THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PUBHHMP 6611 – Health and Healthcare Services in the United States
3 credits – Fall Semester, 2025
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:45 – 2:05 pm
Cunz 160

Course Instructor
Jennifer Hefner, PhD, MPH, Health Services Management and Policy, University of Michigan, 2010
Cunz 200B, Ohio State University, College of Public Health
(614) 292-8350, Carmen inbox messages

Instructor's Office Hours
Tuesdays 11:30 – 12:30 pm

Faculty Feedback & Response Time:
The following gives you an idea of my intended availability during the course:
- **Grading:** You can generally expect feedback within 7 days.
- **E-mail:** I will reply to e-mails (sent via Carmen) within 24 hours on school days.

Course Description:
The course describes the major actors and institutions within the US healthcare system, and the key strategic, managerial, and financial issues facing industry executives and public policy-makers. To simplify the exposition of all this material, we focus on three major segments in the healthcare value chain:

1. Payers   (employers, government, consumers)
2. Providers   (hospitals, physicians, alternative care sites)
3. Producers   (biopharmaceutical firms, medtech)

The course also covers some of the major intermediaries that connect these segments: insurance companies, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), and wholesalers.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Describe the major players along the healthcare "value chain" (payers, providers, and producers), their interactions & divergent incentives
2. Discuss the major issues facing all stakeholders (in this country and all others): access, cost, and quality
3. Analyze the major strategies that stakeholders are using to address these issues as well as grow their businesses.

Text
Burns, Lawton Robert. The US Healthcare Ecosystem: Payers, Providers, Producers. McGraw Hill Professional, 2021.
https://search.library.osu.edu/permalink/01OHIOLINK_OSU/rr4vai/alma991085567388608507

Course Web Site
There is a Carmen site for this course: https://carmen.osu.edu. All course materials are available via Carmen.

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:
- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article for step-by-step instructions (https://admin.resources.osu.edu/buckeyepass/adding-a-device)
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the Duo Mobile application (https://admin.resources.osu.edu/buckeyepass/installing-the-duo-mobile-application) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

Class Format: How this course works
- **Mode of delivery:** In person
- **Credit hours and work expectations:** This is a **3-credit-hour course**. According to Ohio State policy (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct in-class instruction in addition to 6 hours of homework/active learning activities to receive a grade of (C) average.
- **Attendance and participation requirements:** In-person attendance is required

Course Technology
Technology skills needed for this course
- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)
- CarmenZoom virtual meetings (go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings)

Required equipment
- **Computer:** current Mac (Mac OSX) or PC (Windows 10+) with high-speed internet connection
- **Calculator:** Students should have access to a scientific calculator that can perform basic arithmetic, square roots, logarithms, and exponentiation.
- **Other:** a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

Optional equipment (for participation in optional live office hours and/or review sessions)
- **Webcam:** built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- **Microphone:** built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone

Required software
- **Microsoft 365 Copilot (formerly Office 365)**
  All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft 365 Copilot (formerly Office 365). Full instructions can be found at go.osu.edu/office365help.

Technology support
For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.
- **Self-Service and Chat support:** http://it.osu.edu/help
- **Phone:** 614-688-4357(HELP)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu

MHA Course Competencies Addressed

MHA #10: Health Care Issues and Trends—Explain important issues in health care, including circumstances causing major changes and reform in U.S. health care delivery.

MHA #11: Health Policy—Describe the public policy process related to health care, including the creation and implementation of policy and the political aspects of policy and analyze the impact on the delivery of health services.

MHA #13: Population Health—Use epidemiological, market, patient outcome, and organizational performance data to improve quality, and manage financial and other risks associated with defined populations.

MHA #19: Critical Thinking—Evaluate a situation, issue, or idea by understanding and challenging assumptions, considering competing points of view, and anticipating potential effects within and beyond the health care system.

MHA #20: Written Communication Skills—Write in a clear, logical manner and prepare effective business communications.

MHA #21: Verbal Communication Skills—Demonstrate effective oral communication and presentation skills.

MPH Foundational Knowledge Objectives Addressed

FKO #3: Explain the role of quantitative & qualitative methods & sciences in describing & assessing a population's health
FKO #6: Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge

Competencies & Objectives linked to Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to:

Learning Objectives	Competencies		
Objective	**MHA**	**PhD**	**MPH**
Discuss the relationship of health care and other determinants to individual and population health.	10		
Describe the major components of the health care system and their interrelationships.	10, 11, 20	7	
Assess the performance of the U.S. health care system compared to other health care systems.	19		
Examine new and emerging organizational delivery models and payment methods.	10, 13	7	6
Describe how values and ethics intersect with health care policy, in turn impacting access, costs, and quality.	17, 19, 20	7	3

MHA Program Competency Development and Assessment
The MHA curriculum has been developed to support students' development of MHA Program Competencies over our two-year curriculum, with each course designed to focus on a designated subset of competencies. Within each course, faculty will design assignments to support students' development of specified competencies, formally assess students' progress towards their attainment at the target level for the course (basic, intermediate, advanced), and provide feedback to students as to whether a competency has been "met" or "needs work" by the end of the course. Please note: while there is often a relationship between competency attainment and overall course grade, the purpose of the competency assessment is to provide students with feedback that can be used for future development and growth.

The table below summarizes the competencies that will be developed in this course, the activities/assignments that support students to develop this competency, and the measure that I will use to assess each students' attainment.

MHA Competency	Level	Assessment Measures	Criteria for meets

10	**Healthcare Issues and Trends**	I	Exam 1	B+ or better
11	**Health Policy**	B	Site Visit Reflections	B+ or better
13	**Population Health**	B	QTP avg. grade	B+ or better
19	**Critical Thinking**	B	Exam 2	B+ or better
20	**Written Communication Skills**	I	Site Visit Reflections	B+ or better
21	**Verbal Communication Skills**	I	Class Participation Grade	B+ or better
	MPH FKOs	**Level**	**Assessment Measures**	**Criteria for Meets**
3	**Quant/Qual Methods**	A	Site Visit Reflection #1, Analysis Criteria	B+ or better
6	**Assess Evidence**	A	Exam 2, Q #6	B+ or better

*B- basic skills, encompassing knowledge and comprehension of subject matter; I- intermediate skills, encompassing application to analyze a problem; A= advanced skills, encompassing ability to evaluate, judge, and synthesize information

Course Expectations

You can expect the professor to:
- Have passion for the material
- Be prepared for classes
- Be responsive to students learning needs
- To reply to Carmen inbox messages within 48 hours
- To assign work that adequately covers the material and meets the learning objectives of the course while adhering to the time expectations for a three-credit hour course

- To give exams that accurately reflect the material covered in class, readings, case assignments
- To evaluate students fairly and timely
- To notify students with adequate and appropriate time in the event of changes to the syllabus or assignment expectations.

Students are expected to:
- To be attentive and engaged in class
- To spend an adequate amount of time on course readings and out of class assignments
- To attend office hours when appropriate
- To be flexible to changes in the course syllabus
- To appropriately communicate with the professor regarding concerns or issues
- To be a responsible member of a positive learning community
- To uphold the highest academic integrity

Use of laptops/tablets will be allowed for purposes directly related to the course only. Cell phones should be turned off or on silent during class. If you require cell phone access for the course, please speak with the instructor outside of class.

Assignments/Assessments

15%   *Class Participation,* will entail engagement in warm-calling on individual students in-class, participation in small group and whole class discussions of questions related to the week's class content. Each student's level of participation will be evaluated based on the rubric available in the syllabus. There will be opportunities for participation in each class. Submission of each Pre-visit Site Summary Assignment linked to the professional development site visits will also be included in this grade (one letter grade reduction for >1 missing submission).

15%   *Three Site Visit Reflections,* weighted evenly. Each reflection will be in the Assignments section of Carmen with no due date, and each student is required to complete this assignment for 3 of the 6 site visits during the semester.

20%   *Questions to Ponder (QTPs), weighted evenly.* QTPs are posed at the end of each assigned textbook chapter. The Carmen page for each class session will indicate which QTPs students should answer and there will be a corresponding dated assignment page where students submit the QTP answers by midnight the day before each class.

25%   *First exam* will be in-class, closed book, and consist of a series of short answer questions (1-2 paragraphs) drawn from the textbook chapters, lecture slides, and class discussions. The date of the exam is noted in the syllabus and suggestions for focused study will be provided in class. The rubric for each exam question will be identical to the QTP rubric.

25%   *Second exam* format will be identical to the first. It will include short answer questions (1-2 paragraphs) focused on the content from the second half of the semester. The date of the exam is noted in the syllabus and a dated exam page in Carmen.

Assignment Detail

Class Participation: Due to the importance of class participation in student learning, this course relies heavily on student's active participation via warm calls in class. The topics are aligned with specific competencies. Active participation requires a classroom community conducive to learning. During each in-person class the instructor will pose questions to engage in active group discussions of the topic material and assigned cases using the think-pair-share model of group discussion. To encourage a positive learning environment conducive to active participation, participation in these discussions will be graded based on a rubric evaluating performance in four areas: 1) level of engagement, 2) listening skills, 3) preparation and 4) exhibiting classroom behavior supportive of a positive classroom environment.

The Participation grade will also include **Pre-Visit Site Summaries** corresponding to each of the first-year site visits. There will be a site visit preparation form that requires students to search for information about the organization and then draft two questions that could be asked during the virtual site visit. All students will complete this assignment for each site visit, regardless of planned attendance at the visit. During the in-person class the week before each visit the class will discuss the site and proposed questions and debrief on site visits the week after. At the end of the semester, more than one missing site summary will result in a one letter grade reduction in the Class Participation grade (10% deduction).

Site Visit Reflections (2-3 pages): These assignments will provide students with an opportunity to link their MHA first-year virtual site visits to topics we learn in class. Students will prepare a 2-page reflection for three of the site visits they attend. The format will be essay style following a series of prompts provided by the professor on the Assignment page. The Carmen Assignment page will include a scoring rubric outlining grading criteria and expectations. Each student will pick 3 of the 6 site visits to attend and write a reflection. Each reflection is due within 6 days of the site visit.

First and Second Exams: These exams will be in-class, closed book, and consist of a series of short answer questions (1-2 paragraphs) drawn from the textbook chapters, lecture slides, and class discussions. The date of each exam is noted in the syllabus and suggestions for focused study will be provided in class.

There will be no exam make-ups except those planned with the professor in advance of the testing day/time.

Questions to Ponder: QTPs are posed at the end of each assigned textbook chapter. The Carmen page for each class session will indicate which QTPs students should answer. The instructor will review the guidelines for QTP responses and there will be a dated

Carmen assignment page for each required submission. The format and content requirements of student QTP responses will be identical to the exam questions, thereby providing practice preparation for each exam.

Grading Scale

Assignment of letter final grades will be based on the following point (%) distribution:

A	=	94-100
A-	=	90-93
B+	=	87-89
B	=	84-86
B-	=	80-83
C+	=	77-79
C	=	74-77
C-	=	70-73
D+	=	67-69
D	=	64-67
D-	=	60-63
F	=	< 60

Late Assignment Policy

Late submission of an assignment will result in a one letter grade (10%) reduction in score for each day late, unless the student contacts the professor BEFORE the due date to request an extension.

In-class Discussion Participation Rubric:

	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	**Points**
Level of Engagement	Student proactively contributes to class by sharing current events, and/or asks questions more than once per class and/or works consistently on group project the entire time.	Student almost always proactively contributes to class by offering ideas, sharing current events and/or asks questions once per class and/or works on group project for most of the allotted time.	Student rarely contributes to class by offering ideas, sharing a current event, and asking questions and/or works on group project only some of the allotted time.	Student never contributes to class by offering ideas, sharing a current event, and asking questions and/or has trouble staying on task during group project time	
Listening Skills	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others. Student never speaks when their classmates or professor is speaking	Student usually listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student rarely speaks when their classmates or professor is speaking	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student speaks when their classmates or professor is speaking.	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student often interrupts when others speak. Student frequently speaks when their classmates or professor is speaking	
Preparation	Student is almost always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is usually prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is almost never prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	

Exhibiting classroom behavior supportive of a positive classroom environment	Student always contributes to a positive learning environment (Example: is rarely late to class, surfing the web, doing other work in class, or having side conversations)	Student usually contributes to a positive learning environment (Example: is almost never late to class, surfing the web, doing other work in class, having side conversations, making statements which are not conducive to a positive learning community)	At times the student contributes to a positive learning environment, and occasionally displays disruptive behavior during class (Example: On occasion: late to class, surfing the web, doing other work in class, or having side conversations)	Student almost always displays disruptive behavior during class. (Example; On a consistent bases student does one of the following: late to class, surfing the web, doing other work in class, or having side conversations	

Copyright Statement

This syllabus and all course materials (e.g., homework assignments, solution keys, course materials) are under copyright by the instructor and cannot be posted elsewhere without written permission.

Generative AI Policy

Given that the learning goals of this class, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools such as Copilot or ChatGPT, writers aids like Grammarly, or translation platforms such as Google Translate is not permitted in this course. Any use of GenAI tools for work in this class may therefore be considered a violation of Ohio State's Academic Integrity(opens in new window) policy and Code of Student Conduct(opens in new window) because the work is not your own. If I suspect that you have used GenAI on an assignment for this course, I will ask you to explain your process for completing the assignment in question. The unauthorized use of GenAI tools will result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct(opens in new window).

Office of Student Life: Disability Services

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Mental Health Services
As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Religious Beliefs or Practices Accommodations
Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office. (Policy: Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances)

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (B)). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

Grievances and Solving Problems

A student who encounters a problem related to his/her educational program has a variety of avenues available to seek resolution. According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, you may take your case to the department chairperson. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23, the CPH Graduate Student Handbook, and the CPH Undergraduate Student Handbook. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

Class	Date	Topic	Readings and Materials
unit		**Unit 1: Foundations of the Ecosystem**	
1	8/26 (Tu)	*Course Introduction*	Introductions and watch in class: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/the-healthcare-divide/
2	8/28 (Th)	*A Guide Through the Wilderness*	Course Textbook: Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 Watch NIH Social Inequalities in Health | 3 minutes 2 seconds
3	9/2 (Tu)	*What is a Healthcare System?*	Course Textbook: Chapter 3 Healthcare: is it a right or a luxury? | Tarik Sammour | 14 minutes
4	9/4 (Th)	*Population Health and Goals of Healthcare*	Course Textbook: Chapter 4 & Chapter 5 In class: Supplemental lecture on *Health Disparities and Health Equity*
5	9/9 (Tu)	*Rising Healthcare Costs*	Course Textbook: Chapter 6
6	9/11 (Th)	*Managing Quality*	Course Textbook: Chapter 7
		Unit 2: Provider Sectors in the Ecosystem	
7	9/16 (Tu)	*The Medical Profession*	Course Textbook: Chapter 9 Health Research & Educational Trust. (2015, July). Diversity in Health Care: Examples from the Field. Chicago, IL: Health Research & Educational Trust. *For in-class discussion In class: Supplemental lecture on *Problems in the Healthcare Workforce*
8	9/18 (Th)	*Primary Care: Physicians, Nurses, and Pharmacists*	Course Textbook: Chapter 10 Supplemental lecture on *Problems in the Healthcare Workforce, continued*
9	9/23 (Tu)	*Hospitals*	Course Textbook: Chapter 11 In class: Supplemental lecture on *Safety-Net Hospitals and Access to Care*

10	9/25 (Th)	*Hospital Diversification, Restructuring, and Integration*	Course Textbook: Chapter 12
11	9/30 (Tu)	*Organized Ambulatory Care*	Course Textbook: Chapter 13
12	10/2 (Th)	*Post-Acute Care and Long-term Care*	Course Textbook: Chapter 14
13	10/7 (Tu)	***Exam #1 review session***	**In-class guided review session**
14	10/9 (Th)	***Exam #1***	**Exam will be in-class**
		Unit 3: Payer Sectors in the Ecosystem	
15	10/14 (Tu)	*Employer-based Health Insurance*	Course Textbook: Chapter 15
	10/16 (Th)	***Fall Break, no class***	
16	10/21 (Tu)	*Contracting for Prescription Drug Benefits*	Course Textbook: Chapter 16
17	10/23 (Th)	*Private Health Insurance and Managed Care Organizations*	Course Textbook: Chapter 17
18	10/28 (Tu)	*Medicare*	Course Textbook: Chapter 18
19	10/30 (Th)	*Medicaid and the PPACA*	Course Textbook: Chapter 19
		Unit 4: Technology Sectors in the Ecosystem	
	11/4 (Tu)	**No Class**	Dr. Hefner attending APHA Annual Meeting (American Public Health Assoc.)

20	11/6 (Th)	*The Healthcare Technology Sectors*	Course Textbook: Chapter 20
	11/11 (Tu)	**No in person class, Veterans Day**	**Review for Exam #2**
21	11/13 (Th)	*The Pharmaceutical Sector*	Course Textbook: Chapter 21
22	11/18 (Tu)	*The Biotechnology Sector*	Course Textbook: Chapter 22
23	11/20 (Th)	*The MedTech Sector*	Course Textbook: Chapter 23
	11/25 (Tu)	**Thanksgiving Break – No Class**	
	11/27 (Th)	**Thanksgiving Break – No Class**	
24	12/2 (Tu)	*Healthcare Information Technology*	Course Textbook: Chapter 24
25	12/4 (Th)	***Exam #2***	**Exam will be in-class**
26	12/9 (Tu)	*Cookies and Conundrums: eat cookies and consider ethical decisions in healthcare administration.*	End of semester cookie party and guest lecturer *George Marshall, professor of health care ethics* Join a simulated hospital ethics committee to consider the ethics involved in human resource and budgeting decisions.