This course is designed to introduce students from multiple disciplines to the fundamental characteristics of health care systems and key factors in their performance; the organization, financing, and delivery of services in the U.S. health care system as a whole and many key sectors; critical management and policy challenges of cost containment, quality improvement, and reduction of disparities in health care and health outcomes; and the process of public policy development and analysis of options for health system improvement.

The course is open to all graduate students and to undergraduate students with instructor permission. No prior knowledge is assumed.

3 credits, Monday and Wednesday 1:15-2:30 PM

Lectures: Room 1345, Health Sciences Learning Center (HSLC)  
Breakout discussions in assigned rooms

Thomas Oliver, Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences, troliver@wisc.edu

Gordon Ridley, Adjunct Professor Emeritus, Department of Population Health Sciences, gtridley81@gmail.com

Wednesdays 9-11 AM or by appointment (760C WARF)  
Generally available before or after class (HSLC Atrium)

Interactive lectures, video, web-based materials, breakout discussion sessions, group project and presentation

All required course readings and other materials are available as PDF files or links on the Learn@UW course website.

If there is any reason that may interfere with your ability to complete the requirements of this course or to participate in the activities described in this syllabus, contact the course instructor, your advisor, the program advisor, or the program director. Appropriate actions are facilitated by timely requests. Reasonable requests for appropriate academic adjustments will be granted and all requests are held in confidence.
Course Objectives, Requirements, and Evaluation

Course Objectives
The specific objectives of the course are:

- To understand important concepts and measures for evaluating the performance of health systems
- To develop knowledge of sectors within the health care system
- To identify key management and policy issues in contemporary health systems
- To analyze strategies for health system improvement through public policy
- To improve skills in written and oral analysis

Requirements
Take-home essays 60%
Health policy analysis project 40%

Take-home Essays
Throughout the course, students will write eight two-page essays to apply important concepts regarding health systems and to analyze policy and management challenges in improving health system performance. The essays will be based on course lectures, readings, and online materials, as well as topics discussed in breakout sessions. Essay questions will be posted and completed essays will be due on scheduled dates via submission to the Learn@UW dropbox.

Health Policy Analysis Project
Students will work in groups (3-4 people) to examine a significant problem in contemporary health systems and potential governmental responses to the problem. Each group will select a problem and conduct a careful evaluation of the probable impact and feasibility of alternative policy options. Based on their group work, students will prepare an 8-10 page memorandum individually or as a group that presents their analysis and recommends a preferred option for health system improvement. The group will then present its analysis and recommendations during one of the concluding sessions of the course. The project includes the following products and due dates:

4 March List of group members and selected topic
18 March Problem definition and potential policy alternatives
5 April Preliminary outline and bibliography (including relevant course readings)
   The preliminary outline should include:
   • Problem definition (updated as necessary)
   • Selected alternatives and rationale
   • Selected criteria for policy choice
   • Key evidence and sources for each of the above
7-8 April Group meetings with course instructors to review preliminary outline and bibliography for policy analysis memorandum
19 April    Detailed outline and complete draft of policy analysis memorandum

21-22 April Group meetings with course instructors to review draft policy analysis memorandum

2 May or 4 May Final policy analysis presentation

6 May     Final policy analysis memorandum

Criteria for Grading Written Assignments
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).

Class Participation
Regular attendance and participation in discussion are necessary to understand the broad range of material to be covered in the course. The value of the course will depend on the preparation of participants and their willingness to exchange ideas and critique the arguments presented in lectures, readings and breakout sessions.

If you miss a breakout session, you will be required to submit detailed written responses to the questions assigned for that session.

We are fortunate to have a large number of distinguished experts who offer us their time and high-level experience in health systems, management, and policy. We expect regular attendance in the lecture sessions of the course as a way to demonstrate our appreciation for their participation and as an opportunity to engage them in questions and discussion. We reserve the right to adjust the course grade downward for noticeably poor attendance or upward for students who make positive contributions to those sessions by asking good questions of lecturers or providing informed answers to questions posed by the lecturers.
PHS 785—HEALTH SYSTEMS, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY
SPRING 2016

Course Schedule

MODULE 1: THE SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS

Study of the American health care system begins with an understanding of its distinctive history and characteristics. In essence, we try to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. system by “looking around” at other systems and by “looking in the mirror” at our own system. In so doing, we try to answer some basic questions: “How well are we doing?” and “How did we get here?” and “How can we do better?” This module describes how health systems are organized in other developed nations and how the U.S. compares both in its structure and performance. We also explain how our system, or any system, is a product of historical conditions and choices along with contemporary economic, social, and political forces. Finally, we present a critique of the current U.S. health care system and an overview of how the new federal health reform law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Affordable Care Act or ACA for short), might contribute toward health system improvement and better population health.

Session 1
A Systems Perspective on Health Care Reform
20 January
Tom Oliver

The U.S. Health Care System in Global Perspective
Tom Oliver

Session 2
Viewing of Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare
25 January

Session 3
Breakout Session #1
27 January

Session 4
Health Reform, U.S. Style: An Overview of the Affordable Care Act
1 February
Gordon Ridley

MODULE 2: SECTORS OF THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The health care system includes many sectors or subsystems, each with a distinctive patient population, types of service providers, sources and methods of financing, and regulations. In this module, our goal is to help students to become more familiar with some of the most interesting and important sectors in the U.S. health care system. Although most of these sectors might reasonably claim to require greater resources to adequately address patient and population needs (e.g., primary care, mental health, long-term care), we invite experts to ask whether existing personnel, organization, technology, and financial support are appropriately deployed and how we might reconfigure both training and service delivery to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and equity (or, at least one of those without making another worse). Historically, many sectors have developed and operated in relative isolation from one another (as “silos” of training and care); but new models of care are focused on more integrated systems that offer better continuity of care for the patient, greater emphasis on disease...
prevention, and both better satisfaction and health outcomes. We begin this module with a roundtable discussion of current and future health workforce needs and the changing roles of various health professions within the U.S. health care system. We then offer expert perspectives and evidence about the state of affairs in a number of health care sectors, including key problems and potential solutions. We take a brief detour in the middle of the module to introduce the key steps in policy analysis to help you and your group members get started with the task of identifying and assessing options for health system improvement.

**Session 5**
**3 February**
**Roundtable on Health Professions and Workforce Training**
Barbara Duerst, Director of Public Health Training, Pop. Health Sciences
Connie Kraus, Professor, UW School of Pharmacy
Elizabeth Petty, Sr. Assoc. Dean, UW School of Medicine & Public Health
Barbara Pinekenstein, Professor, UW School of Nursing
Virginia Snyder, Director, UW Physician Assistant Program
Lisa Steinkamp, Director, UW Physical Therapy Program

**4 February**
**Essay Assignment #1 posted**

**Session 6**
**8 February**
**Primary Health Care**
Valerie Gilchrist
Professor and Chair, Department of Family Medicine

**Session 7**
**10 February**
**Breakout Session #2**

**11 February**
**Essay Assignment #1 due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox**

**Session 8**
**15 February**
**Academic Health Centers and Biomedical Research**
Robert Golden
Dean, UW School of Medicine and Public Health

**Session 9**
**17 February**
**Hospitals and Health Care Systems**
Donna Katen-Bahensky
CEO Emeritus, UW Hospital and Clinics

**Session 10**
**22 February**
**Pharmaceuticals and Health Care**
Gordon Ridley
Julie Chang
Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine

**Session 11**
**24 February**
**Breakout Session #3**

**Session 12**
**29 February**
**Analyzing Policy Options for Health System Improvement**
Tom Oliver

**Session 13**
**2 March**
**Mental Health Care**
Ronald Diamond
Professor, Department of Psychiatry
3 March  Essay Assignment #2 posted

4 March  Policy analysis group members and selected topic due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox

Session 14  Long-term Care and Chronic Care Management
7 March  Barbara Bowers
          Associate Dean for Research, UW School of Nursing

Session 15  Integrative Medicine
9 March  David Rakel
          Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine
          Director, UW Health Integrative Medicine Program

10 March  Essay Assignment #2 due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox

Session 16  Breakout Session #4
14 March

MODULE 3: SYSTEMWIDE CHALLENGES IN HEALTH CARE FINANCING AND DELIVERY

What are the basic challenges that confront health professionals, managers, and policy makers in every sector of the health care system? In this module, we will return to the core dimensions of health system performance—effectiveness, efficiency, and equity—and begin to think more deeply about the sources of our problems and potential solutions that typically transcend one sector or another. Why are prices for health services in the U.S. so high, why is there so much variation in the volume and cost of care even within the U.S., and how are those things connected to how we pay for health care? Who gets what kind of health insurance coverage, and why? How can we improve the quality of health care without spending even more money in the process? Why aren’t the most effective and efficient treatments rapidly adopted across the health care system? How can we ensure that, even when people have nominal access to health care, there are not wide differences in the care they receive and impact on their health status? Throughout this module, we will learn to apply basic concepts of access, quality and costs to the health care system as a whole and pinpoint areas in the system where better design, economic incentives, professional communication, and organizational commitment to provide patient-centered care (including treating food and housing as medicine) might dramatically improve system performance.

Session 17  Economic Analysis and Health Care Costs
16 March  David Vanness
          Associate Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences

18 March  Problem definition and potential policy alternatives for policy analysis are due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox

19-27 March  SPRING BREAK

Session 18  Private Insurance and Integrated Health Systems
28 March  Terry Bolz
          CEO, Unity Health Plan
Given the many challenges we face in the organization, financing, and delivery of health services, why is it so difficult to take serious action to address them? In this module, we examine the process of health policy development—agenda setting, policy choice, and implementation. The goal is to better understand when and why opportunities for health system improvement through public policy arise, and the key factors in whether a promising idea will survive, die, or be rendered unrecognizable by its original sponsors. We will explain why government usually responds to problems—even big problems—with incremental policy change or sometimes no action at all. Most policy change, big or small, takes time—often many years and many only loosely connected steps—to come to fruition. Through three case studies—the Affordable Care Act (a package of dozens of new policies), mental health parity, and development of a population health management strategy for UW Health—we will explore the perceived problems, the key actors inside and outside of government, different plausible solutions, and critical factors in policy design, adoption, and implementation.
Session 25  
20 April  
Breakout Session #6

21-22 April  
Group meetings with course instructors to review draft policy analysis memorandum

Session 26  
25 April  
Case Study of Health Policy Development: Mental Health Parity  
Linda Reivitz  
Professor Emeritus, UW School of Nursing

Session 27  
27 April  
Implementing Health Care Reform: Integrating Personal Health Services with Population Health Management  
Stephanie Berkson  
Vice President, Population Health, UW Health

28 April  
Essay Assignment #4 posted

Session 28  
2 May  
Presentations of Policy Analysis Projects

Session 29  
4 May  
Presentations of Policy Analysis Projects

6 May  
Policy analysis memorandum due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox

11 May  
Essay Assignment #4 due via submission to Learn@UW dropbox