

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Fall 9-1-2012

PSCI 488.50: Health Care Policy

Laura Dimmler

University of Montana - Missoula, laura.dimmler@umontana.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Dimmler, Laura, "PSCI 488.50: Health Care Policy" (2012). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 5916.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/5916>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

**UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
HEALTH CARE POLICY PSCI 448**

Fall 2012

Instructor: Laura Dimmler, PhD

Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus, if necessary, at any time.

Introduction

The intent of this course is to familiarize students with the sociopolitical environment influencing health policy in the United States. The essential issues include health politics and policy development, political structure and process, health care financing, public opinion and special interest groups, political leadership, and policy reform. Given that health care reform legislation was passed into law in March 2010 – The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – this new initiative also will be a primary focus of the course, including how this new law influences health care delivery in Montana.

The health care delivery system in the United States is an enigma. This nation is the only industrialized country that, until very recently, did not ensure all citizens access to health care services. Yet, the U.S. has a long history of centralized government involvement in the delivery of health services and health policy development. This complex and intertwined relationship between government and health care will continue well into the future, in spite of rapid change in the health care industry, and an historical desire to reduce public spending and restructure health care delivery toward the competitive private sector.

Leading to the recent passage of the new health care reform law, there has been considerable debate and emotional discussion about health care reform and whether access to health care is a privilege or a right, if reform should offer a government-sponsored option or whether the free market model is more efficient. This debate represents a series of highly complex and emotionally charged issues which are difficult for Americans to untangle and understand. Special interests want to maintain the status quo and not upset opportunities for power, control and profits. Through this course, it is anticipated that students will become informed health care consumers and develop an in-depth appreciation of the complexities and nuances of health care delivery and recent reform initiatives in the U.S.

Required Texts

Jacobs, L., and Skocpol, T. (2010). Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know. New York, NY: Oxford.

Starr, P. ((1982). The Social Transformation of American Medicine. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Starr, P. (2011). Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle Over Health Care Reform. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wennberg, J. (2010). Tracking Medicine: A Researcher's Quest to Understand Health Care. New York, NY: Oxford.

Other Required Readings

Additional required readings, including case studies, will be posted in the course modules. Unless stated otherwise, all readings must be completed by the end of the week in which they are assigned.

Course Objectives

1. To understand the role of the federal government and the states in health policy development, and the institutions and policy processes that contribute to it.
2. To familiarize students with the politics of healthcare and public health, and the important processes, outcomes, failures and successes.
3. To comprehend the importance of shaping future health policy initiatives as the U.S. confronts shifting demographics, changing epidemiological trends, economic constraints in health care delivery, increasingly expensive medical technology, and new threats to the nation's health.
4. To appreciate the social and economic impact of health policy formulation and implementation on various populations, especially those in rural/frontier areas such as Montana.
5. To understand and appreciate the complexities of the new healthcare reform legislation – The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Course Grading

Undergraduate Students

Class participation (online discussions/other unit assignments): 30%

Case Studies: 40%

Book Report: 30%

Graduate Students

Class participation (online discussions/other unit assignments): 20%

Case Studies: 20%

Book Report: 30%

Health Policy Paper and Abstract: 30%

Additional Assignment for Graduate Students Only: Policy Analysis Paper

For graduate students only, a 15-page Policy Analysis Paper is required on a health policy topic of your choice. This paper represents 30% of your grade in the course and is due by midnight on December 7, 2012. Please begin your research early. An abstract of your paper and a reference list (with a minimum of 10 references) is due by October 15.

Academic Code of Conduct

If the instructor detects instances of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, misrepresentation, failure to appropriately attribute reference materials or the reuse of a student's written materials from other courses on any exam, paper, assignment or other work submitted by a student, or submit the work of another student as your own work, the result will be an immediate failure of the course, with a grade of F, and referral for possible institutional action (see the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct).

Course Assignment Matrix

Assignment	Percent of Grade		Due Date
	Undergraduate	Graduate	
Case Study 1: Rocky Mountain HMO	20%	10%	October 22
Case Study 2: Regence HMO	20%	10%	November 12
Class Participation: Blogs	30%	20%	Ongoing Dates – see Blogs (three are required)
Book Report	30%	30%	Book Title to Instructor: October 15
			Final Book Report Due: November 30
Graduate Students Only: Additional Assignment - Policy Analysis Paper	NA	30%	Abstract Due: October 15
			Policy Analysis Paper Due: December 7

Course Reading Schedule – see Moodle Modules

Case Study Analysis Assignment

Students are required to write two 3-5 page (typed and double-spaced) case study analyses - the first is due on October 22, and the second is due on November 12. For these analyses, please provide the following:

1. An overview of the case study: What are the key issues/concerns?
2. Prepare a SWOT Analysis of the organization defined in the case:

SWOT ANALYSIS – Strengths and weaknesses are internal elements of the organization; opportunities and threats are external to the organization – an example of an external threat would be market competition from another organization.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

3. How would you address the concerns/problems/issues defined in the case?
4. What affect do you think the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act may have on the organization/issue identified in the case? (Explain in detail and be specific, supporting your ideas with information from the course readings and other peer-reviewed articles).

Health Policy Book Report

Students are required to write a 5-8 page, typed and double-spaced book report (using APA format), which will be due by midnight on November 30. Students may select any book about a health policy topic covered in the course this semester, and they must submit for approval the title, author, and a brief paragraph describing the book. Students will need to submit their selected topics and book titles to the instructor by October 15. The final book report assignment represents 30% of the course grade.

Book Report Requirements

1. Select a book and submit a brief description of it to the instructor by October 15.
2. Read the book and using APA format, submit a 5-10 page, typed and double-spaced book report that includes:
 - a) A comprehensive description of the policy issue(s) covered in the book; include a brief history of the issue(s) - this should cover about 2-4 pages of the report.
 - b) Identify the stakeholders and in terms of the health policy issue described in the book, explain the impact of the health policy decisions on stakeholders; outline the role of policy makers and special interest groups in this process – this should cover about 2-4 pages of the report.
 - c) Evaluate the book – Did you like the book? Did it add to your knowledge? Did the book provide an accurate and comprehensive view of the issue(s)? Has the problem been resolved or exacerbated by the actions taken or decisions made? Did the author identify potential actions or solutions regarding the issue(s)? What course of action do you think still needs to be initiated to resolve

or improve the issue(s)? Provide any additional comments that are relevant to describing or evaluating the book – this should cover about 1-2 pages.

d) Be sure to include a reference list if you use any references for your report.

Policy Analysis Paper for Graduate Students

A 15-page (typed and double-spaced) policy analysis paper on a single aspect of healthcare reform in the United States is due by **December 7**. Your paper needs to describe the historical context of this issue, an assessment of current policy including policies (successful and failed) initiated in the 20th and 21st centuries which led up to the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, an explanation of why a healthcare reform initiative was needed at this time (or not), and your recommendations for future policy change.

Your paper must define the nature of the problem from a political and policy perspective: (i.e.; Does the new health care reform law make good policy? Why or why not? Explain. If not, what does? Why was the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act designed as it is? How might this legislation be improved? What evidence should be used to craft a better policy? What role has special interest played and what has been the outcome?) This is an example of the types of questions you need to answer in your paper, based on the specific topic you select.

You must support the position you present in your paper using evidence-based research from the course readings or other peer-reviewed articles that support your arguments. A lack of peer-reviewed evidence-based research in your paper will reduce your grade one full grade point.

This assignment represents 30 percent of the total grade for the course. Please begin your research early - an abstract of your paper and a reference list (with a minimum of 10 references) is due by October 15.

You must use APA format for this paper or your final grade on the paper will be reduced by 15%.