

PUBH 763
Policy Issues in Health Outcomes and Quality of Care:
A Focus on Measurement in the Health Care System
Spring 2019
W 2:30p – 5:00p

Bondurant 2030

Professor:

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919-360-3882 (mobile – you may call or text but if the latter, please let me know who you are!)

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I am readily available by appointment!

The twin objectives of this course are

(1) to permit a deeper exploration of the politics and policy associated with the paradigms driving our thinking about the delivery of health care; especially in terms of reform, outcomes, quality, and effectiveness; and

(2) to focus tightly on **MEASUREMENT**. How are the data we need created, maintained, analyzed, and curated? You are getting superb training in the health system's current paradigms, as well as a very strong introduction to vital endeavors like critical appraisal and cost effectiveness. You've also had a first-rate exposure to statistical analysis.

But all these things – and indeed the entire system in which you will practice – are voracious for data. How do you build valid, reliable, usable data? All the careful analysis in the world won't advance our goal of building a much better health system if we have poor data, or if we use good data poorly.

What is the current application of quality of care, quality measurement, outcomes and outcomes measurement (including patient-reported outcomes measurement), performance improvement, comparative effectiveness, and their subsidiary manifestations, such as safety. How do these constructs drive – or fail to drive – health care, from the education of health care professionals right through to the delivery of care?

In this class, we are interested in understanding the foundations, enduring questions, and surrounding political and policy environment in which health care delivery proceeds. Quality of care, broadly defined, has a very long history, and the course will emphasize both the constants and the sweep of change over centuries and into the present.

The course is, thus, intended to provide you with a coherent conceptual framework for understanding the field, interpreting contemporary research and policy issues related to quality of care and outcomes as they arise in related coursework, and building broad policy analytic skills especially relevant to understanding health reform. Its most practical benefit, I hope, is that you will learn enough always to feel secure about building and using databases!

I. The University asks us to assure you are aware of our community's **diversity policy**:

Valuing Diversity

Promoting and valuing diversity in the classroom enriches learning and broadens everyone's perspectives. Inclusion and tolerance can lead to respect for others and their opinions and is critical to maximizing the

learning that occurs in this course. This may challenge our own closely held ideas and personal comfort zones. The results, however, create a sense of community and promote excellence in the learning environment.

Diversity includes consideration of (1) the variety of life experiences other have had, and (2) factors related to “diversity of presence”, including, among others, age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, disability, gender, geographic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social position.

This class follows principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (100 E. Franklin Street, Unit 110, CB #9170, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-9170 or (919) 966-3576) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University’s non-discrimination policies. <http://policies.unc.edu/policies/nondiscrim/>

II. Course Objectives

The conceptual and analytical framework that students may take from the course includes but is not limited to

- the origins, definitions, concepts, lexicons, theoretical foundations, and principal methods of these fields;
- broad approaches to and challenges of assessing patient outcomes, especially self-reported outcomes, including patient satisfaction and assessment of health system performance;
- the ability to evaluate whether data are “good,” and can support the uses to which they are being put; and
- an improved ability to analyze the likelihood that current quality and outcomes paradigms will contribute – or fail to contribute – to significant system reform.

The current political climate leaves us in greater uncertainty about health reform than we have ever been. We will try to arm ourselves with resources that help us understand what emerges from all this terrible uncertainty. So I welcome your thoughts about how we might change, add, or subtract things as we are working – I will also welcome interim feedback about how the topics meet your need for understanding.

III. Course Requirements

A. Student Responsibilities and Participation. Attendance in class meetings is expected, of course. Class sessions are largely group discussions, not solely didactic presentations. Good discussions require collegiality, active contribution to the creation of an environment of respectful, constructive conversations, a shared conceptual foundation. In other words, please complete the readings on each topic before that topic’s class session occurs, and please be prepared to engage in spirited but civil inquiry.

I will ask you to give me the dates on which you plan to submit your three required essays. , and ***you should submit your essays no later than 5pm on the day AFTER your topic date (e.g. if you choose the March 6 class/topic, your paper will be due to me by 5p on Thursday, 8 March).*** and your essays should reflect the topics to be discussed in class on the days you submit them. You may change a date/topic BEFOREHAND – but not

on the date you had originally said you'd submit an essay. I penalize late essays 10% of the grade they would have earned had they been submitted on time, unless circumstances beyond a student's control causes the lateness. Should emergency, one's own illness or the illness of a loved one, or some other unforeseen circumstance prevent you from completing an essay on time, I strongly encourage you to reach me as soon as possible, preferably before the class during which the essay is due. I handle these matters on a case-by-case basis as they arise, and I always want to accommodate you in a time of distress! We'll hope we don't have any of those this semester.

B. Honor Code and Permissible Collaboration. 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 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. Academic dishonesty includes even unwitting failures to cite the work and/or ideas of others, for the failure to attribute credit to the originator of a piece of work is theft of intellectual property. 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 (966-4041).

C. Assignments and Methods of Evaluation. The minimum course requirement for a grade of PASS is the completion of 3 (three) short critical essays on three different topics of your choice (short is considered to be 5 to 10 pages double-spaced, excluding bibliography, in 11-12 point font; references not included in text page limits). In addition, this course includes a final class project, the results of which the entire group will present on the last day of class, **April 24, 2019**. Please see the final assignment description in a handout on the Sakai site.

Essays:	20 points each,	60 points total
Final Class Project:		25 points
Participation		15 points

H: 90 or more points
P: 80-89 points
L: 70-79 points
F: fewer than 70 points

PLEASE review the resources I've provided on the course's Sakai site in "Assignments" and in "Writing Resources." I expect you to use the guidance in both places as you develop your own essays.

IV. Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings

1/09/19 First Day of Class: these are old questions – but sometimes they are asked in new ways!

The purpose of this class is to understand enduring questions of quality, safety, effectiveness, and outcomes in the broader context of health reform, and to consider how policy decisions affect our hope to improve quality, safety, effectiveness, and outcomes while making the growth in health care more rational and cost-effective -- reducing the cost of all this is also everyone's goal, but one of our objectives will be to think about how to deliver more care to more people at lower cost: possible? At all?

We won't go far into the semester before trying to summarize where the Affordable Care Act stands, including current controversies, as a way of thinking about how the ACA is seen as policy. Then we will trace

the Affordable Care Act's emphases on quality and outcomes back to the original ideas. I look forward to taking the journey with you! I

I'll ask you to take a look at the first day's readings, and in particular I ask you to think about some current and classic definitions. From the very beginning of what we might call the "modern age of medicine" we have asked the same kinds of questions about improving it. Note particularly the way Nightingale's and Codman's essays read -- all but for some antiquated language -- as if they could have been written today. I want to emphasize that I am continuing radically to change this course -- it is different in significant ways from what it was a couple of years ago -- and in some ways we can treat it as a work in progress -- I will welcome your continuing suggestions for doing things differently!

Because ACA implementation, and continuing debate about its very existence, is a moving target, please bear with me as we make changes and additions to the Sakai site and possibly to this syllabus as well.

1/16/19 NO CLASS TODAY:

I will be away at a meeting. BUT here is something I'd like you to do, and to report on in our next class: Create a "variable journal." This is what I would like you to do:

1. If you have already decided on a master's paper topic, use that topic.
2. If you're still refining your master's paper topic, think of another important question that interests you.
3. In either case, reflect on these three things:
 - a. WHAT do you need to measure in order to answer your question?
 - b. HOW can you measure what you need to measure?
 - c. WHAT limitations -- including time and money, or ethics, or the simple absence of some data -- might you encounter?
4. Please record your reflections on these 3 questions briefly and in any format you use to help you work. We'll treat this as the beginning of a kind of master's paper lab notebook. We will discuss them next week.

1/23/19 Class 2: The roots of the present paradigms: tracing the processes of including quality, effectiveness, outcomes, and effectiveness

FIRST, we will discuss your "lab notebooks:" what do you need to measure, and how might you measure it? THEN we will move into the history of quality, effectiveness, and outcomes measurement.

1/30/19 Class 3: The ACA so far: what is and is not happening

Today we're going to try hard to see where the ACA is now -- and that is no easy task. Please review the JHPPL articles called to your attention here in the syllabus (Kersh, Jacobs, Frankford) for historical grounding, and we'll spend time reviewing the latest resources at the excellent foundation, service, and consulting sites. I'm also giving you some Scotusblog entries -- we won't spend a lot of time on these but they do help you understand how the USSC has reasoned about different parts of the ACA in the past. I've added a VERY descriptive, not sufficiently analytical, paper I wrote for a political science meeting during the thick of the contraception controversies several years ago. I am also adding two very accessible discussions of the most recent court case, *Texas v. Azar*, (on appeal to 5th Circuit at this writing)

2/06/19 **Class 4: What is a Variable?**

2/07/19 **Class 5: Causal Inference**

2/13/19 **Class 6: The Logic of the Codex**



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**Happy Valentine's Day –
Today we have an excellent session with Ms. Mandy Gooch, from the Odum
Institute, presenting database creation and curation.**

We will spend the remainder of the class using examples of past HC&P students' database development as practical, hands-on examples of small databases.*

****Warmest thanks to Courtney Lee MD, Carrie Lee MD, Everett Young MS4, and Eleanor Saunders MS4***

You have learned an introduction to statistics, and some of you are learning “qualitative” or what I call “small N” methods – but what about the data on which you practice these skills? I hope and trust you'll carry this information about building, protecting, using, and storing databases through the rest of your career!

2/20/19 **Class 7: What does “Validated” mean?**

2/27/19 **Class 8: Drawing data from surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups**

3/06/19 **Class 9: What can we get from data gathered for other purposes?**

TODAY, class will begin in HSL 307, because we will be training in I2B2!

We can't do justice to THESE large topics any more than we can to surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, but we will get an introduction to the "back sides" of such databases. We'll start by learning how to use portals for chart data, and we will try also to explore what other major administrative claims databases look like.

3/13/19 **NO CLASS: Spring Break. Go Heels.**

3/27/19 Class 10: Triangulating data

Today we are fortunate to talk with Dr. Miriam Laugesen of Columbia University, author of the award-winning *Fixing Medical Prices*, on the challenge, exhilaration, and benefit of triangulating data from several sources in order to strength the richness and validity of findings.

4/3-4/10/19 TWO CLASSES, Classes 11 and 12: Coding (TWO classes)

We will go back to the various data examples we have encountered thus far and review how and why the investigators made the coding choices they did.

Special Exercise: come prepared to explain variables and values in your own research!

4/4/17/19 Class 13: What Meta-analysis can tell us about using and misusing Results

Now you are masters of data creation and analysis, we will look at old and new readings with a fresh eye on the quality of the data we encounter.

4/24/19 LAST CLASS: Your presentation of your educational portfolio!

I will bring treats and we will have a festive last class.