

Sociology of Health Care
Sociology 331-001

Fall 2009
W 5:00-7:40
Bolton 84

Professor A. L. Greer
Office Bolton 712
Office hours: W 3:30-4:30
 Th 3:00-4:00
Telephone O: 229-6944
 H: 351-1617
Email: agreer@uwm.edu
(responses on W & Th)

Course overview

In twentieth century America, illness is a complex affair. In seeking help, individuals and families confront a bewildering array of professional workers and health care organizations. They experience technological miracles and endure crushing burdens. The health care system is itself undergoing tumultuous transformation. Economic and political changes have profoundly affected the experience of patients and health care professionals. Over the semester, we will seek to bring some order to this complexity considering 1) medical care, and its difficulties, as experienced by those who use it; 2) the goals and means of professionals who comprise the work force; 3) the organizational framework in which this work now takes place; 4) health care problems and possible solutions. It is obviously a dynamic moment for health care reform: this course will attempt to put some critical structure into the ongoing debate. Our course will involve a combination of readings, invited speakers.

Required reading: Maggie Mahar, *Money-Driven Medicine*, New York: Collins, 2006.
Students will also find materials at D21 and on Electronic Reserve

Class Participation: Weekly class sessions for this course will include discussions of the assigned reading material. Therefore, it is essential that you come to class each week well prepared. This means, obviously, that you *must* do the reading beforehand. Informed discussion of the material is one of the most important components of this class. Participation in the class will be facilitated in two principal ways.

- *Presentations of readings:* Students will share responsibilities for presenting the readings each week. A majority of classes will be organized as follows: Upon arrival at the class, students will meet in small groups to agree the high points of assigned readings and questions that the group will introduce for discussion. The small groups will also share and report to the class on highlights of the health reform debate that now occupies our national attention. Presentations of material from personal searches of material *must* adopt a critical (thoughtful, analytic) perspective regarding the data used, the argument made and the acceptability of conclusions in light of the data and argument. (See 9/9 and handout)

- *Reaction pieces:* Group presentations will be based on brief reaction papers that each student will have prepared before the class. For each reading (both assigned reading and popular sources), students will prepare a paragraph that highlights main points of the reading, including critical reaction, and comments or questions that can be used for class discussion. In reviewing popular reportage, you should pay particular attention to the vantage points from which issues, themes, or questions which are raised. Most weeks there will be two reaction pieces—one for course readings and one for items from the national debate. Each component should be approximately one half page (single-spaced) in length—for a total of one page each week. These are due at the end of each class session and will not be accepted later.

- *Grading*

There are a total of 22 assignments. You must hand in at least 16 divided between text reaction and commentary on sources found in the public debate. These may not be handed in late. These are considered contributions, however, to a work group product and the combined effort of the group as presented in class will constitute 50% of final grade. Other class participation (based on having also completed the reading) will contribute 25% and individual written work reviewed at the end of the semester evaluated at 25%.

Course Schedule

9/2:

Discussion: Issues and stakeholders in health care debate:

Work group formation

9/9 The Transformation of American Health Care

Reading

Mahar, Intro (8 pages) and chapter 1 (p 1-29) 29 pages [total 37 pages]

Assignments:

Search newspapers, magazines, newsletters, blogs for news stories and commentaries on current health care debate. Choose most interesting for class discussion

Due: One-half page summarizing and reacting to highlights reading assignment.

Due: News highlights: one half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion.

For analysis of news item or commentary, consider the following (refer also to handout)

What group is being discussed?

Does it appeal to self-interest of good of society?

Who is speaking for or against?

What arguments or evidence are presented?

Does it appeal to rationality (economic analysis) or emotion (fear, prejudice)?

Does it present a solution?

Who would implement the solution?

State in what way, if any, your news item is informed by this week's readings (or those of previous weeks).

9/15 Workshop at library: Instructor Ms. Mary Boulanger
Scheduled for 5pm in room E159 on the first floor East wing of the Golda Meir Library building.

Assignment: Before the class, complete the tutorial at:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/courses/searchpath/choice.html>

9/23 The Uninsured in Wisconsin Historically and Today

Speaker : Paula Lucey, RN, MSN

Ms Lucey Ms. Lucey is one of Wisconsin's leading advocates for urban health and special health care needs of the poor. She is the immediate past director the Director of Health and Human Services for Milwaukee County where she helped develop and Milwaukee County's General Assistance Medical Program, a safety net of medical care to over 25,000 Milwaukee County residents. Currently she is chairperson of The Medical College of Wisconsin's Consortium on Public and Community Health which oversees the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment.

Reading: [D2L]: Gregory Weiss, "Uninsured in America" and "Young, Sick, and Part-Time: The Vulnerability of Youth and the New American Job Market" (Chapters 27 and 28 in Peter Conrad, *The Sociology of Health and Illness*, Worth Publishers, 8th edition, pages 337-355)

Due: One-half page summarizing and reacting reading assignment.

Due: News highlights: one half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion. State how you revised your search and reading strategies using lessons from Library session on public sources.

9/30: The Marketplace for Health Care

Read: Mahar, Chapter 2, "The Cost of Competition," pages 3-80

Due: One-half page summarizing and reacting to reading assignment.

Due: News highlights: one half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion.

10/7 Transformation of Hospitals in the 20th century

Assignment: Mahar., Chapter 3: For-profit Hospitals, pages 80-138

Due: One-half page summary of reading assignment.

Due: One half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion.

10/14 Back to the Future: Medical Care in America

Speaker: T. Michael Bolger, JD.
President and CEO
Medical College of Wisconsin

In addition to heading the medical college, Mr. Bolger is one of our community's most active contributors to nonprofit action in a wide variety of areas. He is past chair of the Association of Academic Health Centers, a national organization composed of over 100 academic medical centers that is dedicated to advancing health professions education, biomedical and health services research, and health care delivery.

Readings: Atul Gawande, "The Cost Conundrum" [Electronic reserve]

Due: One page summary of Gawande's main point(s) with discussion question.

10/21: Not for Profit Hospitals

Reading: Mahar, Chapter 4, "Not-for-Profit Hospitals" pages, 139-154

Due: One-half page summary of reading assignment.

Due: One half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion.

10/28: Do other countries offer useful models?

View: Michael Moore's *Sicko*

Prepare one page summarizing and reacting to film.

11/4: What is the "best care"?

Reading: Mahar, Chapter 5, "When More Care is not Better Care" p.1
55-198

Due: One-half page summarizing and reacting to reading assignment.

Due: News highlights: one half page summary of a reform issue with critique and thoughtful question for discussion.

11/11: The Costs of Late Care

Reading: Mahar, Chapter 6, "Too Little Too Late: The Costs of Rationing Care," pages 198-224.

Due: One page summary of *Sicko* and One-half page highlights of chapter 6 with question for discussion.

One page summary of personally selected news item or commentary including question for class discussion.

11/18: Doing Less and Doing it Right

Reading: Mahar, Chapter 7, Doing Less and Doing it Right

Due: One page summary of highlights of Chapter 7 with question for discussion.

One page summary of personally selected news item or commentary including question for class discussion.

11/25: Behind the scenes: Device and drug manufacturers

Reading: Mahar, Chapter 8, “Device and Drug Makers, and the FDA”, pages 325-347.
and A.Gawande, “On Fighting” from *Better* [Electronic reserve]

Due: One page summary of highlights of Chapter 7 with question for discussion.

One page summary of personally selected news item or commentary including question for class discussion.

12/2: Preventive Care, Wellness, and Community Care

Reading: A. Gawande, “On Washing Hands’ and “The Mop-Up”

Due: One half page summary of Gawande essays

Due: One page summary of personally selected news item or commentary including question for class discussion.

12/9: Where we are now?

Reading: Mahar, Postscript, “Everyone out of the Pool,” pages 325-347.

Due: One page: Your recommendations for national health policy and question for discussion.

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is:

<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

Students with Disabilities. Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACtr.pdf>

Religious Observances. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm

Students called to active Military Duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following:

http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

Incompletes. You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf

Discriminatory Conduct (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf

Academic Misconduct. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>

Complaint Procedures. Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S49.7.htm

Grade Appeal Procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. Procedures for student grade appeal can be found at:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm

Final Examination Policy. Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S22.htm

Book Royalties. In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2009