# **PM 840: Analysis of Current Health Policy Issues**

Fall 2022

*4 credits*

*Tuesday 10:00AM – 12:50PM*

INS-213

# **I. Course Information**

## **Instructor**

Timothy Callaghan

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617-358-2256

Office Location: Talbot 337W

Office hours: Wednesdays, 9-11am

## **Teaching Assistant**

Alee Lockman

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Office hours: By Appointment

## **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to teach students about an array of important public health policy issues, help them develop the skills to describe, analyze and debate policy proposals, and to identify policy solutions to public health problems. We will explore a range of policy problems relevant to U.S. healthcare. In doing so, we will apply vital tools and approaches for policy analysis including John Kingdon’s paradigm for understanding policy development and Bardach and Patashnik’s steps for successful policy analysis. Our primary focus will be the analysis of current health policy issues in the United States, with a goal of identifying policy solutions in the context of the US health care system. The course will consist of weekly reaction papers that draw from assigned readings, in-class discussion of those readings and associated policy issues, and the application of policy analysis principles to public health problems. The course will culminate in writing an in-depth analysis of a contemporary health policy issue of each student’s choosing and in-class discussion of the issue.

Classes will be topical, ranging across a broad set of issues tied to health access and outcomes. For example, we will examine approaches to regulating firearms, controlling prescription drug spending, combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, surprise out-of-network billing, and changes to abortion policy.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explore contemporary health policy issues at the national and state levels, including assessing the major philosophies that feed the development and debate of these issues.
2. Recognize and explain recent trends in health care spending, finance, and utilization of services, as well as trends in the organization of medical services and health status.
3. Integrate into the development and implementation of health policy a comparative perspective on costs and outcomes, stakeholders’ interests and strategies, and the political and cultural determinants of health care.
4. Objectively evaluate policy proposals in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency, and impact on equity.
5. Critically read and comment on literature published in peer-reviewed health policy, medical, and health services research journals, and evaluate reports generated by government agencies, think-tanks, policy, and advocacy organizations to apply them to policy and research questions.
6. Learn options for sources of data used in health policy analyses and demonstrate how to select an appropriate source for a given problem and to use it to generate information (i.e. translate data to information) that can be brought to the debate over that problem. In particular, to be able to:
7. Find and evaluate sources of health care data and information published on the web
8. Critically evaluate alternative sources of information for solving particular problems
9. Apply publicly available data to problems using appropriate analytic tools
10. Improve the ability to communicate ideas and analysis in a clear and concise fashion, both in writing and verbally.

# **II. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice**

## **Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications**

Boston University School of Public Health recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. We know that name and gender identity are central to most individuals’ sense of self and well-being and therefore I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity and their pronouns may change over time. In addition, many people (e.g. international students, trans people, and others) might go by a name in daily life that is different from their legal name. In this classroom, we seek to refer to people by the names that they would like us to use.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender identity, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, as well as all aspects of your identity, is your choice when and whether to disclose (e.g. should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed.

I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and will support you in doing so as well.

We have an opportunity in class to hear from people with different viewpoints and open some lines of communication about difficult and/or emotional topics. All opinions are welcome, as long as they are grounded in the evidence and presented respectfully. As the professor I reserve the right to manage, intercede, side-line, or stop a conversation if it is leading us too far off track or if it is disrespectful to others.

[Sources: Oregon State <https://osucascades.edu/faculty-handbook/teaching/gender-identity-and-personal-pronouns-syllabus-guidance> and University of MD: <https://lgbtq.umd.edu/good-practices-names-and-pronouns>]

**III. Guiding Principles, Values, and Policies**

## **Expectations of Ourselves at Our Best**

These are intended to be expectations of all members of our community, faculty, staff, and students, expectations we hold ourselves to, aspiring always to be our best selves.

We all aim to:

* Strive for excellence
* Exercise the highest integrity in all aspects of work
* Be open, flexible, realistic, and understanding
* Demonstrate professionalism and trustworthiness as a representative of Boston University and the School of Public Health
* Understand and follow the policies and procedures of Boston University and of the School of Public Health

We aim to be guided by five behaviors, with corresponding expectations of ourselves for each behavior:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Behavior** | **Expectations** |
| Engagement | Embrace responsibility for our work, learning, and all other activities  Work responsibly and collaboratively |
| Collaboration | Receive constructive feedback from faculty, teaching assistants, mentors and others  Openly share expertise and experience to assure individual and team success |
| Communication | Provide constructive feedback to faculty, teaching assistants, mentors and others  Seek support when needed  Use technology in a responsible and professional manner |
| Respect for others | Respect the unique cultures, strengths, viewpoints and experiences of others  Show compassion and tolerance  Actively and respectfully participate in community and classroom discussions and activities |
| Helping others succeed | Reach out to others who appear to be struggling  Seek ways to contribute to the success of others |

## **Code of Conduct in the BUSPH Virtual Community**

All of our virtual communities aim to cultivate important communication and strengthen connections with students, staff, and faculty by building a shared sense of community across the institution. This applies to all shared online virtual platforms such as Zoom, Blackboard, GroupMe, Slack, Twitter, Facebook Group forums, etc.

Each individual has the right to participate in an academic atmosphere that promotes safe and inclusive conversations regarding student academics and student life. Virtual forums prohibit unlawful discriminatory practices, including discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic. We expect that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and that all relationships among BUSPH community members, including in virtual communities, are free of bias, prejudice, and harassment.

Although students remain responsible for their own actions in virtual spaces, they are obligated to conform to all BUSPH-wide goals and expectations. Intrusive acts such as postings or comments that disrupt the learning experience or compromise the academic environment for other students will be removed, violations of these standards may result in disciplinary action. All students are expected to uphold these policies, especially those related to academic integrity and the Code of Conduct. Violations of these policies can result in removal from virtual spaces, as well as other disciplinary actions. Instances of alleged misconduct involving BUSPH students are typically resolved through processes internal to the School of Public Health. Disciplinary action in response to misconduct can include suspension, expulsion, loss of course credit, or other sanctions.

Any member of our community who has questions or concerns about these policies should reach out to the Assistant Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice.

## **Boston University Academic Conduct Code**

Students in the School of Public Health are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic honesty is essential for students to attain the competencies the School expects of its graduates and to enable the faculty to adequately assess student performance. Academic dishonesty undermines the bonds of trust and honesty between members of the community and defrauds those who depend upon our knowledge and integrity.

Academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents their academic accomplishments, or impedes other students’ opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work. Knowingly allowing others to represent your work as their own is as serious an offense as submitting another’s work as your own. Violations include but are not limited to:

* **Cheating on an examination or assignment.** Any attempt by students to alter their performance on an examination or assignment in violation of the stated or commonly understood ground rules.
* **Plagiarism.** Representing the work or ideas of another as one’s own; and/or using another’s work or ideas without crediting the source. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination; copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source; using audio or video footage that comes from another source (including work done by another student) without permission and/or acknowledgement of that source; and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging their contribution. Plagiarism can consist of acts of commission (appropriating the words or ideas of another as one’s own), or omission (failing to acknowledge/document/credit the source or creator of words or ideas).
* **Misrepresentation, falsification, or fabrication of data**
* **Submitting substantially the same work in more than one course** without the consent of all instructors
* **Unauthorized downloading, uploading, sharing, and/or duplicating course materials**

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the [Academic Conduct Code’s](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/) contents and to abide by its provisions. In all charges of academic misconduct against a student, the student is entitled to procedural fairness in any disciplinary proceedings. A student who is found guilty of academic misconduct may be subject to sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the School. Additional resource: [Avoiding Plagiarism](https://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing).

## **Student Questions or Concerns**

If you have any questions about course content, assessments, deadlines, or policies, please do not hesitate to contact a course Teaching Assistant or your course instructor.

If questions or concerns remain unresolved, you may contact Mary Murphy-Phillips, Assistant Dean for Students, at [mcmmurph@bu.edu](mailto:mcmmurph@bu.edu).

If questions or concerns remain unresolved, you may contact Professor Lisa Sullivan, Associate Dean for Education, at [lsull@bu.edu](mailto:lsull@bu.edu).

If questions or concerns remain unresolved, you may contact Dr. Sandro Galea, Dean, at [sgalea@bu.edu](mailto:sgalea@bu.edu).

For confidential, independent, impartial and informal advice, you may contact the Office of the Ombuds at [ombuds@bu.edu](mailto:ombuds@bu.edu).

# **III. Resources**

## **Core Course Tutoring Program**

[The Core Course Tutoring Program](https://www.bu.edu/sph/students/student-services/student-resources/academic-support/core-course-tutoring-program/) is a free peer tutoring program for MPH students who are at risk of not meeting the minimum grade required (B–) in the MPH core courses. Students can be referred to the program by their core course instructor/teaching team or can request assistance by applying directly to [sphtutor@bu.edu](mailto:sphtutor@bu.edu). Students who are retaking a core course do not need a referral, as they will be contacted to be matched with a tutor at the beginning of the semester. Once matched, students can receive up to two hours per week of one-on-one assistance with an upper-class peer tutor. For more information, please contact Rea Shqepa, Assistant Director of Student Success, at 617-358-1805 or [sphtutor@bu.edu](mailto:sphtutor@bu.edu).

## **Public Health Writing Program**

The [Peer Writing Coach Program](https://www.bu.edu/sph/students/student-services/student-resources/academic-support/communication-resources/) offers student-directed writing and presentation appointments to all students enrolled in SPH classes. Sessions are designed to meet the needs of students at all levels of skill and confidence. Students can make an appointment with a peer coach at any stage in your writing process, and can make up to two appointments per assignment. Peer coaches are available both in person and online. Coaches are happy to work with individual authors and teams.

Students must sign up for an [account](https://bu.mywconline.net/register.php) to schedule a first appointment. During the appointments, students may discuss their writing process, goals for becoming a better writer, or any writing challenges they may be experiencing. Appointments can be scheduled [here](mailto:here), and students may contact [sphcoach@bu.edu](mailto:sphcoach@bu.edu) with any questions.

## **Public Health Writing Guide**

The [Public Health Writing Guide](https://populationhealthexchange.org/teph-public-health-writing-guide/) provides concrete strategies for improving prose, increasing productivity, and meeting the specific needs of readers. It offers strategies and best practices that can be useful for students and over the course of a career. Please refer to the guide for encouragement, structure, or advice about how to get started.

## **Alumni Medical Library**

Librarians from the [BU Alumni Medical Library](http://www.bumc.bu.edu/medlib/) can provide strategies for executing advanced searches using PubMed, Web of Science, Google, and other online resources. They can also assist with utilizing Mendeley and Zotero reference managers, properly citing sources, and avoiding plagiarism.

To make an appointment to meet with a librarian to get personalized assistance with a search, students can contact them directly by email ([refquest@bu.edu](mailto:)) or phone (617-638-4228).

# **IV. Course Structure**

This is a seminar course that addresses many of the pressing public health policy problems in the United States. While the focus is on the United States (US), students with international interests can explore these in their research papers, if they wish. Students are expected to ***come to class******prepared to discuss and debate***. Students will be expected to read and think about assigned materials ***prior*** to class. A significant component of each students’ grades will depend on the brief reaction papers students submit prior to class as well as their engagement in weekly class discussions.

Readings and assignments build on material presented in core Health Policy and Management courses. Students will be expected to develop questions for class discussions alongside their reaction papers each week. All students should come prepared to debate and discuss the questions raised by other students.

Given our focus on the analysis of *current* health policy issues, our classes will also be shaped by policy debates and changes ongoing at the federal, state, and local levels. We will devote part of each class to current events. Students will be expected to remain engaged with current events by following Kaiser Health News, Morning Consult, The Health Affairs Blog, and the Public Health Post. Students are also encouraged to engage with health policy podcasts including KHN’s ‘What the Health’ and LDI’s ‘Tradeoffs’ podcasts. Each week, 2 students will be assigned to lead a discussion with the class focused on current health policy debates, how those debates connect to themes from class, and how the political process and the policy analysis process could influence potential outcomes.

## **Pedagogical Approach**

The focus of this course is to help students develop the skills to critically evaluate prominent current health policy problems, to identify alternative policy solutions to those problems, and to identify the best solution to the problem based on objective criteria. To accomplish this, students will learn about the policy analysis process, apply the policy analysis process to current health policy issues, and then demonstrate mastery by applying policy analysis to a public health problem of each student’s choice. The course will rely on a combination of lecture, student-led discussion, faculty-led discussion, in class activities and debates, and presentations. Reading and critically evaluating materials in advance of class will be crucial for student success.

Student grades will be based on their capacity to critically evaluate readings, demonstrate an understanding of current health policy issues, and to apply the tools of policy analysis to public health problems. The final policy paper produced as part of the class will count for half of each student’s grade, and it will be based on each student’s ability to rigorously analyze a public health problem, identify the best solution to that problem, and to present findings both in written and oral formats.

## **Course Materials**

This course will rely on two textbooks as well as a variety of academic journal and web-based articles. You are encouraged but not required to buy the most recent addition of each book. If you choose to purchase older versions of books, it will be up to each student to identify the correct pages to read each week. Journal articles and web-based articles can be found either on Blackboard or using the BU libraries. If you have any trouble accessing any materials, please let Dr. Callaghan know.

Given our course focus on current health policy issues, certain readings or topics may be changed throughout the semester to reflect prominent health policy topics in discourse. Any changes will be communicated with students in class.

## ***Required Textbooks***

Bardach, Eugene and Eric Patashnik. 2019. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. 6th Edition. CQ Press.

Kingdon, John. 2011. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Updated Second Edition with New Epilogue. Pearson Higher Education Press.

## ***Recommended Reading and Listening***

This course will focus on the analysis of current health policy issues. All students will also be required to present to the class this semester on current health policy events. As such, all students are recommended to stay informed on the current health policy landscape. Students are encouraged (but not required) to do the following:

* Sign up for the Morning Consult’s Health Brief. Each day, you’ll get an email detailing the most important health policy news and events. You can subscribe here: <https://morningconsult.com/subscribe/>
* Sign up for the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Morning Briefing which summarizes major health policy news stories at the federal, state, and local levels from various news sources. You can subscribe here: <https://khn.org/email-signup/> You can also view them here: <https://khn.org/morning-briefing/>
* Pay attention to the Health Affairs Blog, which provides detailed analysis of current health policy issues from leading scholars. You can find it here: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/blog>
* You can also look to Commonwealth Magazine for stories about Massachusetts politics and health care debates: <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/category/health-care/>
* For a news source curated by BU, you can also turn to The Public Health Post, which is run out of BUSPH and provides stories about important new health studies and policy issues: [publichealthpost.org](https://bushare-my.sharepoint.com/personal/timcal_bu_edu/Documents/Desktop/publichealthpost.org)
* Finally, you can turn to podcasts. While there are countless health-related podcasts out there, I recommend two. First, I recommend KHN’s ‘[What the Health](https://khn.org/news/tag/what-the-health/),’ which is a female driven health podcast where leading journalists in DC discuss the most important health news. The second is the ‘[Tradeoffs](https://tradeoffs.org/)’ podcast, which takes on a different health policy issue each week.

## **Assessments**

Weekly Reaction papers: Each week (unless otherwise specified), students must submit a 1-page single spaced reaction paper to Blackboard reacting to what they learned in the readings. These written assignments will be due the morning before class and will focus on the lecture content and associated readings for that particular discussion. Each reaction paper must conclude with 2-3 questions tied to the readings or topic of discussion that the student would be interested in holding class discussion about.

Class Participation: Students who are not present by definition cannot participate. Accordingly, attendance accounts for a significant share of the overall assessment of student participation. Students with a work conflict or medical issue preventing their participation should notify the instructor in advance following university rules. The rest of the participation grade is based on each student’s contribution to discussion during each seminar session.

Current Events Discussion Leader: Each student will be responsible for leading a class discussion surrounding a given week’s health policy current events during the semester. The student should come prepared to discuss 3 pieces of current health news. Students will be responsible for educating the class about each current event and tying that current event to the process of policy analysis. They should also prepare discussion questions tied to their current event for class debate and discussion. In total, each student’s presentation should last roughly 30 minutes. A rubric will be provided for this assignment by Dr. Callaghan

Course Paper Topic Selection Assignment: Students must submit a two-page memo on 9/27 detailing their planned topic for the final assignment. They must begin with at least one paragraph describing the public health problem they want to address in their paper and why it should be considered an important current health policy issue. Then students must provide an initial 1-2 paragraphs of background literature detailing what is known already about the topic and attempts at policy change. Then, students must conclude by detailing at least four policy alternatives they will consider in the course of their final projects and the criteria by which they will evaluate their policy alternatives.

Course Paper First Draft: Students will submit initial drafts of their final course papers (described in detail below) for peer evaluation on 10/25. The submitted draft should be complete – including all sections required in the final assignment with appropriate grammar and references. At this stage, students will be judged less on the final criteria and more on whether they have made a good-faith effort to submit a strong first draft for peer evaluation.

Peer Evaluation of Course Papers: Students will be grouped into teams of 4 to provide peer evaluations to 3 other students in class on the initial drafts of their papers. Students will use the week between 10/25-11/1 to read the papers of the other 3 students in their team and to provide 1-2 pages of written feedback for each other team member. The class period on 11/1 will then be spent with the 3 evaluators for each given paper providing feedback on that paper to the fourth team member, with each student getting feedback from 3 other students.

Course Paper: The course paper assignment will require each student to write a policy analysis following the eightfold path described in Bardach and Patashnik on a health topic of their choice (approved earlier in the semester). The written report must be 10-15 pages long double spaced and include 5 key sections which are described below. Assignments will be due by 9 AM on December 13, 2022 and all evidence for the project must be appropriately cited using both in-text citations and a reference list at the end of the document. Any standard citation format is allowed so long as you maintain consistency throughout the document. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment – worth 35% of your grade.

**Section 1: Problem Identification and Definition**

In this section of the report, each student must identify a public health problem that they plan to address in their policy analysis. The section should clearly describe the health problem, its scope, and why it is something that needs to be addressed. It should use the problem identification language described in Bardach and Patashnik (i.e. quantifying the problem and thinking “too”) and should be one to two paragraphs in length.

**Section 2: Background Information**

This section of your report is akin to a literature review and should describe other work that has been done on the topic. You should describe what the literature has to say about this problem, how others have addressed the same or similar problems in other areas, and major obstacles to addressing the public health issue.

**Section 3: Identifying Alternatives**

In this section you should describe the 4-6 policy alternatives you believe are most likely to solve the public health problem after an initial narrowing process learned in class. You should begin this section with 1-2 paragraphs on step 4 of the Bardach and Patashnik process – the criteria used for evaluation – and why you selected the criteria you did. Then, for each of your 4-6 alternatives you should include additional information about each alternative while projecting outcomes (step 5) using the criteria from step 4 and confronting key tradeoffs with the alternative (step 6). Be sure to consider how the alternative can solve the problem, potential pitfalls, and groups of interest. Then, conclude the section by narrowing to the 2-3 best alternatives and how you made that decision.

**Section 4: Identify the Best Alternative**

In this section you will identify the alternative you believe is most likely to solve the public health problem under analysis. Here you should explain why your alternative is the best/better than the other alternatives that survived section 3. In your justification you should account for interest groups, the political environment, cost, and other relevant factors discussed in class. It will also be helpful to discuss the level of government you hope to pursue your analysis at and why that level of government is appropriate.

**Section 5: Conclusion**

In the final section of your report, which should only be 1-2 paragraphs long, you should wrap up your policy analysis. Reiterate the health problem and why it is important, emphasize how you carried out the analysis, and hammer home why your alternative is the one most likely to result in the best outcome in relation to the public health problem.

Course Paper Presentation: In addition to your written report, you will also give a 15-minute presentation in class on 12/6, 12/13, or 12/20 about your project. Your presentation should clearly discuss the policy analysis process you carried out following the five-section approach discussed above for part one of this final project. You will be graded on the content of your report, your clarity – both in terms of substance and presentation style, and your involvement of the rest of the class in your presentation. Each presentation will be followed by in-class discussion by the entire class about the topic presented and student feedback to improve policy recommendations.

## **Grading Policy**

Course grades will be based on student performance during weekly reaction papers, participation in weekly class discussion and activities, serving as discussion leader for current events during your assigned day, assignments related to your final policy analysis, and your final class presentation. Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. The final written assignment must also be emailed to Dr. Callaghan. The table below provides a summary of each assignment, its due date, and the percentage of each student’s grade that will be accounted for with each assignment. Each assignment is described in detail thereafter.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SUMMARY TABLE OF ALL GRADED COURSE ASSIGNMENTS | | | |
| Assignment | Description | Due Date | Percent of Grade |
| Weekly Reaction Papers | One-page single-spaced reaction paper including questions for class discussion | Each Monday by 9am | 15% |
| Class Participation | Active engagement with all class discussions and class activities | Each Class | 10% |
| Current Events Discussion Leader | Leading class discussion on current events from that week; emphasis on connecting current events with policy analysis | Due During Each Student’s Assigned Class | 5% |
| Course Paper Topic Selection Assignment | Students will submit a 2-page description of their preferred topic for the final assignment | Due at Start of Class on 9/27 | 5% |
| Course Paper First Draft | First draft of policy paper to be used in peer feedback | Due on 10/25 to Dr. Callaghan and Peer Evaluators | 5% |
| Peer Evaluation of Course Papers | Students will be expected to provide constructive criticism and suggestions for “building on” the first draft of 3 other students. | Due 11/1 | 10% |
| Course Paper Presentation | In-class policy presentation | 12/6, 12/13, and 12/20 | 15% |
| Course Paper | Final policy paper | Due on 12/13 | 35% |

**Re-Grading Policy**

If a student believes that an assignment has been graded incorrectly, they must notify Dr. Callaghan via email within one week of an assignment’s grades being provided. Dr. Callaghan will re-grade the entire assignment. If he determines that the assignment has been graded incorrectly, the grade will be updated. Please note that Dr. Callaghan will re-grade the entire assignment, not just the issue the student is reaching out about. As such, grades can go up, down, or remain unchanged. Reviews of previously graded materials will not be considered if requested more than 7 days after students have received their grades.

**Boston University Grading Scale**

Students will be assigned the following final letter grades, based on course assessments. Please review the full Boston University School of Public Health [grading policy](http://www.bu.edu/academics/sph/policies/grades/). All SPH candidates must have a minimum 3.0 GPA at SPH to graduate—please review the [Academic Standing](https://www.bu.edu/academics/sph/policies/academic-standing/) policy for grade minimums.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Course Average | Final Grade |
| 94‐100 | A |
| 90‐93 | A‐ |
| 87‐89 | B+ |
| 83‐86 | B |
| 80‐82 | B‐ |
| 77-79 | C+ |
| 73‐76 | C |
| 70-72 | C- |
| 60‐69 | D |
| <60 | F |

## **Course Policies and Expectations**

*Participation*

This class will rely on active student participation in each class session. This will be vital for ensuring informative in-class discussion and student learning. As such, students should come to class prepared with all readings already completed. In addition, laptops and smartphones should only be used in limited circumstances for notetaking or as part of class participation.

*Attendance*

Attendance of all students is vital for the success of this course. As such, attendance will be accounted for in students’ participation grades. Students should plan to attend all classes, particularly because this course does not lend itself well to make-up work or individual work. Any excused absences will follow university policies and the discretion of Dr. Callaghan. Of course, illness and life happen, but you will need to inform Dr. Callaghan of these issues as soon as possible and make up any missed assignments in a timely manner.

*Respect*

This class will focus on the analysis of current health policy issues. As such, a considerable portion of the course will cover still debated or controversial policy topics on which students might disagree. Regardless of your political affiliations or personal beliefs, students are expected to respect the viewpoints of others in the classroom. Dr. Callaghan will do the same. Importantly, when discussing the merits of various policy proposals, Dr. Callaghan will take a pro-public health perspective in class in all circumstances, regardless of his own policy preferences.

*Late Work Policy*

Late assignments will be accepted at a penalty of a 10% deduction in your grade on the assignment per day. A late work penalty will not be assessed in the case of an excused absence or appropriately documented health issue or emergency.

## **Course Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Session** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignments Due** |
| 1 | 9/6/2022 | **Syllabus Review and Course Introduction** | None |
| 2 | 9/13/2022 | **Problem Identification and the Eightfold Path to Policy Analysis** | Reaction Paper |
| 3 | 9/20/2022 | **Theories of the Policy Process** | Reaction Paper |
| 4 | 9/27/2022 | **Agenda Setting and the Policy Process; Class Activity Refining Topic Selection Assignment** | Course Paper Topic Selection Assignment; Reaction Paper |
| 5 | 10/4/2022 | **Health Care Affordability: Prescription Drug Pricing, Long-Term Care, and Surprise Medical Billing** | Reaction Paper |
| N/A | 10/11/2022 | **No Class - Redefined Day; Substitute Monday Schedule of Classes** |  |
| 6 | 10/18/2022 | **Health Care Access: Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, and the Future** | Reaction Paper |
| 7 | 10/25/2022 | **Health Disparities, Health Equity, and Social Justice in Policy Design** | First Draft of Written Final Assignment; Reaction Paper |
| 9 | 11/1/2022 | **Peer Evaluation Day; Class Period Spent with Students Providing Each Other Feedback** | Peer Review Feedback Due |
| 8 | 11/8/2022 | **Policy Analysis Under Pressure: COVID-19 and Confronting Politicization in Public Health** | Reaction Paper |
| 10 | 11/15/2022 | **Intended and Unintended Consequences: Zoning and Policing** | Reaction Paper |
| N/A | 11/22/2022 | **Fall Recess** |  |
| 11 | 11/29/2022 | **Federalism and it’s Health Policy Consequences: Abortion and Gun Control** | Reaction Paper |
| 12 | 12/6/2022 | **Student Policy Presentations** | Students are expected to give a 15-minute presentation on their policy analysis |
| 13 | 12/13/2022 | **Student Policy Presentations** | Students are expected to give a 15-minute presentation on their policy analysis |
| 14 | 12/20/2022 | **Student Policy Presentations** | Students are expected to give a 15-minute presentation on their policy analysis |

## **Weekly Outline**

**The readings for each week, and its associated reaction paper, must be completed in advance of class. For example, all week 2 readings must be completed before the week 2 class.**

**Session 1 – Syllabus Review and Course Introduction (9/6)**

* Bardach and Patashnik: Appendix A. (Old Edition; available on Canvas)
* Seavey, J.W., McGrath, R.J. and Aytur, S.A., 2014. Health Policy Analysis. Springer Publishing Company. Chapter 1.
* McLaughlin and McLaughlin: pgs 7-15

*Assignment Due:*

* *None*

**Session 2 – Problem Identification and the Eightfold Path to Policy Analysis (9/13)**

* Bardach and Patashnik: pgs. 1-105
* Kozhimannil, K.B., 2018. Reversing The Rise In Maternal Mortality. *Health Affairs*, *37*(11), pp.1901-1904.
* Gawande, Atul. 2009. The Cost Conundrum. New Yorker.
* Welch, J.R., 2012. As she lay dying: How I fought to stop medical errors from killing my mom. Health Affairs, 31(12), pp.2817-2820.

\*\*\*Note: Read Bardach and at least 2 of the 3 other articles

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #1 (Due 9/12 by 9am)*

**Session 3 – Theories of the Policy Process (9/20)**

* Kingdon: Chapters 5-8
* Howard, Chistopher. 2007. The Welfare State Nobody Knows. Princeton University Press. pp. 13-69

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #2 (Due 9/19 by 9am)*

**Session 4 – Agenda Setting and the Policy Process (9/27)**

* Kingdon: Chapters 2-3
* Oleszek, Mark and Walter Oleszek. 2012. Legislative Sausage-Making: Health Care Reform in the 111th Congress: In Party and Procedure in the United States Congress, ed. Jacob Straus. Rowman and Littlefield.

Assignments Due:

* Reaction Paper #3 (Due 9/26 by 9am)
* Course Paper Topic Selection Assignment (Due at the start of class on 9/27)

**Session 5 – Health Care Affordability: Prescription Drug Pricing, Long Term Care, and Surprise Medical Billing (10/4)**

* Prescription Drug Pricing
* Montero, Alex, Audrey Kearney, Liz Hamel, and Mollyanne Brodie. 2022. Americans’ Challenges with Health Care Costs. Kaiser Family Foundation. July 14, 2022. <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/americans-challenges-with-health-care-costs/>
* Dusetzina, S.B., Huskamp, H.A., Rothman, R.L., Pinheiro, L.C., Roberts, A.W., Shah, N.D., Walunas, T.L., Wood, W.A., Zuckerman, A.D., Zullig, L.L. and Keating, N.L., 2022. Many Medicare beneficiaries do not fill high-price specialty drug prescriptions. *Health Affairs*, *41*(4), pp.487-496.
* Sachs, R. 2022. Understanding the Democrats’ Drug Pricing Package. Health Affairs Forefront. August 10, 2022. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/understanding-democrats-drug-pricing-package>
* Waxman et al, “Getting to the Root of High Prescription Drug Prices: Drivers and potential solutions” (The Commonwealth Fund) July 10, 2017. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2017/jul/getting-root-high-prescription-drug-prices>
* Long-Term Care
* Puja Upadhyay and Janet Weiner, “Long-Term Care Financing in the United States,” UPENN LDI, Vol.23, No.1, (Sept. 2019). <https://ldi.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/archive/pdf/LDI%20Issue%20Brief%202019%20Vol.%2023%20No.%201_7_0.pdf>
* Cohen, M. and Butler, S. 2021. The Middle Ground for Fixing Long-Term Care Costs: The Wish Act. Health Affairs Forefront. August 9, 2021. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20210729.585743/>
* Richard T. Moore, “Nursing Homes Face Uncertain Future,” CommonWealth Magazine, Jan. 7, 2021, available at <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/nursing-homes-face-uncertain-future/>
* Out-of-Network Billing
* Callaghan, T., Haeder, S.F. and Sylvester, S., 2022. Past experiences with surprise medical bills drive issue knowledge, concern and attitudes toward federal policy intervention. Health Economics, Policy and Law, 17(3), pp.298-331.
* Keith, K. 2022. The Six Provider Lawsuits Over the No Surprises Act: Latest Developments. Health Affairs Forefront. February 16, 2022. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20220216.824139/>
* KHN Bill of the Month. <https://khn.org/news/tag/bill-of-the-month/> (Explore stories that interest you!)

\*All readings are available online except the Montero reading and the KHN Bill of the Month. Both can be accessed using the links on the syllabus

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #4 (Due 10/3 by 9am)*

**10/11 – No Class; Attend Monday Classes**

**Session 6 – Health Care Access: Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, and the Future (10/18) – Guest Discussion Leader Alee Lockman**

* Medicare
* Oberlander, J., 2003. The political life of Medicare. University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 1-42
* Enekwechi, A., Jacobson, G., & Uccello, C. 2022. Addressing Medicare’s Finances is Still Urgent: A Framework for Considering Options. Health Affairs. June 29, 2022. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20220627.360838>
* Medicaid
* Brown, L.D. and Sparer, M.S., 2003. Poor program’s progress: The unanticipated politics of Medicaid policy. Health Affairs, 22(1), pp.31-44.
* Jacobs, L.R. and Callaghan, T., 2013. Why states expand Medicaid: Party, resources, and history. Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law, 38(5), pp.1023-1050.
* Jones, D. 2018. The Medicaid Wave. Health Affairs Forefront. November 8, 2018. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20181108.484046>
* The ACA
* John C. Goodman, “Six Problems With The ACA That Aren't Going Away,” Health Affairs Blog, June 25, 2015, available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hblog20150625.048781/full/>
* The Future
* Sven Steinmo and Jon Watts. 1995. “It’s the Institutions Stupid! Why Comprehensive National Health Insurance Always Fails in America.” Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law. 22(2): 329-372.
* Oberlander, J., 2019. Navigating the shifting terrain of US health care reform—Medicare for all, single payer, and the public option. The Milbank Quarterly, 97(4), p.939.

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #5 (Due 10/17 by 9am)*

**Session 7 – Health Disparities, Health Equity, and Social Justice in Policy Design (10/25) – Including Guest Participant Dr. Celine Gounder**

* Michener, J., 2018. Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics. Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1; 3-4
* Okeowo, A. 2020. The Heavy Toll of the Black Belt’s Wastewater Crisis. The New Yorker. November 23, 2020. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/30/the-heavy-toll-of-the-black-belts-wastewater-crisis>
* Gounder, C. 2022. The Best Way to Slow the Spread of Monkeypox. Time. July 25, 2022. <https://time.com/6200179/slow-spread-of-monkeypox-vaccine/>
* Pollack, et al., “When Storms Collide: Evictions, COVID-19, And Health Equity,” Health Affairs Blog, Aug. 5, 2020, <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hblog20200730.190964/full/>
* Tom Croswell, “Tackling transgender health disparities,” CommonWealth Magazine, Nov. 17, 2018, <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/tackling-transgender-health-disparities/>
* Sadoff, R. 2022. Pain, Pills, And Prejudice: Racial/Ethnic and Gender Disparities In Opioid Prescriptions. Health Affairs. April 29, 2022. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20220427.392249>
* Gonzales, G., Tran, N.M. and Bennett, M.A., State Policies and Health Disparities between Transgender and Cisgender Adults: Considerations and Challenges Using Population-Based Survey Data. Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law. (Optional additional reading).

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #6 (Due 10/24 by 9am)*
* *First Draft of Written Final Assignment (Due at start of class on 10/25)*

**Session 8 – Peer Evaluation Day (11/1)**

* Students must read (and provide feedback on) 3 other students’ final papers

*Assignment Due:*

* *Peer Review Feedback (Due at the start of class on 11/1)*

**Session 9 – Policy Analysis Under Pressure: COVID-19 and Confronting Politicization in Public Health (11/8)**

* Bandler, James, Patricia Callahan, Sebastian Rotella, and Kirsten Berg. 2020. “Inside the Fall of the CDC.” Pro Publica. October 15, 2020. <https://www.propublica.org/article/inside-the-fall-of-the-cdc>
* Cohen, J. 2022. COVID-19 Fallout: Ruinous Effects of Politicization of Public Health Agencies, Such As the CDC. Forbes. April 1, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshuacohen/2022/04/01/covid-19-fallout-ruinous-effects-of-politicization-of-public-health-agencies-such-as-the-cdc/?sh=6665d53f3526>
* Sharfstein, J.M., Callaghan, T., Carpiano, R.M., Sgaier, S.K., Brewer, N.T., Galvani, A.P., Lakshmanan, R., McFadden, S.M., Reiss, D.R., Salmon, D.A. and Hotez, P.J., 2021. Uncoupling vaccination from politics: A call to action. *The Lancet*, *398*(10307), pp.1211-1212.
* Callaghan, T., Lueck, J.A., Trujillo, K.L. and Ferdinand, A.O., 2021. Rural and urban differences in COVID‐19 prevention behaviors. *The Journal of Rural Health*, *37*(2), pp.287-295.
* Meltzer, K., 2022. Grieving in a Pandemic. *New England Journal of Medicine*.
* Yong, E. 2021. Why Healthcare Workers are Quitting in Droves. The Atlantic. November 16, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/11/the-mass-exodus-of-americas-health-care-workers/620713/>
* Khullar, D. 2021. What Will it Take to Pandemic-Proof America? The New Yorker. April 15, 2021. <https://www.newyorker.com/science/annals-of-medicine/what-will-it-take-to-pandemic-proof-america>

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #7 (Due 11/7 by 9am)*

**Session 10 – Intended and Unintended Consequences: Zoning and Policing (11/15)**

* Zoning
* Maantay, J., 2001. Zoning, equity, and public health. *American journal of public health*, *91*(7), p.1033.
* Schilling, J. and Linton, L.S., 2005. The public health roots of zoning: in search of active living’s legal genealogy. *American journal of preventive medicine*, *28*(2), pp.96-104.
* Mock, B. 2017. Zoned for Displacement. Bloomberg. September 13, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-13/displaced-by-hurricane-harvey-by-design>
* Ellen, I.G. and Captanian, A., 2020. Gentrification and the health of legacy residents. *Health Affairs Health Policy Brief*. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hpb20200724.106767/full/>
* Milsap,A. 2020. “Zoning Reform Is Needed Post Covid-19,” Forbes, Jul 1, 2020, available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adammillsap/2020/07/01/zoning-reform-is-needed-post-covid-19/?sh=656a667b4481> (Optional - For Interested Readers Only)
* Policing
* APHA. 2018. Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue. APHA Policy Statement. November 13, 2018. <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence>
* Greenberg, S. and Frattaroli, S., 2018. What police officers want public health professionals to know. *Injury prevention*, *24*(3), pp.178-179.
* Rodenberg, H.  2020. [Understanding Police Violence as a Mutual Problem](https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305585). American Journal of Public Health 110, 456-457
* Obasogie, O.K. and Newman, Z., 2017. Police violence, use of force policies, and public health. *American Journal of Law & Medicine*, *43*(2-3), pp.279-295.

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #8 (Due 11/14 by 9am)*

**Session 11 – Federalism and it’s Health Policy Consequences: Abortion and Gun Control (11/29)**

* Federalism Basics
* Kettl, Donald. 2021. “How American-Style Federalism is Hazardous to Our Health. Governing.com. May 26, 2021. <https://www.governing.com/now/how-american-style-federalism-is-dangerous-to-our-health>
* Jones, D.K., 2017. Lavatories of democracy? Health reform and federalism in the Trump era. The Milbank Quarterly, 95(3), p.470.
* Abortion
* Keith, K. 2022. Status Check on Federal Executive Action on Abortion. July 15, 2022. Health Affairs. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20220715.799549>
* Lazzarini, Z., 2022. The End of Roe v. Wade—States’ Power over Health and Well-Being. *New England Journal of Medicine*.
* Arey, W., Lerma, K., Beasley, A., Harper, L., Moayedi, G. and White, K., 2022. A Preview of the Dangerous Future of Abortion Bans—Texas Senate Bill 8. *New England Journal of Medicine*.
* Gun Control
* Sacks, C.A., Ingelfinger, J.R., Taichman, D.B., Morrissey, S., Malina, D., Phimister, E.G., Stern, K.L., Duff, E.M., Hogan, J.W. and Rubin, E.J., 2022. Nineteen Days in America. *New England Journal of Medicine*.
* Feldman, R. 2019 “I Was an NRA Lobbyist. Here’s My Road Map for Gun Reform,” Politico Magazine, Aug. 21, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/08/21/nra-lobbyist-roadmap-gun-reform-227634>
* Lopez, G. 2018. “I looked for a state that’s taking gun violence seriously. I found Massachusetts”. *Vox*. Nov 13, 2018 <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/13/17658028/massachusetts-gun-control-laws-licenses>

*Assignment Due:*

* *Reaction Paper #9 (Due 11/28 by 9am)*

**Session 12 – Student Presentations (12/6)**

* No Assigned Readings

*Assignment Due:*

* *Final Presentation (On Assigned Date)*

**Session 13 – Student Presentations (12/13)**

* No Assigned Readings

*Assignment Due:*

* *Final Presentation (On Assigned Date)*
* *Course Paper (Due at the start of class on 12/13)*

**Session 14 – Student Presentations (12/20)**

* No Assigned Readings

*Assignment Due:*

* *Final Presentation (On Assigned Date)*