CH 188-03

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

Tufts University
Spring 2016

Wednesdays, 1:30pm – 4:00pm
Aidekman Arts Center, Room 013

Instructor: Alecia McGregor
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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1pm – 2:30pm
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 multiple mediums
Required Texts


Optional


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 Tuesday nights by 11:59pm.

Op-Ed (20%): Students will write a 700 word (max) newspaper Op-Ed on an assigned topic related to changes taking place in the hospital sector.

Literature Review (25%): A 7 - 8 page review of the research literature on a topic of your choice.

Video Project (30%): In groups, students will create a short 10 – 15 minute video, documenting the transformation of a specific aspect hospital care. Include a 3 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 1pm to 2:30pm 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 (1/25): Introduction: Hospital Care in America

 Assigned Readings
Week 2 (2/01): Almshouses and Asylums: The Charitable Roots of Hospitals

Assigned Readings

Week 3 (2/08): Early Twentieth Century Hospitals

Assigned Readings

Week 4 (2/15): Contemporary Shifts in Hospital Care

Assigned Readings
Horwitz, Jil R. “Making Profits and Providing Care: Comparing Nonprofit, For-Profit, and Government Hospitals.” Health Affairs 24, no. 3 (May 1, 2005): 790-801.
Kaiser Family Foundation. Hospitals by Ownership Type.”
http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/hospitals-by-ownership/
Week 5 (2/22): Hospital Payments and Pricing

Assigned Readings

*Op-Ed Workshop in Class.

Week 6 (3/01): Hospital Closings and Hospital Desertification

Guest Speaker: Alan Sager, Ph.D., Professor of Health Law, Policy and Management
Boston University School of Public Health

Assigned Readings

Week 7 (3/08): The Affordable Care Act and Hospitals

Assigned Readings

*Op-Ed Article Due

Week 8 (3/15): Medicare Value-based Purchasing for Hospitals

Guest Speaker: Meredith Rosenthal, Ph.D., Professor of Health Economics and Policy, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Assigned Readings
Week 9 (3/29): “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/

Submit idea for Final Short video Project

Week 10 (4/5): 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 11 (4/12): The Teaching Hospital: Benefits and Concerns

**Assigned Readings**

Week 12 (4/19): The Spatial Arrangement of Hospitals and Access to Acute Care

**Assigned Readings**

Week 13 (4/26): Looking to the Future: What’s Next for Hospitals?

**Assigned Readings**

**Final Project due May 2nd at 5pm**