

POLITICS AND POLICY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Course number: PUBH 735

Section: 960

Spring 2013

Class Dates

Class Begins: January 9, 2013

You are **required** to participate in online discussion forums during the following dates:

- Discussion 1: Jan. 14 through Jan. 28
- Discussion 2: Feb. 4 through Feb. 18
- Discussion 3: Feb. 25 through March 11
- Discussion 4: March 18 through April 1

You are **required** to complete the course units by the following dates:

- Unit 1: Jan. 28
- Unit 2: Feb. 18
- Unit 3: March 11
- Unit 4: April 1

Group Case Analysis **Due:** April 26

Deadlines: Many of us are also working full-time jobs and have major family responsibilities in addition to this class (I know Diane and I sure do). I also know in an online class sometimes it's a temptation to wait and do all the work in the last couple of weeks of the class. Therefore, the deadlines are there not only for you to get your work done but also for me and Diane so we can get the grading done too. Finally they are there so all group members are on more or less the same page during the semester to facilitate working together. Obviously, if you have an unexpected problem with meeting a deadline, just contact me or Diane to let us know. However, to keep the class on track, **unless contacted by you regarding a deadline we will not grade work submitted late.**

Introduction

Understanding policy development and the politics behind public health policy is a critical skill. Leading in the public health arena necessarily involves understanding how health policy is developed and implemented and some of the basics surrounding the discussion of public health issues in the political world.

Policy development includes:

1. Developing policies that will achieve public health goals.
2. Informing the public, policymakers, community groups, businesses, nonprofit groups, and partner organizations about the existence of and rationale for public health goals.
3. Working together with policymakers, community groups, businesses, nonprofit groups, and partner organizations to propose and implement solutions to public health problems.

4. In developing public health policy, both listen to community members about public health issues and develop personal knowledge of current public health practice and research.

This 3.0 credit course requires students to apply skills, knowledge, theories, and strategies inherent in the policy development process to exercises and case studies.

Course Goals

- Define policy and policy development;
- Describe theories of the policy process and policy change;
- Discuss the policymaking process in the U.S., including regulatory and legislative aspects;
- Identify and illustrate features of the policy environment;
- Identify and categorize key stakeholders in the policymaking process;
- Examine the role of the media in the policymaking process;
- Identify and apply the stages of policy development;
- Employ principles of policy analysis to better understand factors that influence the shape, pace and direction of policymaking processes;
- Identify strategies for moving policies in the desired direction using commonly applied tools; and
- Discuss and evaluate the role of community partnerships in policymaking and appropriate measures for ensuring community participation in the process.

Methods of Instruction

Readings: Substantial readings are assigned for each unit of this course. Complete the readings for each lesson first before proceeding to tutorials and activities. Reading materials are found in required textbooks or are available online in each lesson.

Tutorials: Some lessons include an audio or video tutorial – a pre-recorded, online lecture accompanied by slides. Tutorials highlight information and concepts presented in greater depth in readings and throughout each lesson.

Adam's Short Videos: Throughout the course I am trying to include short videos from me to explain or expand on key points. Additionally, I have included one longer lecture on new media techniques.

Discussion / Activity Questions: This component of each lesson is designed to help you reinforce and apply concepts presented in the lesson. In many cases, you will be asked to discuss questions in the context of a case of your choosing that has particular relevance to your work or interests. Better responses are those that thoughtfully integrate concepts and information from the lesson and are well written. **Lengthy responses are unnecessary. Responses may be submitted in outline form, assuming enough information is provided.**

Group Discussions: Discussion forums bring you into contact with your classmates as you share ideas, opinions, and experiences relating to key concepts presented in the course. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing current events relating to the policymaking process. Each discussion group will consist of about five students, and groups will remain together for the duration of the course. Groups may opt to assign a moderator for each discussion to help guide the process and redirect discussion as necessary. **Don't wait until the last few days of the discussion period to start posting – that will stifle interesting discussion. Each of the four discussion forums is worth 25 points.** Your grade is based on your timely submission of the three required posts and on the quality of your posts. A quality post is one that:

- Shows careful consideration of the questions raised by the instructor;
- Draws upon course readings, other readings, or current and newsworthy events to illustrate points; and
- Builds on the ideas and thoughts of fellow students. Please be careful not to offer unsubstantiated opinions or simply agree or disagree with someone's post. **Your posts need not be more than one or two paragraphs in length.** Quality is more valuable than quantity.

Group Case Analysis: A detailed case analysis, compiled by individuals working in their assigned group over the course of the class, is due at the end of the course. The purpose is to demonstrate knowledge of principles related to the course material and an ability to apply and integrate course concepts. Each group's analysis will include background information and a description of the policy to be examined, a review of the policy environment, stakeholder analysis, and an outline of a proposed methodology for conducting an in-depth policy analysis and generation of policy alternatives.

Grading: Participation in discussion forums, completion of online assignments, and quality final project earns a P grade, indicating solid graduate performance. Exceptional performance (95% or better) will merit an H in the course.

What should I do if I want to clarify an assignment, due date, or other course schedule or syllabus item?

Email the instructor, Adam Searing, at adam@ncjustice.org (phone is fine too – 919-856-2568) or course TA Diane Davis, at dimdavis@hotmail.com

The following textbooks are required:

Stone, Deborah, *Policy Paradox*, Third Edition, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, New York, 2011.

Kingdon, John, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Update Edition, with an Epilogue on Health Care (2nd Edition), 2010.

All other required readings are available online on the course materials page in Sakai or in the reserve list on Sakai.

Unit 1: Overview of the United States Health Policymaking Process

Lesson 1: Promoting Health Through Public Policy

Milio, N. (1989). Chapter 4: The Health Problem: Perspective for Policy. In *Promoting Health Through Public Policy* (pp. 69-89). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Public Health Association.

Brownell KD, et al. (2010) Personal responsibility and obesity: a constructive approach to a controversial issue. *Health Affairs*.

Short Video - Policykeeper, politics, and politicians

In this very short video (I recorded it a little while ago, but it is still relevant) I talk about the concept of the policykeeper, why I like it when students take different political positions, and how politicians can present the same issue very differently.

Lesson 2: Theories of the Policy Process

Sabatier, Paul. (1999). Chapter 1: The Need for Better Theories. In Sabatier, Paul A. (Ed). *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 3-17). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Stone, Deborah. *Policy Paradox, Chapter 1*(Required Text)

Lesson 3: The Policy Process in the U.S.

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 2: Participants on the Inside of Government. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*,

Consumer Reports Magazine: *Health Reform: Seven Things You Need to Know Now*. 2012

Unit 2: Factors Affecting the Policy Process

Lesson 1: The Policy Environment

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 7: The Political Stream. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Lesson 2: Stakeholders and Interest Groups

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 3: Outside of Government, But Not Just Looking In. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Stone, Deborah. Chapter 10. In *Policy Paradox (Required Text)*

Lesson 3: Theory behind the role of the media (more on new media strategies later)

Video lecture: New and traditional use of advocacy techniques. See <http://vimeo.com/1781127>

Searing, Adam G. (March/April 2009) Health Reform Advocacy: Change Brings Opportunity. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, Volume 70, Number 2, 171-174

Review “Media” section in: Kingdon, John W. Chapter 3: Outside of Government, But Not Just Looking In. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Unit 3: Stages of Policy Development

Lesson 1: Problem Definition and Goals

Stone, Deborah. **Chapters 7-9.** In *Policy Paradox (Required Text)*

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 5: Problems. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Lesson 2: Goals and Evaluation Criteria

Short Video: Causes and the Golden Leaf Foundation - I give a very short overview of the concept of causes and also talk about the Golden Leaf Foundation - the example for the question used in this lesson. See: <http://www.vimeo.com/8318009>

Stone, Deborah. **Chapters 2-5.** In *Policy Paradox (Required Text)*

Garber, Alan and Sox, Harold, “The Role of Costs in Comparative Effectiveness Research,” *Health Affairs*, October 2010, (pp. 1805-1811).

Lesson 3: Identifying and Evaluating Policy Alternatives and Policies in Place

Patton, Carl and Sawicki, David. (1993). *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, Second Edition. (pp. 58-65). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 9: Wrapping Things Up. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Unit 4: Promoting Policy

Lesson 1: Strategies for Advocates

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 8: The Policy Window, and Joining the Streams. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Debra Strong, Debra Lipson, Todd Honeycutt and Jung Kim; “Foundation's Consumer Advocacy Health Reform Initiative Strengthened Groups' Effectiveness.” *Health Affairs*, 30, no.9 (2011):1799-1803

Colin Delany, **Online Politics 101**, Epolitics.com, 2011.

VIDEO: How to create a personal story video that makes real a policy issue. Adam Searing and Adam Linker, 2011 Available at: <http://vimeo.com/30089272>

OPTIONAL Background Reading for Video: *Video Training Manual for Advocacy Organizations*, 2011, Adam Searing, NC Justice Center. Available at: <http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/HAC%20-%20Video%20training%20manual.pdf>

Lesson 2: Coalitions

Kingdon, John W. Chapter 7: The Political Stream. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*

Community Catalyst, “Strength in Numbers: A Guide to Building Community Coalitions,” 2003.

Lesson 3: Give the People what They Want – Public Opinion Polling

REQUIRED READING FOR THIS LESSON:

1. *Public opinion polling* (Chapter 6); Oskamp S, Schultz PW
2. Then, instead of listening to a tutorial, I’d first like you to take a short look (just check out the first 20 or so slides briefly) at pollster Celinda Lake’s presentation on public attitudes around health reform.

Lake is one of the top Democratic pollsters in the country and her research is one of the major reasons the Affordable Care Act (national health reform) that passed in 2010 looks like it did. She also has interesting data on how the public feels about single-payer health plans and the insurance industry.

Remember – she did this work in 2007, so you can really see the polling influence on a major national policy.