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## **POL 108: Policymaking in the Public Sector – Focus on Health**

**Fridays 10-12 am, at UCCS**

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**Instructor:** Richard Kravitz  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday by appointment (email me)

### **Required Textbooks:**

*Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach*, Thomas Bodenheimer and Kevin Grumbach, 7<sup>th</sup> edition

### **Additional Readings:**

Additional readings will be assigned each week of the course. These readings will be available at Canvas, listed by author's last name. Students may download or print the articles. All of the assigned readings for a given week, plus associated discussion questions (see below), should be completed before coming to class.

### **Course Objectives:**

This course is designed specifically for students enrolled in the Health Policy Track at UCCS. The course is broadly divided into three parts. In the first part, we will examine the meaning of health, the ways in which health policy can influence health, the tools available to health policy analysts, and ways in which health services researchers have examined health care access, quality, and costs. In the second part, we will hold two interactive class sessions. The first interactive session is a classroom "debate" on the future of Medicaid (MediCal in California). Dividing into teams, all students will prepare for and participate in this debate. The second interactive session is an exercise in health services resource allocation (using the game "CHAT"). In the third and final part of the course, we turn our attention to the Affordable Care Act of 2010, the boldest stroke in health policy since the passage of Medicare in 1965 – paying special heed to implementation of the ACA in California. We will also cover recent efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare. We will focus on two specific questions that represent larger issues in policy and politics. In asking, "how did the Congressional Budget Office conclude that repeal and replace legislation would cause 20-30 million Americans to lose health insurance coverage," we examine some key principles of policy analysis. And in asking, "why did California Republican Members of the House support repeal and replace, despite the risk of harm to their constituents," we look at the complex interaction between politics and evidence in shaping public policy.

**Course Outline** (All classes held at UCCS 9-11am unless otherwise specified; dates subject to change):

Session Number	Date	Lead Instructor	Coverage	Readings Due at Beginning of Class*	Assignments Due at Beginning of Class
1	Friday, 9/29	Kravitz	Introduction to Health Policy: What is health? What are the determinants of health? How does policy influence the health of populations?	B&G Chap 1; Pincus et al.	Question Set #1
2	Friday, 10/6	Kravitz	Case Studies in Health Policy (Select debate teams for session 5)	Baicker et al.; Haeder et al.; Meara et al	No assignment
3	Friday, 10/13	Troidl	Health Care Structure and Payment: How is health care organized and delivered in the US? Why are costs so high?	B&G Chaps 2, 4, 5, 6; Moses et al.	Health Policy Research Proposal (Draft)
4	Friday, 10/20	Kravitz/ Troidl	Defining and Measuring Access, Quality and Costs of Care	B&G Chaps 3, 8, 9, 10	Question Set #2
5	Friday, 10/27	Kravitz	In-Class Debate: "Resolved, the Medicaid program should be phased out and replaced by subsidized private insurance."	Sommers et al. 2017	Health Policy Research Proposal (Final)
6	Friday, 11/3	Perez (tentative)	Allocating Health Care Resources Using CHAT	TBA	No assignment
HOLIDAY	Friday, 11/10		Veterans Day HOLIDAY	No readings	No assignment
7	Friday, 11/17	Kravitz	The Affordable Care Act of 2010: What are the major provisions of this landmark act and how has the ACA been challenged?	B&G Chap 15; Obama; Butler; Woolhandler	Question Set #3
HOLIDAY	Friday, 11/24		Thanksgiving HOLIDAY	No readings	No assignment
8	Friday, 12/1	Troidl	ACA Implementation in California. How has California chosen to implement the ACA and how are we doing?	No readings	Health Policy Research Poster due by noon
SPECIAL	Wednesday, 12/6, 9am-1pm	N/A	STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY	No readings	No assignment
9	Friday, 12/8	Kravitz	Obamacare Repeal and the Challenges of Health Reform	TBA	No assignment
10	Friday, 12/15	Kravitz	<b>Final Exam Due</b>		

\*B&amp;G = Bodenheimer &amp; Grumbach; Other readings available on Canvas.

## Grading

POL 108 course grades are based on the following components totaling 250 points. **All assignments should be turned in via Canvas as Adobe .pdf files.** This allows the instructor(s) to seamlessly edit and comment online.

Attendance and participation (40 total)

Two Speakers Series summary reports (5 points each, 10 total)

Three brief question sets (10 points each, 30 total)

In-class debate (20 points, 10 points allocated to the team and 10 to the individual)

Policy research proposal (30 points) and poster presentation (70 points)

Final examination (take home, timed) (50 points)

*Attendance and participation:* Students are expected to attend all class sessions (Fridays, 10 am-12 noon), special sessions with invited faculty speakers (Wednesdays, 11-12 am), and Speakers Series talks (Wednesdays, 12-1pm). Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and with all assignments completed. Written work should be turned in via Canvas by 8am the morning of class, with students retaining a photocopy (or readily accessible electronic copy) for their own in-class notes and reflections. Students should come to the special faculty speakers' sessions with questions for the invited speaker. If you need to miss a class session or speaker due to illness or internship responsibilities, please email the instructor ([rlkravitz@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rlkravitz@ucdavis.edu)) at least 24 hours in advance (except in exceptional circumstances).

*Speakers Series summary reports:* During the quarter students will complete two summary reports (approximately 1 page) based on the Thursday Speakers Series presentations. The summary reports will encourage attendance at the Speakers Series and will also give students a chance to develop their analytical skills as they write about the main points of each speaker. Summary reports are due at 8am before class the Friday following the presentation. Late summary reports will be penalized 1 point for each day they are late, including weekends. Attendance is required at all of the Wednesday Speakers Series events (including both the special sessions with the invited faculty and the public talks).

*Brief question sets:* Most class sessions will require some reading in advance. Because these readings are essential to understanding the course material, you will be asked to complete a brief question set in advance of several class sessions. Students will be asked to upload the assignments before the beginning of class (i.e. by 8am) and to retain a photocopy to use for class discussion. Questions sets are designed to consolidate your understanding of the readings and prepare you for the class discussion. Answers should be succinct and to the point; long essays are neither required nor desired.

*Policy research proposal and poster presentation:* Like the parallel course (Special Studies in American Politics, POL 195) taken by the majority of UCCS students, this course requires a policy research project in two parts: a policy research *proposal* (2-3 pages) and a *poster presentation* including Background,

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Objectives, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Implications. This assignment is designed to provide students with a critical learning experience as well as an opportunity to engage in active public health policy research. The policy research project will require students to gather, analyze, and report on an important public health policy issue relevant to California. For more detailed guidance, see the Course **Assignments** section of Canvas.

The research proposal [2-3 double-spaced pages] will state the nature of the health policy problem, the problem's relevance to California, background information needed to understand the problem, the policy research question(s) to be addressed, and the proposed research approach (i.e. plan of attack). A draft of the proposal is due at the beginning of the third class session. A final version of the proposal is due at the beginning of the fifth class session.

**A PowerPoint version of the poster will be due on Friday, December 1, 2017.** Students may either arrange for printing themselves through Kinko's or other vendor (at their own expense) or delegate UCCS to print the posters (at UCCS expense) in black and white. Printed posters will be presented at a special session attended by students, faculty, center staff, internship mentors, and other members of the Sacramento policy community on **Wednesday December 6, 2017.**

***Note: There is no paper requirement for POL 108. However, students will be expected to prepare a written (expanded) version of their poster as a 10 page double spaced paper in satisfaction of requirements for POL 192AB. Special instructions regarding this paper will be provided to POL 108 students by the POL 192AB instructors.***

All work must be in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

*Final exam:* A take home final exam will be released at the beginning of finals week. The exam will be administered via Canvas. It will be timed. (Once you begin the exam, you will have a fixed amount of time – likely 1 ½ to 2 hours – to complete it.) The exam will cover the weekly readings, other assignments, and material discussed in class.

### **Course Policies**

*Attendance, participation, and weekly readings:* Class attendance is mandatory and counts as 10% of the final grade. Excused absences require consent of the instructor in advance. Health emergencies require a note from a licensed health professional. All students should come to class prepared to participate in class discussions as well as in the special sessions with Wednesday faculty speakers.

*Late policy and make-up exams:* Make up exams and extensions will be allowed only in the event of a medical or family emergency. The emergency must be documented (e.g. note from licensed health care provider on office letterhead). If documentation is provided, then a decision will be made regarding whether you will be granted a make-up opportunity or receive an extension. Any requests for an Incomplete grade must be accompanied by a written medical report from a licensed medical provider.

*Grade appeals:* Students will have one week from when grades are posted to appeal their grade. All appeals must include a typed, double spaced statement explaining why you are requesting a grade appeal, and you must justify with evidence from your exam, research paper, critical appraisal, question sets, or summaries. If you choose to appeal your grade, the instructor reserves the right to increase or decrease the existing grade.

### **Academic Integrity**

As a student enrolled at the University of California, Davis, you have agreed to abide by the University's Code of Academic Conduct (see <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html> ) A version of this code of conduct applies at every UC campus. Cheating and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Students are expected to work independently on all graded assignments except the group debate scheduled for Session 5.

Plagiarism deserves special attention in the age of the internet and the ease with which content can be "cut and pasted." Specifically, passing off another's words or ideas as one's own, or using those words or ideas without proper acknowledgement or citation, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. Students interested in learning more should consult references such as this: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602930301677>

Students who engage in cheating will receive a grade of "F" for the course and may be subject to proceedings of the UC Davis Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UCCS (under the auspices of UC Davis) will make every attempt to accommodate all qualifying disabilities.