

REQUIRED READINGS AND ACTIONS

Required Readings

Health Care Politics and Policy in America, Kant Patel and Mark E. Rushefsky, M.E. Sharpe, 4th Edition (2014)

Dead on Arrival, Colin Gordon, Princeton University Press (2003); paperback (2004)

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Eugene Bardach and Eric M. Patashnick, Sage Publications | CQ Press, 5th Edition (2016)

Twitter Posts

Students are required to sign up for Twitter and follow me @kprubinstein where I will be posting (usually daily) news and resources relevant to your coursework. You are responsible for reading the postings, carefully and thoughtfully, and for being prepared to discuss each week's postings when you come to class.

Kaiser Health News and the Kaiser Family Foundation

Students are required to familiarize themselves with the [Kaiser Health News](#) and the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) websites and to sign up for their free e-mail briefings and updates.

Health Affairs

Health Affairs is the leading journal of health policy thought and research in the U.S. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the *Health Affairs* website at <http://www.healthaffairs.org/> which offers a number of free blogs and podcasts relevant to your coursework along with digital access to the journal via subscription.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

You will learn a variety of concepts and tools in this course and the assignments are designed to enhance your learning and hone your professional skills. Your grade will consist of components that add up to 100 possible points.

Policy prep notes (60 pts.)

Policy work requires shared information, knowledge, effective communication and professionalism (which means you come to class exceptionally prepared). Core competencies for policy professionals include the ability to engage in critical thinking, define problems and communicate findings to a variety of audiences. The purpose of the prep notes is to help you sharpen these skills and to methodically apply them to your coursework and in class discussion.

Each week's prep note will have three (3) parts (REQUIRED):

1. Key points: Prepare a concisely written outline of key points in response to each of the questions (bullet point lists with incomplete sentences are ok; use of social media abbreviations (LOL, ICYMI, etc.) in your prep notes is NOT ok.
2. Your observation(s): What is the central takeaway from today's reading?

3. Current events: Produce one (1) discussion question based on your reading of my Twitter posts during the last week / or one more of articles from the Kaiser Health News daily e-mail briefings to share with the class.

The length of your prep notes should not exceed three (3) pages. Your grade for this assignment includes class participation and attendance.

You are required to (1) send an electronic copy of your prep notes to me by 5:30 pm the day of class and (2) turn in a hard copy at the end of class. I will return the hard copy to you with a grade the following week.

Group collaborative briefings (10 pts. each)

Public policy is a collaborative activity that involves the ability to work in and/or direct a team. Good policy analysis requires the ability to effectively and concisely brief decision-makers on complex problems and issues. The purpose of the collaborative briefings is to devise a response as a group to the questions(s) posed in connection with the assigned readings for the Gordon and Bardach texts.

No formal written component will be required although relevant handouts and notes are encouraged. You will be graded as a class or by groups or teams, depending on how you arrange yourselves, on the quality of your verbal briefing and the effectiveness of your collaboration as a class or team.

Policy Analysis Paper (20 pts.)

Good policy analysis attempts to answer two practical questions: What would be the best thing to do? What is the best result that can be achieved? The purpose of the policy analysis paper is to integrate what you have learned in this course and apply it to a current issue or problem in healthcare. Everything you do in this class will be geared toward preparing you for this paper, which is due at the end of the semester.

To recap, grades for the course will be determined as follows:

- 60 pts. Weekly policy prep notes
- 20 pts. Group collaborative briefings
- 20 pts. Policy analysis paper
- 100 pts. Total possible points for the course

Students who (1) carefully complete and keep pace with the specified readings, writing assignments and class activities; (2) exhibit effective preparation, thoughtfulness and initiative in class discussions; and (3) demonstrate superior scholarship, critical thinking and analysis in their class discussions and writings should be able to achieve excellence in this course.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Grading

Final Grades: A+ = 100-95, A- = 94-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-84 B- = 83-80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-74, C- = 73-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-64, D- = 63-60, F = 59-0.

Class Participation

Come to class having read the materials and given them critical thought; be fully prepared to contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

Assignment Policy

Written assignments are due to the instructor via e-mail no later than 5:30 p.m. on the day of class. Students must transmit both an electronic copy of their completed assignment and bring a hard copy to the class. The hard copy will be returned to the student the following week with a grade. Missed or past due assignments will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy

Regular and prompt class attendance is essential to the educational experience and students are expected to *be on time* and attend all scheduled class meetings. Students with repeated absences and/or who are habitually late will be dropped from the class. Exceptions to this policy require prior approval by the professor.

Academic Honesty

Presenting the words or works of others as your own is plagiarism, is dishonest, and is a violation of the University Policy on Academic Honesty <http://guides.lib.uh.edu/plagiarism>. If you are not certain of what is permissible, you should contact the professor prior to submitting the assignment and/or check the UH webpage <http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/>. A student found in violation of academic honesty may be subject to a failing grade, suspension, or dismissal from the university.

Americans with Disability Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you need special accommodations and assistance due to a disability, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD Building 568, Room 110) and the Learning Support Services (LSS, 321 Social Work Building), or call 713-743-5411 to make appropriate arrangements.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

CLASS OUTLINE / ASSIGNMENTS

AUGUST 21, 2018

Introductions, course philosophy and approach, goals and requirements

AUGUST 28, 2018

How do we value “health”? How much health and for whom? Is there a moral right to a “just minimum” of healthcare? Problem definition and implications for policymaking.

Assignment

(1) Prep notes – questions (*do not forget to include your central takeaway and current events discussion question in your prep notes*)

- Using the Internet, find a definition for “health” and “healthcare” to share with the class. Briefly explain the reasons why you selected each definition.
- What are “social determinants” of health? Why are they important?
- Is healthcare in America a commodity or a public good? What are the facts?
- Do Americans have a “right” to healthcare? What are the facts?
- Why do Bamba, Fox et al. think “health” is political? Do you agree?

(2) Required reading [In addition, you may use the Internet to help answer the questions]

Patel and Rushefsky, Chapter 6 (Falling Through the Safety Net)

[What It’s Like Living Without Health Insurance in America](#) (Apr 2018) Bloomberg

[Tackling Patients’ Social Problems Can Cut Health Costs](#), (Jan. 23, 2017), Kaiser Health News

[Commodity or Public Work? Two Perspectives on Health Care](#) (Fall 1995), Bruce Jennings and Mark J. Hanson, Bioethics Forum

[Health care in the U.S. should be a basic human right, not an entitlement](#) (Aug. 2015), James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy

[I think health care is a right. I asked an expert to tell me why I’m wrong](#) (June 30, 2017), Vox
[Health care in the United States—basic human right or entitlement?](#) (Oct. 1, 2015), Annals of Oncology

[Should Healthcare Be Funded as a Basic Human Right?](#) (Dec. 2012), allnurses.com

[Healthcare is Not a Human Right](#) (July 1999), The Libertarian Standard

[The Political Fallacy that Medical Care is a Right](#) (Dec. 1971), Robert Sade, MD

[Toward a Politics of Health](#) (2005), Clare Bamba, Debbie Fox and Alex Scott-Samuel, Health Promotion International

SEPTEMBER 4, 2018

Introduction to the U.S. Healthcare system. Factors that shape and influence the healthcare policy environment.

Assignment

(1) Prep notes – questions (*do not forget to include your central takeaway and current events discussion question in your prep notes*)

- Identify (list) the key factors that influence and shape U.S. healthcare policymaking
- Give six reasons why public opinion and cultural, social and political values both work to strengthen and impede the development of a comprehensive healthcare policy for the nation.
- The U.S. spends more on healthcare than other countries – list some key factors why.
- Thoughtfully describe (not trash) the U.S. healthcare system in a 140-character (or less) tweet. Be prepared to share and discuss this tweet with the class.

(2) Required reading

Patel and Rushefsky – Chapter 1 (Healthcare Politics), Chapter 7 (Problem of Rising Healthcare Costs and Spending)

[What the Government Spends on Health Care](#) (June 1, 2018) The Concord Coalition

[The U.S. spends more on health care than any other country. Here's what we're buying](#) (Dec. 27, 2016), Washington Post

[Americans are shouldering more and more of their health-care costs](#) (June 27, 2016), Washington Post

(3) Required videos

[The Healthcare System of the United States](#), Healthcare Triage [7:35 min.]

[Why Can't America Have a Growth-Up Healthcare Conversation](#), vlogbrothers [7:05 min.]

(4) Useful resources

[50 things to know about the hospital industry | 2017](#), Beckers Hospital Review (Jan. 25, 2017)

SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

How social policy history impacts and informs policymaking

Assignment

(1) Group collaborative briefing on the following question:

- Why has the U.S. consistently failed to establish a system that provides basic healthcare coverage for all of its citizens?
- How does the Gordon book apply to recent political efforts to reform healthcare?

(2) Required reading

Dead on Arrival, Gordon (entire text)

Patel and Rushefsky, Chapter 2 (Healthcare Policy in the U.S.)

(3) Useful resources

[Medicare and Medicaid at 50](#) (2015), Kaiser Family Foundation [16:45 min.]

[History of Healthcare](#) (Dec 2009) whatifpost.com

SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

No class today.

Assignment

Patel and Rushefsky – Chapter 8 (Healthcare Cost Containment)

Note: no written prep notes are due for this chapter

SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

Applying a structured approach to wicked policy problems.

Requirements for the policy analysis papers to be discussed in detail.

Assignment

(1) Group collaborative briefing – questions

- What is a wicked problem? Why is healthcare a wicked problem?
- What is policy analysis? Why do policy analysis?
- What are the characteristics and benefits of good policy analysis?
- Identify and discuss in detail the eight-step process for successful policy analysis.
- Why is defining the problem a crucial step in policy analysis?
- Using the Bardach text as your guide and the September 18 reading as a resource, prepare two (2) well defined problem statements on healthcare cost containment; be prepared to discuss and defend your problem statements in class.

(2) Required reading

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Bardach (entire text including the Appendices).

(3) Required videos

[What is WICKED PROBLEM? What does WICKED PROBLEM mean? WICKED PROBLEM meaning & explanation](#), The Audiopedia [4:26 min.]

[What is a wicked problem?](#) (2013) Luke J. Houghton [6:15 min]

OCTOBER 2, 2018

Medicaid and CHIP 101: How federalism shapes the dynamics of policymaking, budgeting and implementation of the nation's insurance program for low-income and needy people

Assignment

(1) Prep notes – questions (*do not forget to include your central takeaway and current events discussion question in your prep notes*)

- What problem(s) was the Medicaid program originally conceived to “solve” and how has this changed over time?
- List the key differences between Medicaid and CHIP.
- List some of the challenges associated with operating a joint federal / state healthcare program.
- Discuss the role of Medicaid waivers in effecting state healthcare policy
- Why is Medicaid the “workhorse” of the U.S. healthcare system?

(2) Required reading

Patel & Rushefsky – Chapter 3 (Medicaid and CHIP)

[10 Things to know about Medicaid: Setting the Facts Straight](#) (Mar. 12, 2018), Kaiser Family Foundation

[10 Ways Medicaid Affects Us All](#) (Oct. 5, 2017), Kaiser Health News

[The Coverage Gap: Uninsured Poor Adults in States that Do Not Expand Medicaid](#) (June 2018) Kaiser Family Foundation

[In Health Bill's Defeat, Medicaid Comes of Age](#) (Mar. 27, 2017), The New York Times

[State Waivers As a National Policy Lever: The Trump Administration, Work Requirements, And Other Potential Reforms In Medicaid](#) (Feb. 6, 2018) Health Affairs

(3) Useful resources

[Understanding Medicaid: A Primer for State Legislators](#) (Sept. 1, 2017), National Conference of State Legislators

[Federal Financing for the State Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#) (May 23, 2018), Congressional Research Service

OCTOBER 9, 2018

Medicare 101: The policy, politics and budgetary challenges associated with universal healthcare for those 65 and older

Assignment

(1) Prep notes – questions (*do not forget to include your central takeaway and current events discussion question in your prep notes*)

- What problem(s) was the Medicare program originally conceived to “solve” and how has that changed over time?
- List the key differences between the Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- Why have financial considerations been “an important part of the politics and policy deliberations surrounding Medicare since its inception”?
- What is “Medicare for All” and how would it impact the current Medicare program?

(2) Required reading

Patel & Rushefsky – Chapter 4 (Medicare)

[The “pleasant ambiguity” of Medicare-for-all in 2018, explained](#) (July 2, 2018), Vox
Why ‘Medicare-For-All’ Is Not The Answer

(3) Useful resources

[An Overview of Medicare](#) (Nov. 22, 2017), Kaiser Family Foundation

[The Facts on Medicare Spending and Financing](#) (July 18, 2017), Kaiser Family Foundation

OCTOBER 16, 2018

The Affordable Care Act: Policy, politics and administrative challenges associated with implementing healthcare reform

Assignment

(1) Prep notes – questions (*do not forget to include your central takeaway and current events discussion question in your prep notes*)

- What problem(s) was the ACA conceived to “solve”? Has the ACA been a success? Why or why not?
- List the key goals, strategies and tactics that President Obama and the congressional Democrats used to achieve healthcare reform through the ACA.
- Discuss how these differed (or not) from attempts by prior administrations to reform the healthcare system.

(2) Required reading

Patel and Rushefsky – Chapter 10 (The ACA – Stumbling Toward Universal Health Insurance?)

[Why Obamacare can fail and succeed at the same time](#) (Apr 2018) Vox

[Obamacare Is Proving Hard to Kill](#) (July 3, 2018) The New York Times

[On ACA’s Birthday, 5 Charts Highlight Key Accomplishments](#) (Mar 2018) Center on Budget and

(3) Videos

[Obama’s Deal](#) (Apr. 2010), Frontline (PBS) [60 min.]

(4) Useful resources

[Summary of the Affordable Care Act](#) (Apr. 25, 2013), Kaiser Family Foundation

[Pre-existing Conditions and Medical Underwriting in the Individual Insurance Market Prior to the ACA](#) (Dec 2016) Kaiser Family Foundation

Policy Priorities

[Characteristics of the remaining uninsured: An update](#) (July 2018) Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

[Repeal and Replace Watch](#) (continuous updates) Kaiser Health News

OCTOBER 23, 2018*

The 115th Congress, Trump administration and healthcare reform – reconciling differing priorities

Assignment

TBD - Prep note questions and required reading

Video - [Trump’s Takeover](#) (Apr. 2018), Frontline (PBS) [60 min - but you will only be responsible for the first 30 minutes covering repeal/replace of the ACA]

**This topic may encompass two class sessions*

OCTOBER 30, 2018

Selected policy issues

Assignment

TBD - Prep note questions and required reading

NOVEMBER 6, 2018

Selected policy issues

Assignment

TBD - Prep note questions and required reading

NOVEMBER 13, 2018

In-Class Clinic on the Policy Analysis Paper

Assignment

Bring your carefully considered written problem statement and a detailed outline of your policy analysis paper to class. Be prepared to discuss / defend your problem statement and address any remaining questions you may have about your papers in class.

NOVEMBER 20, 2018*

Selected policy issues

Assignment

TBD - Prep note questions and required reading

**Last in person class day*

NOVEMBER 27, 2018

Reading Day (law students)

DECEMBER 4, 2018

** Policy Analysis Papers are due to Instructor via e-mail no later than 5:30 p.m. **