



Course Syllabus

Public Health 281

HEALTH POLICY ANALYSIS

Spring 2006

Mondays, 6:10-9:00 pm

Ross Hall 104

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Office hours:

Professor Levi: Mondays, 3:30-5:30 pm or by appointment

Professor Wilensky: Thursdays, 3:00-5:00pm or by appointment

Course description: This course will provide instruction in the core elements of health policy analysis: problem definition; background; political, economic, and social landscape; development of policy options; and recommendations. It will also teach the written, graphic, and oral presentation skills associated with policy analysis. These skills will be taught in the context of three multi-week case study cycles of topical issues in federal health policy (plus two shorter cases) that will give students substantive knowledge of the federal policy making process and key issues in health policy. In the context of the discussion of the cases, in-depth historical background related to the policies addressed will be provided.

Prerequisite/Co-requisite: Policy Approaches to Public Health or Introduction to the US Health Care System

Course Learning Objectives/Competencies: Fundamental understanding of policy analysis; ability to perform a concise and effective written and oral policy analysis for various audiences. Focus will be on three current and complex policy issues: provision of health care to immigrants residing in the U.S., implementation of new cost-sharing options in the Medicaid program, and the role of surveillance in public health in an era of improved technology and information (e.g., electronic medical records and genomics). Two shorter cases will also be considered: one relating to pandemic influenza preparedness (to show the multiple levels of government policy making and implementation) and one relating to ethical dilemmas associated with rationing scarce resources, focusing on the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. Students should gain both a technical capacity for analysis and an understanding of the how the federal and state health policy making process works.

Code of Academic Integrity: Students are strongly encouraged to read the GW Code of Academic Integrity regarding plagiarism and cheating. This can be found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

Methods of evaluation:

Grading:

Three policy analyses: 20% each (total= 60%)

Oral presentation: 10%

Final exam: 20%

Class participation and in-class exercises: 10%

Written policy analyses: All students will prepare three full short policy analysis memos of five pages in length (double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point type, Times Roman or equivalent ONLY), one for each of the case studies covered in class. These analyses will be written from the perspective of a particular stakeholder concerned about the issue under discussion. They must follow the structure for such memos that will be taught in class. Specific parameters for the analysis (in terms of subject scope) will be provided in class.

Additional written exercises and group activities: This course places a high priority on learning to communicate in writing. On an occasional basis, students will be asked to perform in-class written exercises and group assignments. The purpose of these exercises will be to teach students to organize thoughts and translate them into writing quickly and effectively.

Oral presentations: At the beginning of the course, students will be asked to pick one of the cases to be the basis for an oral exercise. This will be conducted in the form of a mock

Public Health 281 Syllabus/Spring 2006

legislative hearing, where students will be told in advance the general issues they must prepare for and then will be asked to respond orally to difficult questions.

Final exam: This will be a take-home exam, distributed at the final class and due one week later. This will be an open-book, time-limited exercise. The exam will test students' ability to synthesize the content and skills taught in the class. Part of the focus of the exam will be on the second mini-case.

Late papers: Students must meet the due dates for all assignments. If they are not able to meet these deadlines, they must receive an extension from the instructor (in person, by phone, or by e-mail) prior to the due date. If students are not able to attend class the day a paper is due, it may be submitted electronically or by fax. Students should call the instructor to confirm receipt. Papers that are overdue for which extensions are not granted will be downgraded (one half grade per day over due). Final exams may not be handed in late unless special arrangements are made.

Class attendance: The nature of this course and the written assignments associated with it make class attendance critical. Both basic skills and material content will be presented in class that will be the basis for the written and oral assignments.

Blackboard: It is a requirement of this course that all students have access to Blackboard. You must have a gwu.edu account to access Blackboard.

Readings:

There is no assigned methods text for this course. However, the syllabus contains numerous articles that are either available on Blackboard, the Internet, or will be distributed in class.

It is assumed that each student will follow health policy issues in the popular press (e.g., Washington Post and New York Times). It will also be expected that students track key issues discussed in class. One way to do this is to subscribe to the Kaiser Family Foundation's Daily Health Policy Report. You can register at www.kaisernetwork.org.

It is also recommended that students take relevant classes offered by Himmelfarb Library to improve data collection skills (e.g., classes on using Medline and using the internet for health information resources).

Session/Date	Content	Assignments	Learning Objectives
1 (1-23)	<p>Course overview/syllabus review</p> <p>Overview of cases, choice of oral topics</p> <p>What is public health and health services policy? How are roles and responsibilities for policy and programming divided in the US?</p>	<p>Advance posting on blackboard of selections from IOM reports.</p>	<p>Ability to present a policy issue from the perspective of different stakeholders.</p> <p>Ability to describe how public health and health services policy responsibilities are divided in the US.</p>
2 (1-30)	<p>What is policy analysis?</p> <p>The role of politics in analysis</p> <p>Analysis vs. advocacy</p> <p>Overview of US health care system</p> <p>Role of State of the Union</p> <p>Address and the Budget as policy making tools</p>	<p>The following will be posted on blackboard:</p> <p>Stone, Policy Paradox, 1-13, 17-34, 163-167, 133-135.</p> <p>Meltsner, Seven Deadly Sins of Policy Analysis</p> <p>CRS document on executive budget process timetable: http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RS20152.pdf</p> <p>CRS document on Congressional budget process timetable: http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/98-472.pdf</p> <p>CRS document on Overview of the Congressional Budget Process http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RS20152.pdf</p> <p>CRS document on Budget Reconciliation Legislation http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/98-814.pdf</p>	<p>Ability to distinguish between policy analysis and advocacy.</p> <p>Ability to describe how the US health care system is structured and how health policy is made in the US.</p> <p>Ability to describe how State of the Union and Federal Budget are policy making tools.</p>

3 (2-6)	How US health policy is made Review of SOTU and President's budget Pandemic influenza preparedness as a case study on how policy is made and how it is implemented	Read health sections of State of the Union Address Read excerpts from federal documents on pandemic influenza: National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/pandemic-influenza.html HHS Pandemic Preparedness Plan http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/ Read (1) Overview and (2) Public Health Guidance for State and Local Partners	Ability to describe how policy making responsibilities for pandemic influenza preparedness are divided between the federal and state/local governments.
4 (2-13)	Elements of policy analysis Overview of Medicaid Exercise with problem statements Finding key literature on a policy issue	Readings to be posted on blackboard	Ability to describe and apply elements of policy analysis. Ability to describe the fundamental policy issues associated with Medicaid and SCHIP. Ability to articulate problem statements for policy analyses.
2-20	NO CLASS: President's Day		
5 (2-27)	Discussion of Medicaid cost-sharing issue What information is needed to construct a Background and Landscape Exercise on writing landscapes In class debate: should Medicaid be an entitlement?	Bring to class literature on cost sharing impact	Ability to describe the key issues in the debate around reform of Medicaid, with particular emphasis on cost-sharing and entitlement status of Medicaid. Ability to synthesize findings from the literature for policy analysis purposes.

Public Health 281 Syllabus/Spring 2006

6 (3-6)	<p>How to choose criteria and find options Exercise on analyzing options regarding Medicaid reform In class debate: should Medicaid look more like private insurance? Oral presentation skills</p>		<p>Ability to synthesize and assess key policy options related to Medicaid. Ability to articulate key arguments orally. Ability to answer questions regarding policy positions from perspective of multiple stakeholders.</p>
(3-13)	NO CLASS Spring Break		
7 (3-20)	<p>Oral presentations Guest Speaker - Medicaid Overview of immigration case</p>	<p>First papers due. GAO Report, "Undocumented Aliens: Questions Persist about their Impact on Hospitals' Uncompensated Care Costs," available at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04472.pdf Berk, Shur, Chavez and Frankel, "Health Care Use Among Undocumented Latino Immigrants," <i>Health Affairs</i> July/August 2000:51-64. (posted on Blackboard)</p>	<p>Ability to describe key elements of debate regarding health care coverage for illegal immigrants.</p>

Public Health 281 Syllabus/Spring 2006

<p>8 (3-27)</p>	<p>Continue immigration overview Finding legislation in Thomas and on the internet. Side-by-side tables and reading legislation – review of key federal laws Issue identification for oral presentation Hand-out assignment #2.</p>	<p>Munoz and Gottfried, “Should Immigrants Get Entitlements?” available at http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleID.17467/article_detail.asp Ewing, “Not Getting What they Paid For,” available at http://www.aifl.org/ipc/BenefitsPrint.asp “Hospitals Choose Care Over Compensation When Treating Immigrations,” available at http://www.aamc.org/newsroom/reporter/feb05/immigrant.htm Read legislation – TBA</p>	<p>Ability to construct side-by-side tables for comparison of different proposals. Ability to use the Thomas database for research purposes. Ability to compare legislation</p>
<p>9 (4-3)</p>	<p>Key elements in comparing federal and state legislative proposals regarding immigrant health. Discussion of options and analysis for paper #2.</p>	<p>Prepare a side-by-side table of assigned legislation</p>	
<p>10 (4-10)</p>	<p>Oral presentations Guest speaker on immigration</p>	<p>Second paper due</p>	

Public Health 281 Syllabus/Spring 2006

11 (4-17)	Overview of case: how far does surveillance go – the reach of new technology (electronic medical records) and new scientific knowledge (genomics)	To be posted on Blackboard: Readings on NY diabetes and HIV tracking initiatives Readings on genomics and public health Readings on electronic medical records and public health	Ability to describe uses of surveillance in public health. Ability to describe impact of electronic medical records on public health activities. Ability to describe impact of genomics on public health surveillance and interventions.
12 (4-24)	Continued discussion of case In class exercise: construct a public engagement process related to genomic surveillance	Reading on public engagement posted on blackboard (pages 4-20 of “Bowling Together”)	Ability to describe and assess the value of public engagement in public health policy decision-making..
13 (5-1)	Oral presentations Guest speaker on surveillance, genomics, and public health	Third paper due	Ability to respond to key questions regarding public health surveillance and its relationship to quality health care.
14 (5-3) NOTE: THIS IS A WEDNESDAY	Overview of case for final exam: Ethical issues in rationing care in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program	Go to www.nastad.org and review National ADAP Monitoring Project Annual Report (2006 version should be available); AND ADAP Watch Update report	Ability to describe the key issues facing the ADAP program, with special emphasis on the ethical dilemmas posed by funding shortfalls.
5-12	FINAL EXAM DUE		