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

Fridays 10-12 am, at UCCS

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, 8th edition (available in hardcopy through bookstores or online through the campus library https://search.library.ucdavis.edu/permalink/f/12qmtm2/01UCD_SCP_SERIALS31944424)
For information on how to set up a VPN to the UC Davis Library, see [here](#).

Additional Readings:

Additional readings will be assigned most weeks 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 should be completed before coming to class.** Many class sessions will include small group breakout sessions whose success depends on everyone being prepared.

Course Objectives:

This course is designed specifically for students enrolled in the Health Policy Track at UCCS but, as in 2019, is also open to selected students from the UC Davis University Honors Program. The course is broadly divided into two 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. We will also examine the fundamental values that drive the health care debate, including health care as a right versus a privilege, the "right" amount of health care spending, and tradeoffs between quality and equity. This year, for obvious reasons, we will also discuss the role of public health and personal health care services in responding to a pandemic. This part of the course ends with a midterm examination. In the second 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 continuing 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.

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Course Outline (All classes held at UCCS 10am-12noon 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, 10/2	Kravitz	Course Requirements. Key Questions in 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.	None
2	Friday, 10/9	Kravitz	Evidence for Sound Policy: Three Health Policy Research Case Studies	Baicker et al.; Haeder et al.; Meara et al	Question Set #1
3	Friday, 10/16	Kravitz	Kravitz: How is Health Care Organized and Delivered in the US?	B&G Chaps 2, 4, 5, 6; Fuchs 2013; Moses et al.	Health Policy Research Proposal Draft
4	Friday, 10/23	Kravitz	Defining and Measuring Health Care Access, Quality and Costs	B&G Chaps 3, 8, 9, 10	Question Set # 2
5	Friday, 10/30	Shim (confirmed) Kravitz	Shim: Social Determinants, Equity, and Disparities in Health and Health Care Kravitz: Midterm Review	Sommers et al. 2017; Collins 2003	Health Policy Research Proposal (Final)
6	Friday, 11/6	Kravitz	Midterm Exam (1 hour) Kasirye: Tales of a Public Health Officer (tentative)	None	
7	Friday, 11/13	Romano (tentative)	Pathways to Universal Coverage: NHS, Single Payer, or Something Else? Lessons from Here and Abroad	Schneider 2017; Fuchs 2018	Podcast/Video Synopsis
8	Friday, 11/20	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	Draft Introduction/ Background section for health policy research paper
HOLIDAY	Friday, 11/27	No Class	Thanksgiving Holiday	No readings	
9	Friday, 12/4	Troidl (confirmed)	ACA Implementation in California	To be announced	
SPECIAL EVENT	Wednesday, 12/9 (time TBA)	N/A	STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY	No readings	
10	Friday, 12/11 (note extended time 10-12:30)	Kravitz	The Politics of Health Care (1 hour) End-of-Term Exam and Course Evaluations (1.5 hour)	Oberlander 2018	Work on health policy research paper
	Friday, 12/18	Kravitz	Final Project: Health Policy Research Paper		Health Policy Research Paper due by noon

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

Grading

POL 108 course grades are based on the following components totaling 300 points. **All assignments should be turned in via Canvas as Word (.doc, .docx) or Adobe (.pdf) files.** This allows the instructor(s) to seamlessly edit and comment online.

Assignment	Points	Number	Total Points
Attendance and Participation	15	9 class sessions	135 + 15 bonus points = 150
Question Sets (n=2) and Podcast/Video Discussion Posts	50	3	150
Midterm Examination	150	1	150
Policy Research Proposal	50	1	50
Policy Research Paper (Draft Introduction)	50	1	50
Policy Research Paper (Final Version)	200	1	200
Final Examination	150	1	150
Total Points			900

Attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend all class sessions (Fridays, 10 am-12 noon) and Speakers Series talks (Wednesdays, 12-1pm). **Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and with all assignments completed.**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this class will be offered online only. There will be no in person meetings. Students should log onto Zoom 5 minutes early with cameras and microphones fully tested and in good working order.

Written work should be turned in via Canvas by the designated due dates. *Students should retain a copy for their own in-class notes and reflections.* Realizing that illness, family issues, and internship responsibilities may occasionally necessitate your absence from class, each student is permitted TWO absences from class without penalty or need for excuse. With rare exceptions reserved for dire emergencies, any absences beyond two will result a grade of NOT PASS for the class. As a matter of courtesy to the instructor and to your classmates, please be logged into Zoom with cameras on by 10 am sharp each Friday. Students who are more than 10 minutes late will be counted as absent.

Electronic devices. Considerable research suggests that multi-tasking is a misnomer and that use of electronic devices in the classroom can distract from and inhibit learning. Furthermore, organizing handwritten notes helps to reinforce learning. Therefore it is suggested that students eschew the use of laptops and other electronic devices during class, take detailed handwritten notes, and transcribe their notes into typewritten form for subsequent perusal and study. Students are encouraged to share notes, comments, and readings (outside of Question Sets and Examinations) with the entire class, either informally or through the Discussions section on Canvas. Very little work of significance is accomplished anymore by individuals. Learning to work in teams is an unwritten meta-objective of this course.

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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 (e.g. by 9 am; see Assignments in Canvas) and to retain a hard copy 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.

Podcast/video summary: A sample of **health policy-related** videos and podcasts are posted on Canvas. Students are expected to listen to or view FIVE different programs (whether selected from the list or of your own choosing), each 20 minutes or longer, at intervals during the course. On each of the due dates (listed in Assignments and also in Modules on Canvas), you will turn in a 250 word brief critical synopsis. Instructions for the synopses are provided in Canvas.

Policy research proposal and research paper: Like the parallel course (Special Studies in American Politics, POL 195), this course requires a policy research project in two parts: a 3-5 page double spaced policy research *proposal* and a 12-15 page double-spaced *policy research paper* including Background, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Implications. You should be aware of four important deadlines (see matrix):

Assignment	Date Due
Draft Policy Research Proposal	October 16, 2020
Final Policy Research Proposal	October 30, 2020
Draft Background/Introduction to Policy Research Paper	November 20, 2020
Complete Final Policy Research Paper (including Background, Methods, Results, Discussion)	December 18, 2019

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** [3-5 double-spaced pages] will cover EACH of the following: 1) the nature of the health policy problem, 2) the problem's relevance to California, 3) background information needed to understand the problem, 4) the policy research question(s) to be addressed, 5) the proposed research approach (i.e. plan of attack), and 6) implications of anticipated results for policy (including the implications if the results of your literature review or empirical study do not come out as planned). A draft of the proposal is due at the beginning of the *third* class session. Ideally, the topic will not only be relevant to some aspect of health policy but be of interest both to the student and to the student's internship host. When such alignment can be achieved, students may be permitted to use internship

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hours to work on their policy project. When this is not possible, it is perfectly acceptable for students to work on health policy topics unrelated to their internships outside of the 20-required internship hours per week. A final version of the proposal is due at the beginning of the *fifth* class session.

The **health policy research paper** [12-15 double-spaced pages, plus tables and figures] is meant to summarize the results of a health policy research project undertaken by the student during the term. The project can either be in the form of a *systematic literature review* **or** an *empirical study*.

If you chose to do a systematic **literature review**, the review should identify an important health policy question, specify a **systematic** strategy for combing the literature (including both published, peer-reviewed sources and the “gray literature”), enumerate the results of the literature in **one or more tables**, and summarize the results in the text. A systematic review requires a focused research question and a specific “search strategy” (string of search terms) developed with the help of a **reference librarian** (the ones at UC Davis are glad to help). Your literature review should conclude with a synthesis of the relevant literature, including a discussion of what the results mean and their implications for policy.

If you choose to do an **empirical study**, you should specify the research question(s); describe the empirical methods (e.g., how you developed survey questions and conducted a poll using Qualtrics; or how you examined the association between state abortion laws and teen-age pregnancy using Stata to analyze publicly available data); present the results in tables, figures, and text; and end with conclusions and implications for public policy.

Students must submit a draft of the paper’s Background Section by the beginning of the eighth class session. The Background Section (approximately 3 double spaced pages) should include the rationale for the project, citation of pertinent literature justifying your choice of a policy research question, specification of policy research questions or hypotheses, and a brief summary of the approach you intend to take in addressing the questions or hypotheses you have specified. Essentially, the purpose of the Background Section is to explain **why** you did the study.

Note: Whether your policy research paper is based on a systematic literature review or empirical analysis, you should also plan to present the results as part of a poster, in satisfaction of requirements for POL 196E.

Midterm and end-of-term exams: To help you consolidate key health policy concepts before you begin work in earnest on your final project, there will be a midterm examination during Week 5. The exam will cover lecture material and readings from Weeks 1-5, will include both multiple choice questions and a short essay, and will take one hour to complete. There will also be a one-hour end-of-term exam at the end of Class Session 10. The Final will cover material discussed during Class Sessions 7-10, as well as any accompanying readings.

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

Course Policies

Attendance, participation, and weekly readings: Class attendance and participation is mandatory and counts as 10% of the final grade. All students should come to class prepared to participate in class discussions as well as in the special sessions with Wednesday faculty speakers. Most class sessions will involve lecture as well as “breakout sessions” where students will be assigned a question or problem to discuss in smaller groups. As noted above, all students are allowed up to 2 absences without penalty, but additional absences not pre-approved by the instructor and that do not reflect a medical emergency will result in a grade of NOT PASS.

Late policy and make-up exams: Make up exams and quizzes as well as 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.

Title IX

Please be advised that UC Center Sacramento professors, instructors, teaching assistants, and administrators are mandatory reporters under Title IX. This means that we are required to pass on reports from students, whether communicated verbally during class discussion or office hours or as part of a written assignment or exercise, to the UC Davis Title IX officer and other relevant UC Davis officials. If you wish to seek out help or resources with a non-mandated reporter, please see <https://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/get-support>.

Student Health and Welfare

As registered UC Davis students, you are eligible to use campus resources in support of your personal and academic health and welfare. Please consult this website for more information:

<https://resources.ucdavis.edu> .