



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

# **HPM 600**

## **Introduction to the U.S. Health System**

(Credit Hours: 3)

*Department of Health Policy and Management*  
Gillings School of Global Public Health

Spring 2019 Syllabus  
Online Course

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## **Course Overview**

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This course provides you with an overview of the U.S. health system. Through a variety of resources, you will explore the organization, financing, management, resources, and performance of the current U.S. health system. For each of these topics, you will analyze relevant sections of the Affordable Care Act and discuss current events in the health field. At the end of the course, you will have developed your skills in evaluating health policies, comparing health systems, and discussing the causes and effects of current health events.

## **Course Learning Objectives and ASPH Competencies**

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In 2006, the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) identified core competencies for the master of public health degree in graduate schools and programs of public health. The following table describes both the primary learning objectives for HPM 600 and how these learning objectives map to the ASPH competencies in the Health Policy and Management domain.

*Course Learning Objective*

*ASPH Competencies*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To understand and describe the current organization of the U.S. health system, including the public health sector and private health sector and delivery system.                      | Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the US.<br><br>Describe the legal and ethical bases for public health and health services.                      |
| 2 | To understand and describe the financing of health services.  | Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the US.   |
| 3 | To understand and describe how the U.S. health system is managed, including legislation, regulation, organizational governance and management, and professional ethics.               | Discuss the policy process for improving the health of populations<br><br>Describe the legal and ethical bases for public health and health services.   |
| 4 | To understand and describe the resources required to deliver health services, including medical technology, pharmaceuticals, health information technology, and the health workforce. | Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the US.   |
| 5 | To understand how to evaluate and describe the performance of the U.S. health system in terms of cost, quality, and access.   | Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the US.<br><br>Apply quality and performance improvement concepts to address organizational performance issues. |
| 6 | To compare and contrast the U.S. health system with health systems in other wealthy, industrialized countries.  | Apply systems thinking for resolving organizational problems.   |
| 7 | To analyze, discuss, and debate health issues.  | Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.  |

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | To introduce students to key sources of credible, accurate, and current information in the field of health policy and management. | Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.  |
| 9 | To understand and apply basic financial concepts in a public health context.  | To apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives. |

## Resources

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### *Website*

In this course we will be using the Sakai course management system. You may access Sakai at <https://sakai.unc.edu>.

If this is your first time taking a course here at UNC-CH, you will need to obtain a login and password, in order to log in to Sakai. Here at UNC-CH we call logins “ONYENS” (Only Name You’ll Ever Need). Information about obtaining an ONYEN can be found at <http://onyen.unc.edu/>.

All course-related communications will be sent to your official UNC e-mail address (as listed in Sakai). It is your responsibility to check your UNC e-mail address regularly. If you do not receive any e-mails from the instructor within the first week of class, please contact the instructor.

### *Text*

The main text for this course is **Jonas & Kovner’s Health Care Delivery in the United States, 11<sup>th</sup> edition. Kovner, Knickman Eds. (2015 Springer Publishing)**. Please note that the 11<sup>th</sup> edition is a substantially revised and updated edition, meaning that earlier editions of the textbook will not suffice for the course. **The text can be viewed [electronically for free](#) through UNC Health Sciences Library.**

### *Articles, Websites, and Other Resources*

In addition to the textbook, HPM 600 uses a broad variety of resources that include journal articles, news articles, websites, podcasts, documentary films, and slide presentations. Each of these resources will be linked directly from the module in which it is used. Some of these resources, such as journal articles, will require logging in with an ONYEN.

# Requirements and Expectations

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## *Course Structure*

This is an online course. ***Weekly online lecture sessions will be held Friday mornings from 10-11am. These sessions are meant to provide students with an overview of the module and an opportunity to engage directly with the teaching team and other students. Attendance will not be taken during these lectures. The lectures will be recorded, and recordings made available Friday afternoons.*** While you can review the material in your own time, there are specific due dates for course deliverables which you must meet to receive credit for the course.

The course is composed of six modules.

## *Modules*

1. Welcome to HPM 600 and Overview of the US Health Care System
2. Public Health and the Organization of Health Services
3. Financing of Health Services
4. Organization and Delivery of Health Care
5. Policy and the Courts in the US Health System
6. Cost, Access, and Quality and Comparative Health Systems

**Modules 1, 2, 5, and 6 will last two weeks in length. Modules 3, and 4 are designed to be approximately three weeks.**

All modules are set up in the same way. Each module includes the following:

- A narrative that is designed to introduce each resource, highlight important information, and help make connections between the various resources
- Assignments, including (a) reading check quiz, (b) analysis questions, and (c) discussion forums. The assignments are explained in detail below.

## **Evaluation Methods**

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### *Grade Components*

| Component          | % of Grade |
|--------------------|------------|
| Reading Checks     | 30%        |
| Analysis Questions | 50%        |
| Discussion Forums  | 20%        |

## *Evaluation Criteria*

As a student in HPM 600, you will be expected to complete the following course requirements:

### **Reading Checks**

The reading check is a multiple-choice quiz designed to test your basic knowledge and understanding of the course content delivered in each module.

The 10 multiple choice questions asked on the reading check will be generated randomly from a pool of questions for each module. After you have submitted the reading check, you will get a score report that will tell you how many of the questions you got right, and which ones were wrong.

**You may reference course materials while taking the reading check; however, you must work independently and answer the questions on your own.**

### **Analysis Questions**

Analysis questions are designed to test both your understanding and your ability to apply, analyze and integrate the course content in each module and across modules. There are two types of analysis questions:

- 10-point questions: The 10-point questions focus on the course content within each module and require no additional research. **Your response to these questions should be around 100-300 words total.** We reserve the right to take off points for questions that are significantly under or significantly over this length.
- 20-point questions: The 20-point questions explore and examine the potential effects of the Affordable Care Act or other major pieces of health policy legislation. These questions require you to conduct additional research. To help you with your research, we have prepared (and posted on Sakai) a list of helpful health reform resources.

**Your response to these questions should be between 400-800 words and include at least one citation from a source other than your assigned course readings.** We reserve the right to take off points for questions that are significantly under or significantly over this length.

You may discuss the analysis questions with your classmates; however, you must prepare and submit your responses on your own. When submitting your responses, please note the names of any other students with whom you have collaborated at the bottom of your response. ***Failure to do so may constitute a violation of the Honor Code.***

You can upload your answers to the analysis questions in a Word document directly on Sakai in the Analysis Questions tab. Please **DO NOT** upload documents in .PDF format as it makes it difficult for us to grade and comment. If you are unable to upload your assignment to Sakai or are uncertain whether your assignment has been uploaded, you should e-mail your assignment to your TA in time to meet the deadline.

Additional information about grading and expectations for the analysis questions is available in the Syllabus and Course Information tab on Sakai.

### **Forums**

Discussion forums are designed to give you an opportunity to analyze, discuss, and debate current events and important topics in the field of health policy and management. For the first discussion (Module 1) you will introduce yourself to the class, answer a question, and comment on another student's response (a total of three posts). For Modules 2-6, you will post **TWICE** to the discussion forum of your choice.

The online discussion forums are held via the Forums tab of Sakai. There are four forum topic areas, each of which will have a new resource and opportunity for discussion in modules 2-6. These discussion areas are:

- Policy and Politics
- Disability and Aging
- Determinants and Disparities
- Technology in Medicine

You can stay with the same forum topic area for the duration of the course, or switch between them based on your interest. For modules 2-6 you will post twice to the same forum topic for each module. The instructor and TAs will help moderate the discussions and will also participate.

*A quick word about the discussion forums --- these are a particularly wonderful part of this course. In any given semester, we have students ranging from undergraduates, to graduate students, to seasoned professionals, including health care providers, administrators, and so forth. Previous cohorts have expressed that the forum postings provide a tremendous avenue for the students to share both their experience and their questions, and to learn from one another. (Your instructor has similarly learned a great deal from reading the posts – and I will do my best to join and highlight key points from the discussions each week!) Please take the time to read the posts of some of your classmates – to gain their perspectives and engage with the material more fully.*

You are required to post at least **twice in the same forum topic** during each module:

- One post should be an original post, which may include your initial reaction to the discussion topic or some other original reflection related to the prompt.
- Your second post should include a response to one or more of your classmates' comments. This allows us to create a conversation within the forums, rather than simply reading 30-some unrelated streams.

There will be a few live discussion forums available during the semester. This is another opportunity for students to interact and respond to the course materials. ***Students are required to participate in at least one live forum during the semester.*** To participate the first post should be a question or some other original reflection related to the topic/materials. The second post can be

your attendance to the live forum OR a response to one or more of your classmates' comments. Some live forums will feature experts in health services research. They will be online and available to answer questions. Additional details about the live forums will be posted to the Sakai site as they become available.

You will receive full credit for two or more posts, half credit for one post, and zero credit for no posts by the due date. If you post late to a forum you will receive 70% of the original grade. If you post twice to two different forums you will lose a point.

The quality of your posts is important as it has a significant effect on the overall quality of your group's discussion. The teaching team has the option to give partial credit or zero credit if the quality of a post is poor (e.g. simply agreeing with another group member, but not adding additional analysis or insight). There is no absolute length requirement, but posts of less than 100 words are seldom sufficient; many students post in the 200-500-word range. A well-considered 100-word post can be just as informative as a rambling 500-word post. ***You must note your sources if you include information or ideas from sources not used in class.***

Because the health system touches many parts of our lives and is often highly political, sometimes discussion topics may be sensitive or controversial. All perspectives are welcome in this course, and constructive discussion is encouraged. However, please remember to frame your posts respectfully, to differentiate between personal experience and a researched fact, and to assume good intentions of the person on the other side of the screen. If you are not comfortable with discussing a certain topic, choose another discussion forum for other upcoming modules. If you notice abusive or inappropriate discussions, please notify the instructor or a TA.

## Course Policies & Procedures

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### Writing Skills

This class is writing intensive and writing quality is important. Strong written communication skills are critical in both academia and the workplace. Your responses to assignments must be well-organized, clear, concise, free from grammatical errors, original, and correctly cited. Students who have questions about their writing, or who want to improve their writing are encouraged to contact the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>) which has many excellent resources to help you with your writing.

### Procedure for Appealing a Score on an Assignment

If you feel you have received an incorrect score on an assignment, you are welcome to submit a formal appeal to your grader, cc'ing the instructor within one week of receiving the graded assignment. ***Questions regarding any grades will not be addressed after one week of receiving the grade.*** Your appeal must be sent in writing (e-mail) and include the following:

- Clearly describe the assignment/question you are appealing.
- Include your response to the assignment/question.
- Include any feedback provided by your TA on the assignment/question.

- Describe why you believe your response deserves more credit.

### **Late Work Policy**

As a general rule, the overall flexibility of the course requirements (particularly in that you can work ahead if need be) should allow most of you to complete the modules in a timely fashion even when balancing work and family with your class schedule.

Except in the most extenuating circumstances, assignments received within a week after the due date will be graded and given 70% of the grade they would originally have received.

***Assignments received more than a week after the due date will not be graded and the student will receive no credit.***

Students in need of extensions due to unforeseen outside circumstances should contact their TA or the course instructor as soon as possible, preferably in advance of the due date. We recognize that there are times when a compassionate waiver of the late work penalty is appropriate, so please let us know if you are experiencing difficulties.

Late work is determined by Sakai's internal clock, rather than the clock on the student's computer or any other source. While Sakai will accept late submissions, such admissions are marked as "LATE" and therefore subject to the penalty (even if assignments are submitted one minute late), so we recommend that you submit your assignments early in order to avoid missing the cutoff. If you have difficulty uploading to Sakai, you should e-mail your document to your grader as soon as possible.

### **Disability Services and Accommodations/Universal Design Policy**

UNC-CH supports all reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or a pregnancy complication resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the UNC Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (ARS), <http://accessibility.unc.edu>; phone 919-962-8300 or email [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu). Students must document/register their need for accommodations with ARS before any accommodations can be implemented.

The teaching team of HPM 600 is committed to the principles of Universal Design: namely, that the course will be usable to the greatest extent possible by people with and without disabilities. However, if you require additional modifications to the course material or assignments due to a disability and/or special learning needs, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Evaluation**

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#### **Grading Scale**

**H:** Completion of course with a total score of 92% or greater

**P:** Completion of course with a total score of 75% -91.9%

**L:** Completion of course with a total score of 60% -74.9%

F: Students who achieve less than 60% in their course work will receive an F grade. Students who do not submit at least 50% of the course deliverables will receive an F, unless they withdraw from the course before the withdrawal period ends. Please read your program policies for grading and withdrawal policies or speak to your program registrar and be aware of the withdrawal periods. *Final course grades are rounded up if .5 or above, e.g. a final course grade of 89.5 will receive an A-, a final course grade of 89.49 will receive a B+.*

Each semester a small number of advanced undergraduate students are required or permitted to take this course. For these students final grades will be calculated as follows.

|              |    |             |    |
|--------------|----|-------------|----|
| 94 or above: | A  | 73 to 76.9: | C  |
| 90 to 93.9:  | A- | 70 to 72.9: | C- |
| 87 to 89.9:  | B+ | 67 to 69.9: | D+ |
| 83 to 86.9:  | B  | 63 to 67.9: | D  |
| 80 to 82.9:  | B- | 60 to 62.9: | D- |
| 77 to 79.9:  | C+ | Below 60:   | F  |

## UNC Honor Code

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**The principles of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship govern the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University as they have during the long life of this institution.** Your acceptance of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Student Conduct and a respect for this most significant Carolina tradition. Your reward is in the practice of these principles.

Your participation in this course comes with the expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

If you have any questions about your responsibility or the responsibility of faculty members under the Honor Code, please consult with someone in either the Office of the Student Attorney General (966-4084) or the Office of the Dean of Students (966-4042).

Students are expected to read "The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance" (<http://instrument.unc.edu>) and "Identifying Plagiarism" (<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism>)

Among other things, the honor code essentially requires that your work be your own, and that ideas or words that are not yours are acknowledged and appropriately cited. **For this course this means:**

1. You may discuss the analysis questions with your classmates; however, you must prepare and submit your responses independently. When submitting your responses, you must

note the names of any other students with whom you have collaborated at the bottom of your response. It should be evident that responses are based on independent thought. Failure to do so could result in an Honor Code violation.

2. You must prepare your discussion posts independently.
3. **Extensive verbatim text (e.g. transcripts from a tutorial; multiple sentences of direct excerpt from a reading) should not be submitted as your response to an assignment. With proper citations, this may not be a violation of the honor code; however, you would not be demonstrating your understanding of the material.**
4. **Submitting an assignment that contains verbatim text without quotation marks or citation is considered plagiarism.**
5. If you use non-course materials to help prepare a response, for example when preparing your response to an analysis question or discussion, you must cite your sources.
6. **Assignments found to be in violation of the Honor Code, whether in whole or in part, will not receive credit and the instructor will refer the case to the Honor Court.**
7. Every Analysis Question submission requires you to check an Honor Code pledge stating that you have neither given nor received aid on the assignment. This text is built into the Sakai coding for the honor pledge - for the purposes of this course, it will be understood to mean “no undisclosed aid.” That is, you are certifying that you have noted in your document the names of any other students with whom you have collaborated.

If you are unclear on any aspect of the Honor Code, citation standards, or how they would apply to this course, please get in touch with the instructor immediately. It is much easier to clear up confusion before a violation occurs, and confusion about the rules is not an excuse for violations.

If a suspected violation occurs, ***the instructor will report it to the Honor Court first and contact the student second.*** This policy protects the student because it ensures that the case is considered by an impartial jury of their peers. It also protects the instructor from having to evaluate different mitigating factors that may explain the violation, which could lead to unequal treatment of students. Referring suspected violations to the Honor Court is the best way to guarantee that the rights and interests of all parties are respected.

*After you finish reading the UNC plagiarism tutorial assigned in Module 1, take the self-check quiz. If you get the answers correct, a certificate will appear that certifies that you have finished the tutorial. Take a screen shot of the completion certificate, and upload it to the “Plagiarism and Citing Sources” assignment under the Analysis Question tab. The certificate must include your score and name. Failure to complete this quiz will result in the loss of one point from your first analysis question grade.*

## UNC Online Class Policy

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1. By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the Acceptable Use of online resources. Please consult the Acceptable Use Policy (<http://help.unc.edu/1672>) on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette

and privacy protection.

2. As part of this course you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC Chapel Hill Information Security Policies ([http://its.unc.edu/ITS/about\\_its/its\\_policies/index.htm](http://its.unc.edu/ITS/about_its/its_policies/index.htm)) when participating in online classes.
3. When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the Terms and Conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC Chapel Hill.
4. When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

## **Recognizing, Valuing and Encouraging Diversity**

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The importance of diversity is recognized in the mission statement of HPM. In the classroom, diversity *strengthens* the products, *enriches* the learning, and *broadens* the perspectives of all in the class. Diversity requires an atmosphere of inclusion and tolerance, which oftentimes challenges our own closely-held ideas, as well as our personal comfort zones. The results, however, create a sense of community and promote excellence in the learning environment. This class will follow principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

Diversity includes consideration of: (1) life experiences, including type, variety, uniqueness, duration, personal values, political viewpoints, and intensity; and (2) factors related to “diversity of presence,” including, among others, age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, family educational attainment, disability, gender, geographic origin, maturity, race, religion, sexual orientation, social position, and veteran status.

## **Course Evaluation**

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HPM participates in the UNC-CH's online course evaluation system, enabled at the end of the semester by Scantron Class Climate. Your responses will be anonymous, with feedback provided in the aggregate. Open-ended comments will be shared with instructors, but not identified with individual students. Your participation in course evaluation is an expectation, since providing constructive feedback is a professional obligation. Feedback is critical, moreover, to improving the quality of our courses, as well as for instructor assessment.

If you would like to provide feedback at any point during the semester, either to the instructor or to one of the TAs, please feel free to do so at any time.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### How can I contact my grader or the instructor?

The best way to contact the grader and the instructor is by e-mail. Contact information is available on the first page of this syllabus and in the Syllabus and Course Information tab on Sakai. If your question needs more in-depth discussion than e-mail permits, members of the teaching team are also available to meet by phone, Zoom/Skype, or in person. ***Do not attempt to e-mail us by replying to Announcement notifications – these are sent from a no-reply e-mail address and we do not receive anything you send to that address.***

### What should I do if I have a question regarding the course content or an assignment?

- 1) Check in the Course Information tab on Sakai to see if there is an answer to your question in one of the documents contained there.
- 2) E-mail your grader. You may be able to resolve your questions via e-mail or set up a time to meet.
- 3) E-mail the instructor.

### What should I do if something is wrong with my computer or Sakai?

- If the problem is with Sakai and/or the course site itself:
  1. E-mail the Instructor as soon as possible with as much detailed information as possible.
- If you are experiencing a general computer problem:
  1. Call 919-962-HELP 24 hours 7 days a week for help.
  2. Be sure to also let your instructor or TA know you are having technical issues.

### Where can I look to find out my course grade?

At the end of each semester, you may check your grades on <http://connectcarolina.unc.edu/> Login to the site using your ONYEN and password. Then, click the "Go" button next to grades for the semester you want to view. If your grade is not posted within a week of the end of the semester, you can always view the Sakai gradebook to find out your unofficial grade.

### How do I drop this course?

From time to time, students find it necessary to drop this course. There are students from many different programs enrolled in this course. I recommend that if you want to drop the course, you contact the person who registered you for the course to learn about the proper procedures for dropping the course within your program. Depending on when you choose to drop the course, you may or may not receive a full or partial refund of your tuition. For more information on the specific date regarding the drop process, see the registration calendar at <http://regweb.unc.edu/calendars/>.

### **What if it's too late to drop the course?**

Check in with the instructor and your registrar if you think you will not be able to finish the course on time. You may be able to take an incomplete.

### **What if I am having a problem with my grader?**

If you have any concerns with the performance of your TA, please contact the instructor.

### **Words to the Wise**

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- The discussion forums on Sakai are somewhat finicky and will sometimes destroy posts or respond strangely to formatting. We recommend that you compose your posts in a minimally-formatted text editor (such as Notepad) and paste them into Sakai, rather than risk losing your work. If you compose your posts in Word, remember to use the Paste from Word tool or your post will have a lot of excess formatting notation in it. If you forget to use the Paste from Word tool, or if you remember and this happens anyway (sometimes a problem with newer versions of Word), you can edit your post and clean up the formatting.
- If you need help, please do not hesitate to ask the TAs or the instructor for assistance. Campus librarians are also available to help you locate information for this course. The following links from the UNC libraries help distance learning students utilize the resources provided by UNC libraries [Main Library Distance Education Help](#) and [Health Science Library Distance Education site](#)
- Should unforeseen events or life/work commitments occur during the semester which will impact your coursework, please let your instructor or TA know as soon as possible. We try our best to accommodate students with legitimate conflicts, but the choice to accept late work or assign appropriate penalties is up to the discretion of the instructor/TAs.