>

Submit reflection due Thursday March 11<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

Tuesday, March 9, 2021- Discussion, moving Forward - Cultural Competence, is it the answer? What is Structural Competence? Review for exam.

Read: Jonathan Metzl and Helena Hansen, Structural competency: theorizing a new medical engagement with stigma and inequality. *Soc Sci Med.* 2014 Feb;103:126-133 and

Thursday, March 11, 2021 – In Class Online Exam A

**PART III Access to Health Care in the US: Private, Public, and Uninsured**

Tuesday, March 16, 2021 - What is Health Insurance?

Read: Barr, 112-120

Thursday, March 18, 2021 What is Managed Care?

Barr, "Health Insurance, HMOs, and the Managed Care Revolution," p. 112-149

Tuesday, March 23, 2021- Historical Origins of Medicare and Medicaid

Barr, Medicare 150-195

Thursday, March 25, 2021 Medicare and Medicaid

Tuesday, March 30, 2021 NO CLASS – STUDY BREAK

Thursday, April 1, 2021 **Asynchronous**

Watch: Power to Heal

Submit Blackboard reflection due Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup> at 9am .

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 Uninsured, Underinsured, Uninsurable, Rand  
Experiment, Does Health Insurance even work?

Barr, 228-250

Thursday, April 8, 2021 TBD, In class quiz (15 mins for 10 MCQ)

#### **PART IV: HEALTH CARE REFORM**

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 - **Asynchronous**

Watch Sicko:

<https://vimeo.com/76646445>

Submit Blackboard reflection Tuesday April 20<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

Thursday, April 15, 2021 Health Care Reform, A History

Tuesday, April 20, 2021 – What were the Clinton Reforms and What was  
Learned?

Thursday, April 22, 2021 – ACA Political History

Barr 1-18; 38-41.

Read Barak Obama : <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/02/barack-obama-new-book-excerpt-promised-land-obamacare>

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 – ACA, Cont'd : What does the ACA Do? Medicaid  
Expansion and the Medicaid Gap

Annie Lowrey “The Supreme Court is Bad for Your Health”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/07/medicaid-saves-lives/595096/>

Thursday, April 29, 2021 – ACA in the Age of Trump

Reading to be updated reflecting current events and status of  
SCOTUS lawsuit

Tuesday, May 4, 2021 – Review Session

Thursday, May 6, 2021- In Class Exam (Online)