

Political Science 440: Health Policy and Politics

Monday/Wednesday 2:30 to 3:45 pm
B302 Birge Hall

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Overview

Good health enables people to lead full and productive lives. Many factors affect health: lifestyle, genetic endowment, social and physical environments, and medical care. At various times, governments have attempted to improve health through policies affecting each of these factors. Some of these efforts, such as eugenics, were misguided and abandoned. Others, such as improved sanitation, were highly successful in reducing the incidence of disease and increasing longevity. Governments in industrialized countries now play fundamental roles in funding the development and provision of medical care. In the United States, 16 percent of gross domestic product, or about \$6,700 per capita, are expended on medical care annually. About 45 percent of this expenditure flows through government programs, primarily Medicare and Medicaid. Because health, and therefore medical care, are desirable goods, these figures are likely to increase as the population becomes wealthier. They are also likely to increase as the elderly become a larger fraction of the population, new but expensive medical technologies are introduced, and medical care prices continue to outpace inflation. The intrinsic importance of health, the growing share of the economy devoted to medical care, and the increasing role of the government in funding and regulating it, suggest that health policy will become even more important politically over the next generation. Our objective in this course is to prepare ourselves to be better informed and more effective participants in debates over health policy.

Course Requirements

Your achievement in the course will be assessed as follows:

Midterm Examination (30 percent): The examinations are intended to give you an opportunity

to integrate and apply the various concepts encountered during the course. The midterm examination will be on October 28.

Final Examination (50 percent) The final examination will be cumulative. It will be on December 23 from 10:05 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. **Do not take this course if you cannot take the examination at this time.**

Two Policy Memoranda (10 percent each) The writing assignments in the course are two policy memoranda. You are expected to follow the format outlined in “Professional Writing: The Policy Memorandum,” which is available on the course website at <http://learnuw.wisc.edu>. Each memoranda will be graded in terms of presentation and analysis (the quality of the arguments you make including the use of relevant evidence). Memoranda must be submitted in *both* paper and pdf format. Page limits and due dates will be strictly enforced. Everyone will write their first memorandum on obesity policy. The topic of the second memorandum is your choice. You may want to follow-up on some topic raised in class or you may wish to pursue some other topic you find interesting. Newspapers routinely carry stories that may suggest topics to you. Looking through the archives of relevant journals, such as *Health Affairs*, *Health Economics*, and *The Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* may give you ideas for topics and a start at collecting relevant information. You may also get ideas for topics from the web sites of organizations that deal with health policy issues such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (<http://www.rwjf.org/research/index.jsp>), the Kaiser Family Foundation (<http://www.kff.org/>), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/>), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/>).

Books Recommended for Purchase

Course readings are drawn from both articles and books. All materials are available on reserve in the library and all the articles are available at <http://learnuw.wisc.edu>. In addition, I recommend that you purchase three books:

Martha A. Derthick (2005) *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics* 2nd Edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press).

David Dranove (2003) *What's Your Life Worth? Health Care Rationing...Who Lives? Who Dies? Who Decides* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall).

Atul Gawande (2007) *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance* (New York: Picador, 2007).

Through the Go Big Read program, you will receive a copy of

Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

Tentative Schedule

* Recommended reading

Introduction (September 2)

Course Overview

Determinates of Health (September 9)

What determines health?

What is the relationship between health and wealth?

Models of the Policy Process (September 14)

Interest group theories, institutional rational choice, path dependence, policy streams, advocacy coalition framework, social construction

Case Study 1: Smoking Policy (September 16 and 21)

Rationales for public policy

Policy approaches and processes

Derthick, entire.

Case Study 2: Obesity as a Public Policy Issue

Pollan, entire.

Overview (September 23)

What is obesity?

Is it getting worse?

Should we care?

Allison C. Morrill and Christopher D. Chinn (2004) The Obesity Epidemic in the United States. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 3(3-4), 354-366.

Eric A. Finkelstein, Christopher J. Ruhm, and Katherine M. Kosa (2005) Economic Causes and Consequences of Obesity. *Annual Review of Public Health* 26, 239-257.

Causes (September 28 and October 30)

Public health perspective

Economic perspective

Sociological perspective

Thomas Philipson and Richard Posner (2008) Is the Obesity Epidemic a Public Health Problem? A Decade of Research on the Economics of Obesity. National Bureau of

Economic Research Working Paper 14010.

*James O. Hill and John C. Peters (1998) Environmental Contributions to the Obesity Epidemic. *Science* 280(5368), 1371-1374.

*B. M. Popkin and P. Gordon-Larsen (2004) The Nutrition Transition: Worldwide Obesity Dynamics and their Determinants. *International Journal of Obesity* 28(S3), 28, S2-S9.

Public Policy (October 5)

Is obesity a public policy problem?

Possible policy interventions

Lawrence O. Gostin (2007) Law as a Tool to Facilitate Healthier Lifestyles and Prevent Obesity. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 297(1), 87-90.

Linda Courtenay Botterill (2006) Leaps in Faith in the Obesity Debate: A Cautionary Note for Policy-Makers. *Political Quarterly* 77(4), 493-500.

Regina G. Lawrence (2004) Framing Obesity: The Evolution of News Discourse on a Public Policy Issue. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 9(3), 56-75.

Paul Campos, Abigail Saguy, Paul Ernsberger, Eric Oliver, and Glenn Gaessner (2006) The Epidemiology of Overweight and Obesity: Public Health Crisis or Moral Panic? *International Journal of Epidemiology* 35(1), 55-60.

*Michael Pratt, Caroline A. Macera, James F. Sallis, Michael O'Donnell, and Lawrence D. Frank (2004) Economic Interventions to Promote Physical Activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 27(3S), 136-145.

*J. Eric Oliver and Taeku Lee (2005) Public Opinion and the Politics of Obesity in America. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 30(5), 923-954.

*Michelle J. Mello, David M. Studdert, and Troyen A. Brennan (2006) Obesity—The New Frontier of Public Health Law. *New England Journal of Medicine* 354(24), 2601-2610.

Report 1: Consider a proposal for dealing with the “obesity problem.” Write a memorandum (no longer than four double-spaced pages) that considers the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. Address your memorandum to an appropriate client. Follow the format in *Policy Writing*. Bring your memorandum to class on **October 12**.

Medical Insurance

Basics of Private Health Insurance (October 7)

Risk pooling, moral hazard, adverse selection

Kaiser Family Foundation (2008) *How Private Health Coverage Works: A Primer—2008 Update*. (<http://www.kff.org/insurance/7766.cfm>)

Dranove, Chapters 1 and 2.

National Health Insurance in Perspective (October 12)

Failed efforts in United States

Comparative Perspective

Jacob S. Hacker (1998) The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy. *Studies in American Political Development* 12(1), 57-130.

Dranove, Chapter 3 and 4

View old Harry and Louise Advertisement

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt31nhleeCg>).

View new Harry and Louise Advertisement

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGvkZszS21Y&feature=related>)

View the segment on the United Kingdom at

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/>.

Medicare and Medicaid (October 14 and 19)

Political history, structure, and challenges

Department of Health and Human Services, *Medicare & You, 2009*.

(<http://www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf>) (Especially sections 1 and 2).

Please view the Kaiser Family Foundation video, *Medicare + Medicaid at 40* at the following address: <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/40yearsvideo.cfm>.

(If you would like to see some additional video and audio presentations on the history of Medicare and Social Security, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/history/mpeg/videosound.html>)

*Jonathan Oberlander (2003) *The Political Life of Medicare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Discussion of Current Health Care Reform Proposals (October 21 and 26)

Victor R. Fuchs (2009) Health Reform: Getting the Essentials Right. *Health Affairs Web Exclusive* 28(1-2), w180-183.

Henry J. Aaron (2009) The Pitfalls of Overreaching in Health Reform. *Health Affairs Web Exclusive* 28(1-2), w184-187.

Improving Quality and Curbing Health Care Spending: Opportunities for the Congress and the Obama Administration. Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, December 2008. (http://www.dartmouthatlas.org/topics/agenda_for_change.pdf)

Check the Congressional Budget Office web page for latest analysis of leading bills (<http://www.cbo.gov/>)

Midterm (October 28)

Medical Governance

Program Administration (November 2, 4, 9)

- Payment systems (prospective versus retrospective payments)
- Ensuring quality (pay-for-performance)
- Quality as an organizational problem

Gawande, Part I and Part III

Regulation (November 11)

- Rationales for regulation
- Food and Drug Administration
- Hybrid Forms

Daniel P. Carpenter (2004) The Political Economy of FDA Drug Review: Processing, Politics, and Lessons for Policy. *Health Affairs* 23(1), 52-63.

Private Rulemaking (November 16, 18, and 23)

- Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network
- Kidney and liver allocation

David L. Weimer (2007) Public and Private Regulation of Organ Transplantation: Liver Allocation and the Final Rule. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 32(1), 9-49.

David L. Weimer, *Medical Governance: Values, Expertise, and Interests in Organ Transplantation* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010). Chapter 8: How and How Well Does the OPTN Govern? And Chapter 9: Is the OPTN a Viable and

Desirable Model in Other Medical Contexts?

Report 2: Policy memorandum of up to four double-spaced pages on a topic of your choice. Due in class on **November 25**. (May be handed in earlier.)

Discussion of Policy Memoranda (November 25)

Volunteers present their policy proposals

Health Report Cards (November 30)

Information provision as alternative to regulation
NYS Cardiac Surgery Report, Nursing Homes

Complete *Report Card Exercise* prior to class.

William T. Gormley, Jr. and David L. Weimer (1999) *Organizational Report Cards* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), Chapter 6: "Organizational Responses," pp.123-163.

Introduction to Health Policy Analysis (December 7, 9, and 14)

Utilities of health states

Decision analysis

Mammography, Alzheimer's screening, Smallpox vaccination

Dranove, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9

David L. Weimer and Mark A. Sager (2009) Early Identification and Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease: Social and Fiscal Outcomes. *Alzheimer's & Dementia* 5(3), 215-226.

Final Exam (December 23)