Course Description

The U.S. healthcare system is an enormously complex, trillion-dollar industry. It includes thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, specialized care facilities, independent practices and partnerships, web-based and IT supported service companies, managed care organizations, and major manufacturing corporations. Healthcare is the fastest growing component of many consulting practices and investment portfolios. In dollar terms, it accounts for almost 18% of GDP and is larger than the total economy of Italy. It continues to grow in size and complexity, complicating the long-standing problems of increasing costs, limited consumer access, and inconsistent quality. And, the historic health reform bill that was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court this year will have major implications for years to come. This tremendous dynamism is unmatched by any other industry and offers incredible opportunities for new business opportunities.

This course will provide an overview of the fast-evolving U.S. healthcare industry, the major players involved in the production and delivery of healthcare, and the key challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies, financing mechanisms, business models, and the political and regulatory developments engendered by the recent reform legislation.

Methods and Materials

All readings and cases are contained in the course pack. Additional readings and assignments will be handed out in class as needed. The course involves a mixture of lectures, case discussions and presentations by prominent guest speakers. The workload consists of class participation, case assignments, and a final project.

Requirements and Grading

Your grade in the course will be based on both your individual and group efforts and performance. I will try to assess your understanding of the concepts covered, your ability to integrate and apply them, and your contributions to the class's learning experience. To do this, I will weight the various activities in roughly the following manner:

- Class Participation: 25%
- Case Assignments: 35%
- Course Project: 40%
**Class Participation**
The assigned material should be read before class to facilitate comprehension and discussion of the material. If a case study is assigned for class, you should read the case thoroughly to understand fully the pertinent facts and the situations and issues raised, with particular focus on the questions that you will find on the course website. We will discuss and analyze the readings and the cases together in class.

It is important that you strive to be a vital contributor to class discussions. I will judge class participation on the extent to which you appear prepared, the relevance and depth of your comments, the degree to which you listen carefully and respond to your peers, and your willingness to take chances in order to further the educational experiences of others.

**Case Assignments**
There will be 5 written case assignments. You may discuss these in your groups (at most four students per group), but you must hand in your own individually written report. The reports will address specific questions that I will supply for each case and should be no more than 2 pages.

**Course Project**
The intention of the project is to allow you to apply (or expand on) the ideas you have learned in an area of special interest to you. Projects should be done in groups. Groups are to consist of no more than 4 students. Any exceptions must be approved in advance. All projects must be approved by me no later than the third meeting of the course. You will have the opportunity to do a summary presentation in class and turn in a copy of your full analysis (which can be in Powerpoint format) to me after getting feedback.

Here are some suggested generic types of projects you can consider:

**In-depth study of a health care issue** - The purpose of this type of project is to foster discussion about a current healthcare topic. The topic may be one in which you have a particular interest or an area that has been covered in class. In the case of the latter, be careful that your report is not duplicative of what we’ve read or discussed. The topic should be focused and some conclusions should be reached. Key facts and conclusions should be supported by your research into the topic. The format should consist of a problem statement, background information, discussion of the major issues based on your research and group discussions (try to present more than one side of the issue as appropriate), conclusions, and bibliography. Your conclusions should be specific recommendations on what you believe should be done about the problem area.

**Company report** - This should describe a health care organization that has or is attempting to do something innovative to improve either the cost or quality of health care. The report should describe the service concept, targeted market, competitive position, the main characteristics of its operations, and some indication of its success to date.

All projects should attempt to build on the material discussed in the course. All projects should include a literature review that is based on scholarly and industry articles relevant to the issue(s) under consideration. A good source for recent articles on a variety of major health policy and management issues is the journal *Health Affairs*. Please don't hesitate to ask me for help on anything relating to your project.