HMP 615: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

COURSE SYLLABUS

University of Michigan School of Public Health

Fall 2014: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30
Room 1655, SPH I

Instructor: Peter D. Jacobson, JD, MPH
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Office Hours: Professor Jacobson—Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 pm, or by appointment
Ms. Lillvis: Tuesdays, 10:00-noon

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the public health system and policy issues confronting public health practitioners. The course presents an overview of public health policy interventions, the theoretical motivations for undertaking them, the influence of the political, bureaucratic, and social environments in which policy decisions are made, and the population health consequences of such decisions. A key aspect of the course is to develop a framework for analyzing public health policies. Along with conceptual discussions, the course includes case studies of current public health policy issues.

Primary Exit Competencies for the course are from Domain A (Measurement), and Domain B (Communication):

* A-6 (Policy Analysis): Understand the policy-making process and the role of politics; assess a problem and identify and compare potential policy solutions; and understand and critically assess methods to evaluate policy impact.
* A-10 (Decision-making): Implement a decision-making process that incorporates evidence from a broad analysis that includes uncertainty, risk, stakeholders, and organizational values.
* B-1 (Convey): Speak and write in a clear, logical, and grammatical manner in formal and informal situations; prepare cogent business presentations; facilitate an effective group process.

Secondary Exit Competencies for the course are from Domain B (Communication), and Domain C (Leadership):
Additional Course Objectives:

1. Understanding the structure of the U.S. public health system
2. Developing basic policy analysis skills in thinking critically about public health issues, including the different types of policy interventions and their justifications
3. Understanding the policy process and health politics
4. Developing skills in articulating and communicating policy positions in formats that are common in professional practice (i.e., policy memos, testimony for a public hearing, and oral presentations), and that will assist and influence organizations in their strategic and operational goals

Assignments and Grading: Required readings and materials can be found on the HMP 615 CTools site under the Resources tab. All assignments will be given in writing, with clear instructions. Late work needs to be negotiated before the day the assignment is due, just like you would do on a job. I will almost always be willing to negotiate a new deadline if there is a valid reason for why a deadline cannot be met. Otherwise, late assignments that are turned in without prior discussion or approval will be docked one grade step for every day they are late. The policy memos and written assignments are to be submitted via the CTools website prior to the class (by 10.00 a.m.) on the date they are due.

Class Participation 10%
Policy Memos and Blog 40%
In-class Group Presentations 15%
Mock Legislative Hearing 15%
Research Paper 30%

Writing: Good written communication skills are important in every profession. In the policy world, the ability to craft clear and cogent statements regarding problems and their potential policy solutions is essential. During the semester, students will produce written assignments in formats that are commonly used to convey opinions or positions regarding policy issues. Therefore, I expect that written assignments will reflect deep thinking and significant effort in terms of the writing quality. I also expect that written assignments will be professionally presented (i.e., carefully proof-read and free of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes). Some keys to good writing are: 1) having a clear structure for presenting your arguments; 2) having distinct, organized thoughts that you want to convey; 3) spending sufficient time and energy on the writing; and 4) careful editing, including having someone else proofread a draft to identify points that are not clear, sentences that are hard to follow, and typos/grammatical mistakes.
**Academic Conduct:** Students should behave in class according to the professional and ethical standards of the field of health management and policy and the University of Michigan. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism—that is, taking someone else’s words and/or ideas and passing them off as your own. Taking material from any source without proper attribution will be considered as plagiarism and dealt with accordingly. Consequences could include failing the course or being expelled from your degree program. If you have any questions about this, please contact the instructor or the GSI before turning in an assignment.

If you are unsure about how to properly reference and quote the sources you use in your writing, please seek out the many resources available to you. In graduate school and on the job, ignorance of the proper way to cite other people’s ideas and words is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. So please be careful in how you use information and ideas from other sources, especially information you find on the Internet.

**Class Format and Readings:** Our class time together will mostly be discussion, small group exercises, and a mock public hearing. I assume that you will have read the material before class and will be prepared to participate actively in class discussions and exercises. As adult learners, I expect you to be self-motivated to do the readings, even when specific readings are not discussed in class or covered on an exam. As is typical in graduate school, students will get out of this course what they put into it. The goal is to have productive, lively, and engaging discussions regarding important public health problems and potential policy solutions.

The required readings are available on the course CTools site. You can download and print each reading through the class CTools website. You should read the assigned articles for their content and the information they impart, but pay particular attention to how the authors frame their arguments, present the information, and craft problem definitions and/or policy positions.

I recommend but do not require two other books. The first is Eric Redman's *The Dance of Legislation* (1973). This book is considered a classic case study of the process by which a legislative bill is introduced and eventually becomes law, using the National Health Services Bill (s.4106) as the case. The second book is Joseph M. Williams’ *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* (2003). This is an excellent book about writing style, and strongly recommended for everyone, ranging from those who struggle with writing and need to improve their writing skills to those who already consider themselves to be good writers and want to become even better.

**Classroom Expectations:** It is likely that students in this class have a wide range of perspectives and opinions regarding many of the policy issues we discuss. It is essential that students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing their own opinions and perspectives on complex policy issues. Lively discourse and debate are an essential part of the policy process, and can be very productive if done in a respectful manner. It is perfectly fine to disagree with each other and to have contrary opinions and perspectives. But it is inappropriate to engage in rude, insulting, or hostile behavior during our debates.

Electronic devices (i.e., computers, tablets, smart phones) are not to be used during class without special permission.
COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

SECTION I: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

3 September: Framing the Issues and Exploring the Trends in Public Health Policy


8 September: Fundamentals of Population Health


10 September: Introduction to the Public Health System and Administration


**Optional Reading**


**15 September: Introduction to Literature Searching for Health Policy, and Policy Writing**

Guest Presenter: Judy Smith, University of Michigan Library.


**17 September: Typology of Policy Interventions**


**22 September: Justifying Public Health Policy Interventions**


Optional Reading


**24 September: The Role of Policy In Health Services Management—Integrating Population Health into Medical Care (Joseph R. Horton, FACHE)**

Policy Memo #1 due.


Optional Reading


**29 September: In-class Exercise—Group Presentations**

**1 October: In-class Exercise—Group Presentations**
6 October: SPH Symposium

SECTION II: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

8 October: The Policy Process and Public Health Politics—The State vs. Federal Division


Optional Reading


13 October: Fall Study Break

15 October: Policy Analysis 101


Optional Reading


**20 October: Policy Analysis 101—Continued**


**22 October: Policy Analysis 101—Continued**

In-class exercise.


27 October: Program/Policy Evaluation

Policy Memo #2 due.


29 October: Policy Simulation Analysis/Policy Modeling (Professor David Mendez)


Optional Reading


3 November: Performance Measurement


Optional Reading


5 November: Lobbying, Advocacy, and Analysis in Public Health (Jenifer Martin, JD)


Optional Reading


10 November: In-class Exercise—Blogging

SECTION III: THE BROADER CONTEXT OF PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

12 November: Social Construction of Problems and Policy Target Groups


**Optional Reading**


17 November: Communication


**Optional reading**


19 November: Contracting With the Private Sector to Provide Public Health Services

Policy Memo #3 due.


**24 November: Privacy**


**26 November: Public Health Ethics**


**1 December: Public Health in the Global Context**


3 December: Policy Careers and Leadership—Panel Discussion with Guest Speakers


8 December: Mock Legislative Hearing

10 December: Mock Legislative Hearing