CH 188-03

Too Big to Fail?: Hospitals and the Changing Landscape of Health Care Provision in America

Tufts University
Spring 2018

Tuesdays, 1:30pm – 4:00pm
574 Boston Avenue, Room 316

Instructor: Alecia McGregor
alecia.mcgregor@tufts.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2pm – 3:30pm
574 Boston Ave, Room 208J

Course Description
The 2008 government bailout of big banks sparked an ongoing debate over whether we are privileging the profits of “Wall Street” over the needs of "Main Street." A similar discourse exists around the configuration of health care provision in America. In this seminar, we will trace the evolution of the hospital as a community-based institution with a social mission to its increasingly common location as part of large, integrated hospital systems that operate as business enterprises. We will explore questions such as: How has hospital care in the United States evolved over the last century? How have federal and state public policies (including the Affordable Care Act) influenced the frequency of hospital mergers, reconfigurations and closures? How does the arrangement of hospital systems affect access to acute care locally and nationally, in rural and in urban areas? What role do smaller non-hospital entities, such as ambulatory surgical care centers and community health centers play in providing care? What implications do hospital business decisions have on equity of access across race, class and place?

Course Objectives
Over the course of the semester, we will:

- Trace the social, economic and technological evolution of the U.S. hospital over the last 150 years
- Examine the role of social, political, and economic forces in shaping the organization of contemporary hospital care
- Develop skills to clearly and rigorously explain the causes and consequences of hospital reconfigurations from a multidisciplinary lens and using different mediums.
Optional Texts


Assignments & Grading

**Participation (25%)**: Class discussions are an integral part of the course and all students are expected and encouraged to participate. **Each week**, students will submit a brief (1 to 2 paragraph) discussion post to the Trunk Forum highlighting one or two main points from the week’s readings. In your posts, highlight what you feel are the most compelling points for discussion for the upcoming seminar. **Responses are due Monday nights by 11:59pm**. You may skip one discussion post (of your choice) during the course of the semester.

**Op-Ed (20%)**: Students will write a 700 word (max) newspaper Op-Ed on a topic to be announced.

**Literature Review (25%)**: A 10 - 12 page review of the research literature on a topic of your choice.

**Video Project (30%)**: In groups, students will create a 6 - 10 minute video, documenting the transformation of a specific aspect hospital care. Include a 1 page précis that also summarizes your contribution to the group project.

**Grading Policy**
All assignments will be given a letter grade on the A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc scale. Throughout the semester, any assignment received after the deadline will receive a reduction by one grade for each day late. For example, an A- paper submitted one day late will receive a B-. **Final assignments will not be accepted after the deadline.**
Office Hours
If for any reason, you would prefer to discuss an issue or theme one-on-one, please don’t hesitate to visit during office hours. My office hours are held on Thursdays from 2pm to 3:30pm in 574 Boston Ave, Suite 208J.

I look forward to getting to know all of you this semester!

Resources
Please consider the Tufts Digital Design Studio on the third floor of Tisch Library a great resource as you prepare your video projects. They have cameras, equipment, a recording studio and green screen. Schedule appointments for studio space in advance!

Week 1 (1/23): Introduction: Hospital Care in America

Assigned Readings
PART I- HISTORY

Week 2 (1/30):  Almshouses and Asylums: The Charitable Roots of Hospitals

Assigned Readings


Week 3 (2/6):   Visit to MGH Russell Museum of Medical History and Innovation

Assigned Readings

Boston Globe. March 1, 2016. "MGH Continues to Grapple with Overcrowding"


“INHALATION OF ETHER IN SURGERY.” The Lancet
The Anglo American, a Journal of Literature, News, Politics, the Drama, Fine Arts, Etc. (1843-1847)Mar 6, 1847; 8, 20; American Periodicals


Week 4 (2/13):  Separate but Equal is Inherently Unequal: The Legacy of Segregation in Hospital Care

Assigned Readings


Guest Speaker: Patrick Collins, Tufts Public Relations. How to write a successful Op-Ed Article.

Week 5 (2/20): Contemporary Shifts in Hospital Care

Assigned Readings
Kaiser Family Foundation. Hospitals by Ownership Type.” http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/hospitals-by-ownership/

Week 6 (2/27): Week 6: Hospital Payments and Pricing – A Primer

Assigned Readings
**Week 7 (3/6): Hospital Closings and Hospital Desertification**

**Assigned Readings**


**FILM: Big Chartiy**

*Op-Ed Article Due this Week*

**Week 8 (3/13): The Affordable Care Act and Hospitals**

**Assigned Readings**


Week 9 (3/20): “The Urge to Merge”: A Closer Look at Hospital Consolidations

Assigned Readings
http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2006/rwjf12056
“Merger Watch: Protecting Patients’ Rights When Hospitals Merge.”
http://www.mergerwatch.org/

3/17-3/26: NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (3/27): The Teaching Hospital: Benefits and Concerns

Assigned Readings
Week 11 (4/3): Safety Net Hospitals: Past and Present

In-Class Film: Hospital (1970) Frederick Wiseman

*Literature Review Due this Week*
*No Discussion Post*

Week 12 (4/10): The Extinction of the Hospital? Ambulatory Surgical Centers and Other non-hospital actors

Assigned Readings
http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9471/index1.html

Week 13 (4/17): The Spatial Arrangement of Hospitals and Access to Acute Care

Assigned Readings
“Do Patients Hospitalised in High-Minority Hospitals Experience More Diversion and


**Week 13 (4/24): Indispensable or Obsolete? The Future of the Hospital**

**Assigned Readings**
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/05/realestate/commercial/repurposing-closed-hospitals-as-for-profit-medical-malls.html

*Final Video Project due during Final Exam Period*