

Politics and Policies in the U.S. Health Care System

HIS 373W/473 PM 420/PSCI 317W  
Spring 2021

Tuesdays on Zoom 2-3:15  
Thursday Asynchronous  
Office Hours

Instructor: Mical Raz, MD, PhD micalraz@rochester.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 2-3 pm on zoom. Other hours by appointment.

Course Synopsis:

HIS 373W (US Health Policy and Politics): This course examines the formation and evolution of American health policy from a political and historical perspective. Concentrating on developments from the early twentieth century to the present, the focus of readings and discussions will be political forces and institutions and historical and cultural contexts.

Among the topics covered are periodic campaigns for national health reform, the rise of hospitals as the main site of medical care, the formation of the VA health system, the creation of Medicare and Medicaid and the further evolution of these programs, the rise to dominance of economists and economic analysis in the shaping of health policy, incremental and state-based vs. comprehensive and federal initiatives, the formation and failure of the Clinton administration's health reform agenda, and national health reform during the Obama administration and the Affordable Care Act. The course will end with current health care debates and attempts to scale back, undo or undermine the ACA.

The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIS 373W 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 researching in depth their topics for the final seminar paper.

Required Book:

Starr, Paul - THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN MEDICINE

Copies are available at the Barnes & Noble bookstore in College Town and it is available as an e-book through our library. All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Graduate vs Undergraduate Tracks:

This course is cross listed for graduate students and undergraduate students. The expectations are the same apart from the final research paper, which will be longer and require significant primary source engagement for graduate students. Graduate students are welcome to contact the professor

to tailor the course to their learning needs.

Covid:

These are unprecedented times. We are all doing our best and facing different challenges. I hope to make our class a respectful place for growth and learning and plan to be considerate of the challenges each and every one of you are facing.

Seminar Participation and Grading:

This is a seminar course in which active, well-prepared student participation is expected. Reading should be done in advance of the seminar, not during, and students should come prepared for an informed discussion. This seminar requires a significant amount of writing, revising, and commenting on peer writing. Given the asynchronous nature of our Thursday class, you are responsible for much of your active learning, I am available to support you in this journey.

**Verbal Participation:** Total 10%

Participation: 5%

Leading an in-class discussion: 5%

**Written Engagement:** Total 15%

Discussion board posts (Choose 4 out of 10 prompts): 10%

Responses to discussion board posts (Respond 4 times at least): 5%

**Op-Ed Assignment:** Total 25%

Share chosen op-ed plus analysis: 2.5%

Commentary on peer Op-Ed: 2.5%

Op-Ed: 20%

**Research Paper:** Total 50%

Detailed topic proposal and annotated bibliography: 5%

Commentary on peer Research Paper: 5%

Final Research Paper: 40%

**Important Due Dates (please put into your calendars!):**

Email with general topic and plan for final research paper: March 4

Published Op-ed identified and commentary uploaded: March 15

Op-ed Drafts Posted on Blackboard: March 20

Commentary on peer Op-Ed Draft: March 22nd

Final Op-ed Due: Thursday April 1

Research topic and annotated bibliography: April 6

Draft paper: April 29th

Peer Review of Research Paper: May 3

Research Paper: Due May 13<sup>th</sup>

If you have difficulties with any of these deadlines, please let me know as soon as you can. There is a global pandemic, and I will try to be accommodating, but it is easier to accommodate when I

am informed in advance.

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.1>

Students with Disabilities: 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.

Distance learning:

This is an online course that requires no specialized equipment. You will, however, need a computer, webcam, and stable internet connection in order to be able to participate in Zoom meetings. If you can, please try to minimize internet usage in your household during these sessions in order to maximize bandwidth for lecture and camera. If you can, it's preferable that your camera be turned on when on Zoom; it is fine, however, to use a virtual background if you prefer. And please be aware that it is University policy that all of our Zoom sessions be recorded, so that students can access them as needed. I will delete all of these recordings at the end of the course.

Writing Skills: We will discuss each writing assignment in detail during class. I am also always willing to talk about writing assignments individually: to help you plan an essay, work through the process, or review comments. I encourage all students to take advantage of this by coming to office hours. Another resource is the UR Writing and Speaking Center, which is dedicated to helping writers at all skill levels to improve. You can reach them at 585- 273-3577 or at <https://writing.rochester.edu/OnlineSchedule/AppointmentScheduleEnterStudentID.php>

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## **Detailed Breakdown of Course Requirements:**

### **Verbal Participation:** Total 10%

1 - Your thoughtful contributions to our online zoom class are an important part of your learning experience. You are expected to come prepared, participate in the discussion, and engage respectfully with your peers. (5)

2- For each module, two students will be responsible for leading the discussion and preparing a few questions to stimulate conversation. (5%)

### **Written Engagement:** Total 15%

Discussion board posts (Choose 4 out of 10 prompts): 10%

You will be asked to respond to 4 out of ten prompts on the reading assignments and to write approximately 500-750 words that incorporate your thoughts on the reading and questions that may arise. Your posts should be carefully written and edited prior to posting.

Responses to discussion board posts (Respond 4 times): 5%

You are expected to read and engage with the discussion board posts and respond briefly to different posts on different topics. The more the better, to create a conversation, but at least 4 times to get credit.

### **Op-Ed Assignment:** Total 25%

1 -Share chosen op-ed plus analysis: 2.5%

You will choose a scholarly op-ed you enjoy (Made by History for Wash Post; The Monkey Cage, JAMA Health Forum), briefly describe its argument and why you found it compelling, and post this on Blackboard and be prepared to discuss it in class.

2 – Commentary on peer Op-Ed:2.5%

We will workshop our op-eds and you will provide written feedback (on Blackboard) to one peer, approximately 500-750 words. This peer will be assigned to you.

3- Final Op-Ed: 20%

Based on comments from myself and your peer you will submit a final op-ed, 750-1200 words. My hope is some op-eds will be pitched to newspapers for publication.

### **Research Paper:** Total 50%

1 - Detailed topic proposal and annotated bibliography: 5%

Early in the semester you will identify a topic of interest and find relevant sources for an original research paper. The topic proposal consists of a title for your project, a one-page abstract, and a bibliography of the list of sources (primary and secondary) you will use for your paper. For the abstract, make sure that your argument, key questions, and main sources are clear while limiting yourself to 250 words. For the bibliography, include basic information about at least 10 sources, letting the reader know what they are and why you are including them in the bibliography.

You will upload this to Blackboard.

2- Commentary on peer Research Paper: 5%

You will read the draft research paper of one peer (will be assigned to you) and provide written feedback on their work. This feedback is designed to help you develop your peer review skills and your critical reading and will help your peer. Neither your research paper grade nor your peers grade will be affected by this, it gets graded separately. You submit the peer review on Blackboard.

3- Based on feedback from myself on your draft and the peer review you receive you submit your final research paper by May 13.

Final Research Paper: 40% approx. 15-20 pages.

### Library Resources:

As part of your research paper, you will need to identify primary and secondary sources. These resources will vary depending on your primary discipline (history, public health, political science).

Stephanie Barrett is the public health librarian. 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 an appointment with her at <http://libcal.lib.rochester.edu/appointments?u=31920>.

Other valuable resources for source identification are:

Lara Nicosia, History Outreach Librarian [lnicosia@library.rochester.edu](mailto:lnicosia@library.rochester.edu)

Anna Siebach-Larsen, Director of Robbins Library [alarsen@library.rochester.edu](mailto:alarsen@library.rochester.edu)

Miranda Mims, Director of Rare Books and Special Collections [mmims@library.rochester.edu](mailto:mmims@library.rochester.edu)

Andrea Reithmayr, Special Collections Librarian [areithmayr@library.rochester.edu](mailto:areithmayr@library.rochester.edu)

Melissa Mead, University Archivist [mmead@library.rochester.edu](mailto:mmead@library.rochester.edu)

**Intro to Seminar, Welcome:**

Tuesday, February 2, 2021- online class meeting

**Module 1 Hospitals**

Thursday, February 4, 2021- Asynchronous

Read: Starr 145-179 (ok to skim, it's a lot)

*Rosenberg Care of Strangers* 310-345

Optional - Vanessa Gamble, *Roots of the Black Hospital Reform Movement*

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 – online class meeting

**Module 2 The Hill Burton Act, Deluxe Jim Crow**

Thursday, February 11, 2021

Read: Starr 347-351

Intro to *Deluxe Jim Crow* and timeline

Karen Kruse Thomas , “The Hill-Burton Act and Civil Rights: Expanding Hospital Care for Black Southerners, 1939-1960,” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 72, No. 4 (Nov., 2006), pp. 823-870

Tuesday, February 16, 2021- online class meeting

**Module 3 Employer Sponsored Insurance**

Thursday, February 18, 2021 - asynchronous

Read:

Starr, Remedy and Reaction, pp. 35-50

David Rothman, Chapter 1 Blue Cross and the American Way in Health Care, in *Beginnings Count: The Technological Imperative in American Health Care*

Beatrix Hoffman, Chapter 5: “Rationing by Coverage: The Rise of Private Health Insurance,” in *Health Care for Some: Rights and Rationing in the United States Since 1930*, 2013

Tuesday, February 23, 2021- online class meeting

**Module 4 Healthcare for the Poor, Early Medicaid**

Thursday, February 25, 2021 Asynchronous

Read:

Beatrix Hoffman, "Don't Scream Alone: The Health Care Activism of Poor Americans in the 1970s." In *Patients as Policy Actors*. Rutgers University Press, 2011 pp.132-147.

Engel, Jonathan, *Poor People's Medicine*, Chapter 3.

Tuesday, March 2, 2021- online class meeting

### **Module 5 What is Medicaid, What is Federalism**

Thursday, March 4, 2021 Asynchronous – *Email me a topic for your final paper and how you'll approach it.*

Read Jamila Michener – *Fragmented Democracy*, chapters 1,4.

Read this blog post:

<https://www.theregreview.org/2020/12/23/chung-federalism-harmed-public-health/>

Tuesday, March 9, 2021- online class meeting

### **Module 6 Medicare, Desegregations, Older Americans and Politics**

Thursday, March 11, 2021 asynchronous

Watch: *Power to Heal*

Read:

Starr, *Social Transformation*, 363-378

Mark Schlesinger, "Medicare and the Social Transformation of American Elders."

*Medicare and Medicaid at 50*. Chapter 7, pp. 119-144.

Optional: Uwe Reinhardt, "In Health Care Overhaul, Language Matters" JUNE 19, 2009

<https://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/19/in-health-carereform-language-matters/>

*Identify model op-ed and upload it to Blackboard with some explanation. Due March*

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Tuesday, March 16, 2021 -online synchronous class

### **Op-Eds**

Thursday, March 18, 2021- asynchronous.

**MARCH 20 – Op Eds uploaded to blackboard, March 22 – peer feedback due.**  
Tuesday, March 23, 2021 – in class discussion of draft op-eds and model op-eds

### **Independent Work Week**

Thursday, March 25, 2021 – work on research paper proposal and revise op-eds  
Tuesday, March 30, 2021 STUDY BREAK

### **Module 7 Kidneys, Medicare, Race**

Thursday, April 1, 2021 Asynchronous – **FINAL OPEDs DUE ON BLACKBOARD**

Watch: John Oliver clip

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw\\_nqzVfxFQ&list=ULBgyqAD5Z6\\_A&index=203](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw_nqzVfxFQ&list=ULBgyqAD5Z6_A&index=203)

Read: David Rothman, *Beginnings Count: The Technological Imperative in American Health Care*, Chapter 4 (Dialysis and National Priorities) p87-110.

Shana Alexander, “They decide who lives, who dies: Medical miracle and a moral burden of a small committee,” *LIFE* magazine, 9 November 1962

Robin Fields, “In Dialysis, Life-Saving Care at Great Risk and Cost”, *ProPublica*, Nov 7, 2010 at

<https://www.propublica.org/article/in-dialysis-life-saving-care-at-great-risk-and-cost>

Lizzie Presser “Tethered to the Machine” Dec 15, 2020

<https://features.propublica.org/covid-dialysis/for-years-jamarcus-crews-tried-to-get-a-new-kidney-but-corporate-healthcare-stood-in-the-way/>

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 - online class meeting

**PROJECT PROPOSALS AND BIBLIO DUE**

### **Module 8 The ACA**

Thursday, April 8, 2021 Asynchronous:

Read: Starr, *Remedy and Reaction* 239-298 (ok to skim)

Jonathan Oberlander. 2016. Implementing the Affordable Care Act: The Promise and Limits of Health Care Reform. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 41(4): 803-826.

<https://read.dukeupress.edu/jhpl/article/41/4/803/13901/Implementingthe-Affordable-Care-Act-The-Promise>

Optional but excellent: Obama in *New Yorker*

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

Tuesday, April 13, 2021- online class meeting

### **Module 9 The ACA, Medicaid Non expansion**

Thursday, April 15, 2021 Asynchronous

Watch– John Oliver clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d3nASKtGas>

Read:

Metzl, *Dying of Whiteness*, Intro and Pages 165-188

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

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

Miller and Wherry: Health and Access to Care during the First 2 Years of the ACA  
Medicaid Expansions - <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1612890>

Tuesday, April 20, 2021- online class meeting

### **Module 10 The ACA after Obama**

Thursday, April 22, 2021

Watch:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEGpriv2TAc&list=LLO\\_dWiYLEgzMF6c6Ko-IvJw&index=94](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEGpriv2TAc&list=LLO_dWiYLEgzMF6c6Ko-IvJw&index=94)

Read:

Michener, *Race, Politics and the ACA*.

Oberlander, J. 2018. The Republican War on Obamacare: What Has It Achieved? *New England Journal of Medicine* 379(8): 703-705.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/08959420.2018.1462684>

Tuesday, April 27, 2021- online class meeting

### **Independent Work on Research Paper**

Thursday, April 29, 2021 – individual zoom meetings scheduled. **DRAFT PAPERS DUE**

Tuesday, May 4, 2021- individual zoom meetings scheduled.

Thursday, May 6, 2021- individual zoom meetings scheduled.

