

Northwestern University – School of Continuing Studies
Masters in Medical Informatics
Med Inf 401 - American Healthcare System
Expanded Syllabus - Winter 2009
Synchronous sessions: Most Wednesdays, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. CT – see schedule

Instructor:

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Course Description:

Welcome to MED INF 401 – American Healthcare System

This course will serve as an introduction to elements of the American Health care system including the provider components, the financing of health care, the basic structure of public policy making and public health systems, comparative analysis of the American system to the health care systems of other countries, and the legal and regulatory framework within which the American health care system functions. In addition to the structural components of the system, the course will review some of the current issues within the American health care system including public health, preparedness, quality of health care, pay for performance, and consumerism.

Texts:

The primary text for the course will be Health Care Delivery in the United States, 9th Edition by Anthony R. Kovner, PhD and James R. Knickman, PhD, 2005 Springer Publishing Co., Inc.

Additional readings are assigned for certain sessions and can be found on the course website.

Student Goals:

Upon completing this course, the students will be able to:

- Articulate a working knowledge of key facts and issues of our health care system;
- Understand the perspectives and roles of each of the entities within the American health care system and how they view their roles within the system;
- Assess the core healthcare financing and quality improvement mechanisms used in the US;
- Develop a framework for understanding major health care issues.

Prerequisites:

There are no formal prerequisites for this course.

Online Activities and Class Projects:**Participation:**

- Discussion Board:

You are expected to contribute to the Discussion Board at least 2 or 3 times during each week. Discussion questions will be provided on several topics that are being covered during the week. You can also start your own threads on any topic related to the session. Please check the Board about every other day to read what your classmates and instructor will have posted and respond to those posts. You must post responses to each question and participate in the discussion several times each week. Discussion questions are meant to generate discussion among all students in the class – this is a key learning tool in online education. Do not wait until the end of the week to ‘catch up’ in your participation – failure to actively participate in the weekly discussion, at a substantive level, several times from the start to the end of each week will result in the loss of points for participation.

The discussions of each week’s topic or question(s) will start on Thursday morning of each week of the term, and will conclude on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. Upon the completion of each week’s discussion, the class will move on to the next week. Students are not responsible to back through prior discussion board questions to post responses or further discussion. Grade points are earned only by posting in the discussion of the current week.

Grading in the discussion Board is based on two factors:

1. The substance of the discussion input. Responses to questions should be supported by reference to the current and/or research literature. Some students provide links to articles or to videos. When doing so, please be sure to provide key points made by the author in your post – your classmates typically do not have time to read all of the articles that are posted.
2. The level of active participation as evidenced by the number and timing of posts (i.e. don’t wait until the last day in the week to participate)

- Synchronous Sessions:

These are meetings that you’ll have with your instructor and classmates and, possibly, a guest speaker, during most weeks of the course. These meetings will

begin with brief discussion of current healthcare topics as reported in the news, and continue with discussion and debate about whatever the session topic is that week. These sessions will be recorded and accessible if you have to miss the live meeting for any reason.

For these sessions, you will log onto Blackboard for instructions and required links and passwords. These instructions will be found on the announcements page of the course website.

Please set aside time on your calendar now for the synchronous sessions. If you must miss a session, please let the instructor know in advance, and if you know that you will miss more than one session, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. (Missing more than one synchronous session will cause a reduction in your grade of 10 percent for course participation)

- **Readings:**
There will be both assigned and optional readings each week. The assigned readings must be read before the synchronous portion of the session in order to fully participate in the session. Optional readings are just that – optional. They can be read at any time if you are interested in exploring a topic further.

Written assignments:

Please note due dates for each of the following assignments. Late submissions will result in a reduction in grade points of 10% for that assignment, or 1 point for assignments with less than 10 points. Submissions will not be accepted after 7 days following the assignment due date.

Term Project:

Students will work in small groups or individually to prepare a term paper that will be prepared and submitted in electronic format at the end of the term. If a student has an interest in a topic not shared by other students in the class, that student may work individually on the paper (however, the preference is that all projects be team-prepared). These papers are typically 15 to 25 pages in length, 12-point type, double-spaced, however, there is no length requirement or limit for the projects. In preparing the paper, the student will research the literature on the topic, summarize that research into a well organized paper using an outline that includes at least: (1) an introduction or background on the topic, (2) presentation and discussion of findings from the research, and (3) conclusions and/or recommendations.

There are several elements that must be completed in the term project:

1. Write the term paper. An outline will be submitted at about mid-course.

2. Provide one article on your topic to share with the class near the end of the term. The article must be posted on the Discussion Board no later than one week prior to your presentation.
3. Send to the course Teaching Assistant one question on your topic that can be posted to the Discussion Board for class discussion in the 9th and 10th week of class. The team or student will be responsible to lead the discussion board interaction.
4. Prepare your paper in presentation form and present it to the class during the assigned session at the end of the term. Each person in the team is required to present, and the team should save time at the end of the presentation for brief class discussion. PowerPoints or other media may be used in the presentation.
5. Time line for course project:
 - a. **Team member names** submitted in writing, or through the Discussion Board, by the end of the 3rd week of the course, **January 26th**. There will be a thread on the discussion board in which you can identify the topic in which you are interested, and/or you can respond to other student topics in which you share a similar interest. This will be a useful tool in which to organize your teams or to find that you would prefer to work individually.
 - b. The term paper **topic** will be submitted by the end of the 4th week of the course, **February 2nd** for instructor approval. Approval/comments will be provided by me generally within 3 days of submission.
 - c. A **one-page outline** will be submitted in writing by the end of the 5th class session, **February 9th**. Identify on the outline, each team member's content responsibility.
 - d. **The question for the discussion board and the article** for the class reading on your topic are due on **February 26th**.
 - e. The **final paper** is due on the last day of class, **March 10th**

Topics might be drawn from any of the areas below (or other of student's particular interest in the field):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure of a healthcare organization • Tax exempt status of healthcare organizations/community benefit • Electronic Health Records • Healthcare Reform • Pharmaceuticals • The Medical Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Transfer and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) • Healthcare for the uninsured/underinsured • Medical Malpractice • Workers Compensation • Ethical issues in financial management • Fraud and abuse
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive behavior in the clinical setting • HIE's • Issues of integration and interoperability in healthcare IT • Other healthcare IT issues • HIPAA/Privacy and Security • Health status and impact of financing mechanisms on the health status • Sarbanes/Oxley and its impact on healthcare financial reporting • Medicare Part A • Medicare Part B • Medicare Part C • Medicare Part D • Medicaid • SCHIP • Financing care for veterans • Balanced Budget Act of 1997 • Philanthropy in healthcare financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding • Medical Savings Accounts • Consumer driven health plans or High Deductible Health Plans • Certificate of need (CON) • P4P initiatives • Financing of long term care in nursing homes • Financing of rehabilitation services • Financing of home health care • Hospice care • Long term care insurance • Prospective payment, changes in it, and impact on providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RBRVS ○ DRGs • An ethics issue • Global issues in healthcare delivery • Health Reform
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Current topic report

Each student will select or be assigned a current topic or article on which to report to the class in sessions during approximately weeks 2 to 6 of the course. Each report will be no longer than 5 minutes and will cover key points about the topic or article. The report will be accompanied by a 2 to 3 page paper that will be posted for everyone in the class, and sent separately to the instructor through Gradebook for grading.

Healthcare in another country – summary

Each student will select/be assigned a country whose healthcare system will be briefly summarized (one to two pages), and posted on the Discussion Board for week 8 of the term. The assignment must be completed and posted by Feb. 23rd. During the 8th week synchronous session, each student will be asked to give a 3 to 5 minute summary of healthcare in his/her respective country prior to a discussion of global health.

Exam

An essay exam will be posted by February 19th to be completed by March 2nd.

Evaluation Method:

The final grade for the course will be based on the following activities. There will be a possibility for 100 points as outlined below. There will, also, be a grade reduction of 10 percent for late assignments, and assignments will not be accepted if submitted 7 days or more after the due date (except for unusual and approved circumstances).

Point grading:

- Class participation -30 points. *A grade will be posted for 1/3 or 10 of the points at after the 1st to 3rd weeks, the 4th to 6th weeks, and for the remaining 10 points at the end of the term.*
- Current topic report - 10 points
- Healthcare in another country - Summary – 10 points
- Term project - 25 points
 - *Outline – 5 points*
 - *Paper and Presentation – 20 points*
- Exam - 25 points

Letter grading:

- A = 95 – 100
- A- = 91 – 94
- B+ = 87 – 90
- B = 83 – 86
- B- = 79 – 82
- C = 75 – 78
- F = <74

Participation Assessment Guidelines for Discussion Board and Synchronous Sessions

- **Outstanding Contributor:**
Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are substantive, provide major insights, and help direct discussions. Student is eager

to volunteer, interacts and negotiates with other students, always goes beyond what is expected, and is always well-prepared.

- **Good Contributor:**
Contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive; provide good insights, and sometimes direction for the class. Student is attentive, responsive, and goes beyond what is required, if not always successfully. Is almost always well-prepared.
- **Adequate Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation, but waits to be called upon.
- **Non-Participant:** Says little or nothing in class and contributes minimally. There is little effort to participate; the responses are generally incorrect or reflect little preparation or willingness to participate in class or online discussions.
- **Unsatisfactory Contributor:**
Contributions in class or online reflect inadequate preparation, erratic oral and written performance. Contributes nothing to the class as a whole.

University Policy

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Northwestern University policy and equal access laws, we are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations you may require as a student with a disability. Request for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the quarter, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. For more information, visit <http://www.northwestern.edu/disability/>

Academic Integrity at Northwestern

Students are expected to comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please speak to me before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site, “How to Avoid Plagiarism” at <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others’ answers, providing information to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student’s paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment – at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply. For more information, visit http://www.scs.northwestern.edu/student/issues/academic_integrity.cfm

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of Northwestern University that no male or female member of the Northwestern community – students, faculty, administrators or staff – may sexually harass any other member of the community. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when: submission to such conduct is made or threatened to be made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened to be used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating what a reasonable person would sense as an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment. For more information, visit <http://www.northwestern.edu/sexual-harassment/policy/index.html>

Course Schedule:

Week 1: (Jan 6) The State of Healthcare Delivery in the U.S. and the Health of the U.S. Population

In this session we will cover the following topics:

- Introductions
- Health Status/Population Health
- Overall measures of the US healthcare sector such as expenditures on health care in the U.S. compared with other countries

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Recognize the key measures of health status in the US and the factors that influence health status
- Understand the scope, sources, and uses of healthcare spending in the US

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
Assigned Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapters 1 & 2 in Kovner & Knickman• Gawande, A., The Cost Conundrum: What a Texas Town can teach us about health care	Discussion Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce yourself in response to the first question in the Discussion Board.• Respond to the other questions in the Discussion Board• Discussion question:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Should the federal government undertake initiatives to modify health behaviors in the US? Why?	Synchronous Session: Wed., Jan. 6th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates. Consult the Announcements page for instructions on accessing the session. For the session, open the PPT slides and any articles that have been posted in the folder for the session. Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.

Week 2: (Jan 13) The Structure of Healthcare Delivery in the U.S.

In this session we will cover the following topics:

- Institutional providers of care and the care continuum
- Organization and structure of healthcare providers

By the end of this session you will understand:

- The major components of healthcare delivery in the US & the continuum of care
- The organizational structure of the “typical” healthcare system and hospital
- How physicians are related to the institutional providers of healthcare

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text: Chapters 7, 8, 9 Optional Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day, T: About Nursing Homes• “Trends in Nursing Facility Characteristics”, American Health Care Association Research Department (2007)	Discussion Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you believe non-profit hospitals should be tax exempt? Why?	Synchronous Session: Wed., Jan. 13th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates. Access any materials you think will be helpful during this time under “Readings & Resources” Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.

Week 3: (Jan. 20) The Healthcare Workforce

In this session we will cover the following topics:

- Physicians
- Nurses and other Clinicians
- The overall healthcare workforce

By the end of the session, you will:

- Understand more fully the role of physicians in healthcare delivery, the challenges facing physicians, and the drivers of change for practicing physicians
- The role of the allied health workforce, and the key factors influencing the supply of nurses and their professional practice
- Recognize the forces for change in the larger healthcare workforce

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Chapter 12 • Dwyer, J., What's Wrong with the Global Migration of Health Care Professionals, Oct. 2007 • Physician Demand (Health Leaders Fact File) 	<p>Discussion Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, if any, initiatives should be taken to expand the workforce of nurses and primary care practitioners? • Given the forecast of a lack of needed primary care physicians by 2020, how will healthcare delivery be re-shaped to meet the medical needs of the population? <p>Project teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team member names to be submitted by Jan. 26th 	<p>Synchronous Session Wed., Jan. 20th 7:00 to 9:00 CT</p> <p>Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates.</p> <p>Access any materials you think will be helpful during this time under "Readings & Resources"</p> <p>Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.</p>

Week 4: (Jan 27) The Financing of the American Health Care Delivery System

Class discussion will cover the following topics:

- Public funding sources: Federal and State governments
Medicare
Medicaid
- Private funding sources: Payers, Employers and Individuals
- The Uninsured/Underinsured
- Healthcare reform: Single payer system, universal coverage

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Understand the role and structure of the various payers in healthcare financing in the US

- Assess the impact of the uninsured and underinsured and challenges in providing them with access to care
- Understand the various approaches that are currently be debated in healthcare reform

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 3, 16, 17 • Based on the status of healthcare reform, an additional reading will be assigned. • Schoen, C.: How Many Are Underinsured? Trends Among US Adults, 2003 and 2007, June2008 • Oregon Health Plan <p>Optional Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Executive Summary “Losing Ground: Report from the Commonwealth Fund”, Aug 08 	<p>Discussion Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would a national health insurance program solve the healthcare financing issues in the US? If so, how? If not, why not? • The Federal Government is investing billions of dollars in the electronic health record? What should be done to make this the most effective investment possible? <p>Term Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit topics for term projects by Feb. 2nd. 	<p>Synchronous Session: Wed., Jan. 27th</p> <p>Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates.</p> <p>Access any materials you think will be helpful during this time under “Readings & Resources”</p> <p>Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.</p>

Week 5: (Feb. 3) The Quality of Health Care

Class discussion will cover the following topics:

- Data on the quality of care provided (variation in care, gaps in care)
- Managing information for quality
- Key players in the national quality landscape
- Hospital and health plan accreditation
- Complexities of measuring quality
- Understand the role of healthcare IT in quality improvement

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Assess the scope of the quality issues faced by healthcare
- Understand the spectrum of major quality initiatives implemented in healthcare
- Know how to access available quality information on healthcare providers

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 13, 14, 15 • Gawande, A., et al., Op-Ed Contributors, August 13, 2009. 10 Steps to Better Health Care. <i>New York Times</i> • An additional reading may be assigned <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E. S. Fisher & J.E. Wennberg, Healthcare Quality, Geographic Variations, and the Challenge of Supply-sensitive Care, <i>Perspectives in Biology and Medicine</i>, 46(1) 	<p>Discussion Board: Discuss the following, both before and after the synchronous session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the problem with variations in the cost and quality of healthcare delivery in the US? What should be done to reduce these variations? <p>Term Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a one-page outline of your term project by Feb. 9th. 	<p>Synchronous Session: Wed., Feb. 3rd 7:00 – 9:00 CT</p> <p>Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates.</p> <p>Access any materials you think will be helpful during this time under “Readings & Resources”</p> <p>Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.</p>

Week 6: (Feb. 10) Health Care Federal Legislation and Legal and Regulatory Issues

Class discussion will cover the following topics:

- The role of the Federal and State Governments
- Federal legislation: key players and processes
- Major legislation and regulations impacting healthcare

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Understand the role of the Federal and State Governments in healthcare
- Be aware of major federal legislation impacting healthcare delivery
- Have insight into the key issues related to reform of healthcare payment structures in the US

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 • DeBakey, M., The Role of Government 	<p>Discussion Board: Discuss the following, both before and after the synchronous session:</p>	<p>Synchronous Session: Wed., Feb. 10th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT</p>

<p>in Health Care: A Societal Issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Atwood, “Impact of Medical Apology Statutes and Policies” Journal of Nursing Law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What initiatives are underway to solve the problem of fraudulent and/or unintentional over-billing in this country? Are they working adequately? Should more/less be done to address the problem? 	<p>Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates.</p> <p>Access any materials you think will be helpful during this time under “Readings & Resources”</p> <p>Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.</p>
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Week 7: (Feb. 17) Public Health

In this session we will cover the following topics:

- Public health role and responsibilities
- Public health providers
- Population health concepts
- Healthy People 2010: goals and focus areas
- Influenza Pandemics and disaster preparedness

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Recognize the role of public health in the US and globally
- Grasp population health concepts
- Understand the major goals of public health
- Identify areas of integration of public health with private healthcare delivery in the US

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 4 & 10 Kovner and Knickman • Gostin et al., Public Health in America: The Future of Public Health: Vision, 	<p>Discussion Board: Discuss the following, both before and after the synchronous session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major goals and challenges for Public Health in the US? How should they 	<p>Synchronous Session: Wed., Feb. 17th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT</p> <p>Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates.</p> <p>Access any materials you</p>

Values, and Strategies	be addressed?	think will be helpful during this time under “Readings & Resources” Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment..
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Week 8: (Feb. 24) Global Health Issues

Class discussion will cover:

- Major elements and structures of healthcare delivery in other countries
- Models of health care financing in major countries around the world

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Understand the commonalities and differences between healthcare delivery in the US and in selected other countries around the globe.
- Be able to articulate key points about health care delivery systems in major countries.

Readings	Deliverables	Synchronous Meeting
Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 6 & 18 • Davis, K., Learning from High Performance Health Systems Around the Globe. Jan 2007 • Articles posted by project teams to help you prepare for their presentation 	Discussion Board: Discuss the following, both before and after the synchronous session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should US employers include coverage of medical procedures performed outside the US in employee health insurance plans? Why? Project Teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit one question on your project to the Discussion Board. • Post on the Discussion Board one article on 	Synchronous Session: Wed., Feb. 24th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT Join the online discussion with your instructor and classmates. Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.

	<p>your topic for the class to read in preparation for your presentation.</p> <p>Exam will be posted Feb. 19th. – to be completed by March 2nd.</p>	
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Week 9: (Mar. 2) The future of healthcare delivery in the US

Class discussion will cover:

- Issues and trends driving the future shape of healthcare delivery in the US

Upon completion of this session, you will:

- Form your individual perspective on how the future healthcare delivery system may be configured in the US
- Understand the development and role of the Medical Home concept in transforming healthcare delivery.

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medical Home: Disruptive Innovation for a New Primary Care Model – A report from Deloitte • Articles posted by project teams to help you prepare for their presentation 	<p>Discussion Board:</p> <p>Respond to the project teams’ question on the Discussion Board.</p> <p>Project presentations</p>	<p>NO Synchronous Session</p> <p>Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment..</p>

Week 10: (Mar. 10) Team presentations

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Synchronous Meeting</u>
<p>Required Readings:</p> <p>Articles posted by project teams to help you prepare</p>	<p>Discussion Board:</p> <p>Respond to the project teams’ question on the</p>	<p>Synchronous Session Wed. Mar. 10th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CT</p>

for their presentation	Discussion Board. Project presentations Project reports are due by midnight, March 10th.	Online Office hours: Meet online with your instructor to ask any questions you have about this session. Please contact the instructor for an appointment.
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