

Department of Politics
POL 357: Block 5, 2007/2008
Seminar: US Healthcare Policy

Instructor

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Office Hours: 9-5 M-F when we are not in class, appointments are best to have my undivided attention.

Course Description

This is a seminar course in U.S. health policy. The course begins by describing the basic machinery of policymaking and legal process that underpin the individual health care and public health systems in the United States. The course then turns to an exploration of many of the fundamental problems and contemporary issues in health policy in the United States. We will review the historic development of health policy in the U.S. and factors that affect future health policy initiatives including the basic elements underlying financing, organization, and delivery of healthcare services including Medicare, Medicaid, access to healthcare, and the relationship between the public and private sectors on health policy. Students will learn to think systematically and critically about these issues and the various methods available to public and private policymakers to improve the US healthcare system.

Course Prerequisite(s): POL 262 or 282 or permission from instructor.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To gain an understanding of the health policymaking process,
2. To be introduced to health care economics and financing and their relationship to health policymaking,
3. To gain an understanding of federal health insurance programs and their connection to access to health care, the uninsured, and health reform,
4. To gain an understanding of the basic legal concepts that underlie the health care and public health systems, including the legal rights and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the health care system and the extensive and complex role played by federal and state law in the protection of the public's health.
5. To learn to write a concise and effective policy analysis and improve students' analytic reasoning skills.
6. To discuss contemporary issues in health policy in an apolitical format.

Required Texts

Title	Author	Year
<i>Health Policy Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Approach</i>	McLaughlin & McLaughlin	2008
<i>Essentials of Health Policy and Law</i>	Joel Teitelbaum & Sara Wilensky	2007
<i>Policy Challenges in Modern Healthcare</i>	Ed. Mechanic, Rogut, Colby, and Knickman	2008

Supplemental Readings

Supplemental readings will be provided.

Methods of Instruction

This course will be a combination of lectures, case studies, student presentations, and class/small group discussion.

Methods of Evaluation

Percent of Grade

Methods of Evaluation	Percent of Grade
Class Preparation	10%
Case Studies – Presidential Platforms (3)	30%
Health Insurance Assignment	5%
Mid-term – 2 nd Wednesday	20%
Final Presentations	15%
Final Examination – 4 th Tuesday	20%
Extra Credit	5%

Grading Scale and Standards

The grading scale is as follows:

100-95%	A
91-94%	A-
86-90%	B+
82-85%	B
79-81%	B-
76-78%	C+
72-75%	C
69-71%	C-
66-68%	D+
60-65%	D-
59 or below	F

Late Work Policy

Assignments will be lowered by one letter grade per hour late. Case studies, exams, and class presentations are evaluated during class, so it is not possible to turn them in late.

Make-up Exams Policy

Exams must be taken at the listed date/time unless there is a major catastrophic event (I get to determine events defined as majorly catastrophic).

Attendance/Participation Policy

It is expected that students will be present, both mentally and physically, at each class meeting. You will be asked to leave if you are sleeping, because obviously you need to sleep more than you need to be in class. If your cell phone goes off during class and you are not awaiting an emergent call which you told me of prior to class, I will probably answer the phone for you. This is the same for text messaging. If you are ill, please contact me by e-mail.

Academic Integrity Statement

The College considers Cornell students to be responsible persons whose maturity will develop in a community which encourages free inquiry. The College expects the highest degree of personal integrity in all relationships. Any form of dishonesty is a violation of this spirit and of College rules.

A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

Dishonesty in academic work includes both cheating and plagiarism. If I judge that you have violated the College's policies on academic honesty, you may be charged with academic dishonesty and assigned an F either for the particular examination, paper, report, or project, or for the course. I will discuss this with you and will also notify you in writing of the charge and the penalty and will include a statement of the circumstances which precipitated the action. A copy of my letter along with a copy of the work thought to be dishonest shall be sent to the Registrar. The Registrar shall then advise the student in writing of the right to appeal. Within ten (10) days of notification, the student may appeal the charge and/or the penalty by submitting a letter to the Dean of the College requesting that he or she appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of three (3) faculty members, one of whom may be nominated by the student. The recommendation of this committee is advisory only and is not binding upon the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

Please let me know during the first three days of class if you need extra time for exams due to a disability that is on record with the Registrar. Or, if you need to sit in a certain location of the room to hear/see better, etc., please let me know immediately so we can make appropriate accommodations.

Adverse Weather/Class Cancellation Policy

Although Cornell rarely cancels class due to weather, I am currently six months pregnant, live in North Liberty, and it is January in Iowa. If class is canceled, I will e-mail the entire class at least 1 hour prior to the class meeting for the day. Hopefully by having afternoon class this will not be a problem. I will probably reschedule for the next morning if weather conditions are too poor for class.

Assignment Descriptions

Class Preparation (10%)

Students are expected to bring two discussion questions to class each day. Questions should be typed or legibly written on two separate pieces of paper or a note card with your initials somewhere on the paper. These questions will be placed in a basket and drawn from throughout the class period to lend to class discussion. The best questions will be selected as short answer and essay questions for the midterm and final exams. Extra credit can be received for extraordinary questions.

Case Studies – Presidential Platforms (3) (30%)

During the first three weeks of the course, students will spend one class period a week presenting a candidate's position on a contemporary health policy issue. These discussions are meant to be interesting and thought-provoking, and they will require you to look at issues from different political perspectives. Students will be randomly assigned to a Presidential candidate three days prior to the class discussion. On the day of the case presentation, the class will be divided into teams representing the different candidates. Each student will be responsible for a 4-5 page write-up of his/her Presidential candidate's view of the issue, using materials from the texts, supplemental readings, and additional outside sources to support this view. Each team will be responsible for discussing their candidate's perspective with the class.

Individual write ups should include, to the best of your ability given the available information:

- An overview of the current health policy status quo and a description of how your candidate's view on this issue is similar or dissimilar from the status quo.
- The candidate's policy perspective as supported through speeches, websites, interviews, voting records, etc.
- Your interpretation of the reasoning behind this perspective.
- Your interpretation of the potential effectiveness, sustainability, and/or possibility of this policy perspective.
- Describe the portion of the American public that will benefit from this policy perspective. How? Describe the portion that may be negatively affected? How?
- Your interpretation of the cost and health affect on the American public resulting from this policy perspective.

Health Insurance Assignment (5%)

Ask your parents or another friend/relative about their health insurance plan. What is their co-pay? What is their deductible? What type of a plan is it (single, single plus one, couple, family). How much do they pay per month for their plan? Does the plan cover dental, eyeglasses, infertility, prescriptions, chiropractic care? If so, to what extent are these things covered? Are there other unique things about their plan or is the plan pretty bare bones? Overall, do they think it is a "good" plan?

- 1) Write up your findings in a 2-3 page Word document addressing these questions and your overall impressions of the healthcare plan and what surprised you or was new to you regarding healthcare plans after talking to this person.

Midterm (20%)

The midterm will cover all readings and class discussions prior to the date of the test. Student discussion questions will be included as questions on the mid term. This is an in-class exam consisting of short answer and essay questions. No notes will be allowed. Students will have up to three hours to complete the exam.

Final Presentations (15%)

Students will orally present their final topics the final Monday and Tuesday of the block. Students are expected to use a Power Point format for presentations. Presentations must be held to ~25 minutes with another 5 minutes for questions. E-mail your presentation to me by 8:00am the morning of the presentations. Students will also write up two essay questions from their presentation as possibilities to be used in the final exam.

Your final presentation will discuss a health policy issue of interest to you. Presentations will:

1. Describe the health policy issue including historical development and present day description of the issue.
2. Describe the population affected by this policy.
3. Discuss the levels, branches, and institutions of government (federal, state, local) involved with making and implementing this policy.
4. Discuss the pros, cons, and health implications of this policy.
5. Discuss the political players trying to modify or influence this policy.
6. Describe how or if this policy should be modified and what needs to happen in order for the modification to occur to lead to a positive health outcome.

Presentation topics are due on Thursday, January 17th

A presentation outline is due on Wednesday, January 23rd

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be on the fourth Tuesday of the block. This exam will be cumulative from course readings, discussions, presidential platforms, and will include questions from students' presentations. The test will consist of short answer and essay questions. No notes will be allowed. Students will have up to three hours to complete the exam.

Course Outline

Monday, January 7

1:00pm

Topic: Course Overview and Introduction

Required readings for tomorrow:

- 1) EHPL Chapters 1, 2, and 3
- 2) PCMHC Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2
- 3) Healthcare Costs: A Primer (PDF)

Assignments: None

Tuesday, January 8

12:30pm

Topic: Conceptualizing US Health Policy

Required readings for tomorrow:

- 1) EHPL Chapters 4 and 5
- 2) PCMHC Chapter 3
- 3) Cornell Health Insurance Plan (PDF)
- 4) University of Iowa Graduate Student Plan (PDF)

- **Assignments:** Health Insurance Assignment

Wednesday, January 9

12:30pm

Topic: Understanding private health insurance and basic health econ in a policy context

Required readings for tomorrow:

- 1) EHPL Chapter 6 and 7
- 2) Medicare: A Primer (PDF)
- 3) Medicaid: A Primer (PDF)
- 4) Uninsured: A Primer (PDF)

Assignments: None

Thursday, January 10

12:30pm

Topic: Understanding government health insurance programs and the populations they serve

Required readings for tomorrow:

- 1) HPA Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4

Assignments: Presidential Platform #1 Write-Up/Discussion

1) Covering the uninsured, expanding health insurance coverage, merits of a single payer healthcare system (address one or more of these depending on how much you can find on your candidate)

Friday, January 11

12:30pm

Topic: Where are we, where do we want to be? And, Case Study #1 Discussions

Required readings for Monday:

- 1) HPA Chapters 5 & 6
- 2) Prospects for HC Reform (PDF)
- 3) New Architects for Health Reform (PDF)
- 4) Which Medical Conditions account for hc costs? (PDF)

Assignments: None

Monday, January 14	12:30pm
Topic: What are the Alternatives?	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) EHPL Chapter 8 & 9 2) Comas (PDF) 3) Physician-Assisted Dying (PDF) 4) Impaired Newborns (PDF) 	
Assignments: None	
Tuesday, January 15	12:30pm
Topic: Individual Rights and Mid-Term Exam Review	
Required readings: None	
Assignments: Study for Midterm	
Wednesday, January 16	12:30pm
Topic: MIDTERM	
Required Readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PCMHC Chapters 5, 8, 9 2) Key Facts: Race, Ethnicity, Medical Care (PDF) 	
Assignments: None	
Thursday, January 17	12:30pm
Topic: Health Inequalities and Disparities	
Required readings (skim):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Abstinence Education Evaluation (PDF) 2) Guidelines for Stem Cell Research (PDF) 	
Assignments: Presidential Platform #2 Write Up	
1) Stem cell research, abortion rights, sex education	
Friday, January 18	12:30pm
Topic: Health Policy and Ethics, Presidential Platform #2 Presentations	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PCMHC Chapters 10, 11 2) To Err is Human Exec Summary (PDF) 3) Why a Quality Chasm? (PDF) 	
Assignments: None	
Monday, January 21	12:30pm
Topic: Healthcare Quality and Medical Errors	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PCMHC Chapters 12 and 14 2) 20 year trends in physician workforce (PDF) 3) Nursing Shortage Redux (PDF) 4) Trends in Supply of PAs and NPs (PDF) 5) Physician Workforce Policy (PDF) 	
Assignments: None	

Tuesday, January 22	12:30pm
Topic: Health Policy and Healthcare Providers	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How much should MC pay for drugs? (PDF) 2) Medical Malpractice: Multiple Factors Contribute to Premium Increases (PDF) 3) Implications on Rising Malpractice Premiums on HC Access (PDF) 4) MEDPAC Physician Payment under Medicare Description (PDF) 5) MEDPAC 2007 Physician Payment Report (PDF) 	
Assignments: Presentation outline due Wednesday at 12:30pm	
Wednesday, January 23	12:30pm
Topic: Back to costs, medical malpractice reform	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) American Disabilities Act http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pubs/ada.htm 2) ADA Guide (PDF) 3) HPA Chapters 7, 8, 9 	
Assignments: None	
Thursday, January 24	12:30pm
Topic: Health Policy Analysis, American's With Disabilities Act, Draft 1 of papers will be returned.	
Required readings:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) HPA Chapters 10, 11, 12 	
Assignments: Presidential Platforms #3 Write Up/Discussion	
1) Medical malpractice litigation reform, health professions shortages/surpluses, Medicare/Medicaid funding to health providers	
Friday, January 25	9:00am
Topic: Health Policy Analysis, Presidential Platforms #2	
Assignments: Bring Questions for Amy Roloff!	
Friday, January 25	1:00pm (TBD)
Topic: Amy Roloff from "Little People Big World" to discuss Americans with Disabilities Act	
Assignments: Prepare presentations and two questions from your presentation as possibilities for the final exam. Send a copy of your power point to me by 8:00am the day of the presentation.	
Monday, January 28	9:00am
Topic: Presentations	
Monday, January 28	12:30pm
Topic: Presentations	
Tuesday, January 28	9:00am
Topic: Presentations	
Tuesday, January 28	12:30pm
Topic: Presentations	
Wednesday, January 29	9:00am
Topic: Final Exam	