HPM 351.001
Policy Issues in Health Services Delivery
(3 Credit Hours)
Department of Health Policy and Management
Gillings School of Global Public Health
Spring 2017
Mondays, 3:35-6:35 PM
Location: Rosenau 235

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Course Overview

This course is designed to provide senior BSPH students with an introduction to health care politics and policymaking in the United States. Politics is about competing ideas and philosophies regarding the appropriate balance between government, markets, individual liberty, and societal responsibilities, and choices between different goals and policy instruments. It is about what priorities the government should pursue and what it should not do. Politics is about constituencies, interests, money, budgets, taxes, subsidies, spending, influence, lobbying, distribution and redistribution of resources, regulation and deregulation, who gets what in the policymaking process and from legislatures and executive agencies. Politics is also about the exercise of power, conflict, cooperation, compromise and negotiation, authority, elections, rules and procedures, and institutions. And politics is about partisanship, public opinion, messaging, rhetoric, persuasion, strategies, and expertise. Politics can be visible and involve explicit choices that have immediate results; it can also be invisible and policymakers’ decisions can produce unanticipated consequences and long-term impacts.
Those working in or studying public health and health services research sometimes think of their work as apolitical, with the task a fundamentally technical one of identifying the most efficient, effective health-promoting policies for adoption. Yet policymaking in health care and public health is inherently political. Health policies reflect different values, impose various obligations, pursue different priorities, result in varying forms of redistribution, and give authority to different institutions.

This course is about the intersection between politics and health policymaking. We will explore how American political institutions, interests, and ideologies shape health policy and public health. We will focus on the roles that the presidency, Congress, courts, interest groups, public opinion and media play in health policymaking. We will also explore concepts such as agenda setting, issue framing, federalism, policy feedback and legacies, the “hidden” or “delegated” welfare state, and partisan polarization.

We will illuminate and illustrate these political dynamics by studying the century-long struggle in the United States over health care reform and universal insurance. The picture that we paint of American politics and policymaking will be drawn on the canvas of health care reform. How did we get to this point in American health policy? Why is health reform so hard to enact in the U.S.? How did past struggles over national health insurance shape our (non)system and set the stage for contemporary debates? These are the questions we will grapple with.

We will take full advantage of this extraordinary time in American health politics by focusing on the Affordable Care Act and its (likely) impending repeal. We will investigate how the Affordable Care Act became law, why health reform took the form that it did, how the ACA sought to change American health care, the issues surrounding its implementation, successes and failures, the fight over repeal, replacement options, and what US health policy will look like post-ACA. We will also examine health care spending and efforts to contain costs. Finally, we will consider lessons from other countries’ experiences in financing medical care and controlling health care costs.

Our goal is to understand: how politics shape health policymaking, lessons from past failures and successes in health care policy, the contemporary state of health reform, emerging controversies in health policy, options for reform and possible futures.
# Learning Objectives and HPM Competencies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Learning Objective</th>
<th>HPM Competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. <em>Describe</em> the history of health care reform in the United States and the origins of</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td>the contemporary health insurance system</td>
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<td>2. <em>Explain</em> how the history of US health care policy has shaped the current health care</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td>system and the reform debate</td>
<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>3. <em>Explain</em> why the U.S. health care system is so difficult to reform</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>4. <em>Analyze</em> how American political institutions, ideology, and interests impact the</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>substance and process of health policymaking in the US</td>
<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>5. <em>Evaluate</em> the Affordable Care Act, its implementation, and impact on the health care</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>system</td>
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<td>6. <em>Identify</em> the sources of high health care spending and options for cost control</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>6. <em>Compare</em> how other nations organize and finance their health care systems to the US</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>7. <em>Write</em> an analytic research paper that examines a contemporary issue in health policy</td>
<td>Health Industry Knowledge</td>
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<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>8. <em>Design, prepare, and produce</em> oral presentation as part of a group project/debate on</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Teamwork Skills</td>
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<td>issue in health reform</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research, Analysis &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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Resources

Course readings for each session are posted on the course Sakai site, are linked directly in the syllabus, and available on E-reserves under Sakai.

There should be no problem with the direct links in the syllabus for articles in e-journals that UNC carries, but with book chapters and other journal articles, it’s a different story. Depending on whether you are accessing the system on campus or at home, you may have to go through e-reserves above or the UNC library to access those articles. Please let me know about any problems that you encounter opening material and links immediately. From time to time I will also post other course materials—additional readings, assignments, web links to materials, and so on—on Sakai.

Requirements and Expectations

Participation

I believe in a highly interactive form of teaching. This class emphasizes active learning and regular class discussions and does not use Power Point as a form of lecture notes. Student participation is vital to the course’s success. I encourage you to ask questions and get involved in class discussions and our group exercises, you have much to learn from each other and I have much to learn from you. While I hope and expect that you will participate regularly in class discussions, there is no participation grade for the class. The class size makes it impossible for me to fairly assign such a grade.

Our discussions will often revolve around and take off from course readings, and it is critical that you read and reflect on these selections before each class. You should focus on the main concepts and arguments in each article, and not get bogged down trying to memorize the endless details we will encounter. Instead, you should think about the authors’ major themes, what they are arguing and the implications of those arguments, whether the analysis, evidence and arguments are persuasive, and what alternative explanations or arguments might look like. Even if we do not discuss every reading in class, you are responsible for reading and understanding the main points of assigned articles.

Each week I will send you a series of questions to think about as you read the materials in preparation for class—these questions will help guide you through that week’s materials and the stage for our in-class discussions. I expect you to think about, be able to answer, and come prepared to discuss these questions in class.

We will often study issues that are controversial—disagreement and debate are absolutely acceptable and indeed essential to learning. At all times you should be respectful of others’ views, ready to listen to different perspectives, open to changing your mind, and tolerant of opinions that may diverge from your own beliefs.
I have tried to make the reading load as manageable and compelling as possible, though some weeks it will be relatively heavy because of the ground we need to cover. I have high expectations regarding your engagement with the readings (exams will cover readings as material discussed in class). Some of the material we will cover may be confusing or unfamiliar and some of it is certainly provocative. I encourage you to voice your comments on the readings and raise questions during class, email me or drop by my office to further discuss the course (or anything else on your mind).

There is nothing that kills discussion and communal learning more than surfing the web during class. Please use computers only for taking notes; surfing the web during class is prohibited. Texting during class is also prohibited.

**Debates**

During the semester, the class will engage in 4 debates on key, controversial issues in health care policy and health reform. These debates will enable us to understand these issues in depth, expose us to different political and ideological perspectives, and give you an opportunity to hone your research and presentation skills.

The class will divide up into 8 groups of 5-6 students, with each group taking one side of our 4 debate topics. Each group will then present a 15-20 minute presentation with Power Point, followed by a chance to respond to the other side and to questions from the rest of the class. Presentations will be graded on the basis of their organization, clarity, content, flow, persuasiveness, delivery and strength of their research foundation.

These 4 debates will occur at defined times throughout the semester. Every group member is required to participate in planning their group’s presentation. The group should identify 3 members to lead the initial presentation, and 2-3 members who will be responsible for responding to questions from the class/other group and for asking questions of the other group.

The entire group must meet together with the course TA before you are scheduled to present to go over a rough draft of your group’s presentation, ensure you are on the right track, and discuss any issues or questions. Each group will also turn in their PPT to the TA and instructor when they present.

Our debate topics this semester will be:

1. Should North Carolina expand Medicaid eligibility?
2. Should Medicaid be block granted?
3. Should Medicare’s retirement age be raised?
4. Is high deductible insurance the solution to rising health costs?
**Attendance**

UNC’s official attendance policy is that “Regular class attendance is a student obligation, and a student is responsible for all the work, including tests and written work, of all class meetings. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings except for excused absences for authorized University activities or religious observances required by the student’s faith. If a student misses three consecutive class meetings, or misses more classes than the course instructor deems advisable, the course instructor may report the facts to the student’s academic dean.”

Attendance at all course sessions is required. Because this course meets only once a week, missing one session is equivalent to missing an entire week or two 75-minute sessions of another class. We will be doing many group activities and engaging in collective conversations together about the material. In order to participate in those conversations and activities, learn from each other, and help us create a better class, you need to attend in person. You are responsible for ensuring that you understand any material that we go over in class for a session you did not attend, and should consult with other students, the TA, and me to make sure you grasp that material. For any absences, excused or unexcused, you will be asked to complete a brief written response to that week’s discussion questions to ensure that you understand what we have read.

Attendance is 10% of your grade. If you attend all sessions, you will receive all 10 points. You can miss one class session for an unexcused absence without any penalty. If you miss only one class for an unexcused absence, you will still receive all 10 points. If you miss 2 classes for unexcused absences, you will lose 3 points off the attendance component of your grade (i.e., you would score 7/10). If you miss 3 classes for unexcused absences, you will lose 6 points (for a grade of 4/10). If you miss 4 classes for unexcused absences, you will lose all 10 points for attendance (0/10). If you miss 5 or more classes for unexcused absences, you will lose all 10 points for attendance and incur an additional 10 point penalty, meaning that your final course grade will be lowered by 20 points.

You should notify the course instructor two weeks in advance for excused absences for religious observances as required by UNC policy. Excused absences from class for additional valid reasons (illness or family emergency, etc.) may also be granted. A student should present his or her explanation for any absences in writing to the course instructor in advance if the reason for the absence could be foreseen, or as soon as possible thereafter if the reason for the absence could not be foreseen.

A student may appeal a course instructor’s denial of a request that an absence be excused if the request to be excused from class and the reasons for the request are presented to the course instructor in writing within the time limits above. The appeal is to be made to the course instructor’s immediate academic supervisor.
Students who are members of regularly organized and authorized University activities and who may be out of town taking part in some scheduled event are to be excused during the approved period of absence. Notification of such an absence must be sent by the responsible University official to the course instructor before the date(s) of the scheduled absence.

Exams and Papers

There will be a midterm, a final, and one paper. The midterm and final will be in-class exams, with essay and short-answer questions. An exam can only be rescheduled if an official exam excuse is provided.

The paper will be around 10 pages maximum in length. It should be succinctly written, cogently argued, carefully edited, professionally presented, and well-organized; we will talk much more in detail about the paper when it is assigned. Papers will be graded on the basis of substantive content, research effort, and writing quality.

When you submit your paper, be sure that it has a title page with your PID. Your name should not appear anywhere on the paper so we can grade anonymously. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the designated date. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for each additional day after the due date. If there is an unexpected event, such as illness, or another compelling reason why you cannot turn in the paper on time, you must speak with me beforehand to get an extension.

Evaluation / Grading

Your grade will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>March 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>March 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>May 8</td>
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The grading scale for the class is:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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**Lecture Capture**

This class is being recorded and/or streamed with the school’s lecture capture service. You should assume that anything you say and do in the room will be recorded. Recordings will be available in the Sakai site for this course and will only be viewable by persons enrolled in the Sakai site. Even if someone forwards a link to the video of a captured lecture to another person, that person will only be able to see the content if they’re enrolled in our Sakai site. Still, we request that you do not try to share these links with anyone outside the class, as they’re part of you and your fellow students’ educational record and sharing this information violates FERPA.

This class is a community and as a member of that community, you share obligations with all of us. One of those shared obligations has to do with how we handle the information and recordings of class sessions on lecture capture. At times we will be discussing politically sensitive topics and it is important that whatever is said in class stays in class. Lecture capture is solely for your personal use. By taking this course, you commit to not disseminating, distributing in any form, or otherwise sharing any of the material placed on lecture capture to any person or entity outside of our class. All students will be asked to sign a pledge affirming this commitment.

**Recognizing, Valuing, and Encouraging Diversity**

Promoting and valuing diversity in the classroom enriches learning and broadens everyone’s perspectives. Inclusion and tolerance can lead to respect for others and their opinions and is critical to maximizing the learning that we expect in this program. This may challenge our own closely held ideas and personal comfort zones. The results, however, create a sense of community and promote excellence in the learning environment. Diversity includes consideration of (1) the variety of life experiences others have had, and (2) factors related to “diversity of presence,” including, among others, age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, disability, gender, geographic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social...
position. This class will follow principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

**Disability Accommodation**

UNC-CH supports all reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or a pregnancy complication resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the UNC Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (ARS), [http://accessibility.unc.edu](http://accessibility.unc.edu); phone 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu. Students must document/register their need for accommodations with ARS before any accommodations can be implemented.

**UNC Honor Code**

*HPM Statement*

The principles of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship govern the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University as they have during the long life of this institution. Your acceptance of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Student Conduct and a respect for this most significant Carolina tradition. Your reward is in the practice of these principles.

Your participation in this course comes with the expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

If you have any questions about your responsibility or the responsibility of faculty members under the Honor Code, please consult with someone in either the Office of the Student Attorney General (966-4084) or the Office of the Dean of Students (966-4042).

Read “The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance” ([http://instrument.unc.edu](http://instrument.unc.edu)).

*Plagiarism*

UNC rules about plagiarism are available here: [http://guides.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism-citing](http://guides.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism-citing).

Please take the time to carefully read these rules. See also the tutorial available from the UNC library: [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/)

Knowing how to write a research/analysis paper that is original writing while drawing on previous research and existing sources is an important skill to develop. When the paper is assigned we will go over how to write a research paper, proper research methods, what constitutes plagiarism, proper citation form and standards, the difference between plagiarism and paraphrasing, and other related issues. These principles are crucial for you to learn given the temptations inherent in a web-based age of cut and paste. Students who plagiarize often
don’t think they are doing anything wrong—that is why it is vital that you read and understand the rules regarding plagiarism and the standards for academic research outlined in the links above. Please feel free to discuss any questions about these rules with me.

Your papers for this course must be original work. You cannot use someone else’s paper or copy material without attribution from another source. Nor can you use a paper that you have written or are writing for another course. Papers in this course have the status of exams—you are to complete all work yourself and you are not to receive help from others with writing your paper.

A special note on paraphrasing: it is not writing to copy someone else’s words/paragraphs/pages at length and simply alter an occasional word to pass it off as your own work. Avoid repeated and extensive use of this type of “close” paraphrasing, which amounts to plagiarism even if you are citing the source.

Course Evaluation

HPM participates in the UNC-CH’s online course evaluation system, enabled at the end of the semester by Scantron Class Climate. Your responses will be anonymous, with feedback provided in the aggregate. Open-ended comments will be shared with instructors, but not identified with individual students. Your participation in course evaluation is an expectation, since providing constructive feedback is a professional obligation. Feedback is critical, moreover, to improving the quality of our courses, as well as for instructor assessment. Students are notified when the evaluation is available online, towards the end of each semester.
Schedule of Sessions

January 23  
**The Politics of National Health Insurance**


January 30  
**Medicare, Medicaid & CHIP: The Politics of Demographic Incrementalism**


February 6  

**Enacting the Affordable Care Act: The (Im)Possible Politics of Reform**


[https://www.unc.edu/sakai/](https://www.unc.edu/sakai/)

February 13  

**Public Opinion, Media, and Health Reform**


[http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/29/6/1125.full.pdf+html](http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/29/6/1125.full.pdf+html)

[https://www.unc.edu/sakai/](https://www.unc.edu/sakai/)

[https://www.unc.edu/sakai/](https://www.unc.edu/sakai/)

*Debate 1: Should North Carolina expand Medicaid eligibility?*
February 20  
**Understanding the Affordable Care Act**

[https://www.unc.edu/sakai/](https://www.unc.edu/sakai/)

**Debate 2:** Should Medicaid be block granted?

February 27  
**Implementing the Affordable Care Act**

[http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/surveys_and_polls/2015/rwjf420854](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/surveys_and_polls/2015/rwjf420854)


March 6  
**Midterm**

March 20  
**Repealing and Replacing the Affordable Care Act**


*Readings for the above session likely to change as reality does*
March 27  International Health Systems

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~/media/Files/Publications/Issue%20Brief/2012/May/1595_Squires_explaining_high_hlt_care_spending_intl_brief.pdf


April 3  State Experiences with the Affordable Care Act

***Paper Due in Class April 3***

April 10  Controlling Health Care Spending


Debate 3: Is high deductible insurance the solution to rising health costs?
April 17  Reforming Medicare

http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/27/3/793.full.pdf+html

https://kaisershiefamilyfoundatio-files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8191.pdf

**Debate 4:** Should We Raise the Medicare Retirement Age?

April 24  Wrapping up: The Future of Health Reform

Readings TBA

May 8  Final Exam  4-7PM