HBEH 775: Introduction to Public Health Policy and the Policy-Making Process
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health
Syllabus (Spring 2018)

Course Day/Time: Fridays, 9:05 – 12:05pm

Course Location: MG 2304

Course Website: Accessible through Sakai, at: http://sakai.unc.edu

Credit Hours: 3.0

Course Instructors

Carolyn Crump, PhD Research Associate Professor Department of Health Behavior CB# 7506; 137 East Franklin Street, Suite 21 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7506 ccrump@email.unc.edu 919.966.5598	James Emery, MPH Research Associate Department of Health Behavior CB# 7506; 137 East Franklin Street, Suite 21 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7506 jemery@email.unc.edu; 919.966.7172

Course Description
Public health professionals are increasingly working on structural (i.e., policy, systems, and environmental) solutions to health problems. This course introduces students to skills they need to effectively assess and influence a policy change process.   Course content includes:

Module A) Problem Definition
- Problems as social constructions that can be defined for a policy intervention
- Social determinants of health as root causes of health inequities
- Core socio-political values that motivate stakeholder involvement in the policy process
- Framing and reframing public health problems

Module B) Policy Development
- Population-based approaches (policies, built environments, systems)
- Systems thinking as a tool to identify the scope of a problem and suggest the type of solution(s) to pursue
- Using policy theories to inform the scope and timing of a policy intervention
- Structuring a policy analysis to compare potential solutions and make a decision
- Using critical-thinking skills to analyze legislation and regulations

Module C) Policy Enactment
- General framework of the policy process (federal, state, local)
- Political control (internal and external)
- Strategies to influence the policy process
- Staying on message

Module D) Policy Implementation
- Governmental administrative (bureaucratic) structures and processes
- Planning for implementation
- Regulations and the rulemaking process

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand how public health problems are defined to elicit population-based solutions.
2. Describe how to apply policy analysis methods to compare potential solutions to address a public health problem.
3. Identify appropriate advocacy strategies and tactics to influence the policy process.
4. Plan for the implementation of an enacted policy.

Course Expectations & Assignments

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION** – 20% of final grade
   a. This is not a PowerPoint-based lecture class. Seminar-style discussions and group-based activities will enhance your learning from the required readings. Instructors might use PowerPoint slides to illustrate select concepts or to detail examples. Students are not permitted to audio or video record class sessions without written permission of the instructors.
   b. Your grade depends on your attendance, punctuality, completion of assigned readings, and the quality of your engagement in class discussions and activities. Participation is an act of stewardship which means you are helping support the learning of everyone by being punctual, prepared, and committed.
   c. Inform the instructors of any absences in advance of the class so they can adjust activities accordingly.

2. **TOPIC SUBMISSION** – not graded
   a. **Must be uploaded on Sakai by 8pm – Wednesday, January 31, 2018.**
      i. *NOTE: This submission is not graded. Instructors will review your paper topic, provide feedback, and either approve the topic or provide guidance to adjust the topic.*
   b. Paper formatting:
      i. Calibri 11-point font
      ii. 3-4 double-spaced pages with 1" margins
      iii. Header and footer with 0.3" margins. Header should include your Last name, First name, and the title: "Topic Submission". Footer should include page numbers.
      iv. Include a title page with your name, "HBEH 775 Spring 2018," and "Topic Submission."
      v. References should be cited and bibliographically compiled using APA format.
      vi. If you include a table or figure, be sure to give it a formal title (e.g., "Table A. Health Conditions Associated with the Problem") and introduce it with a sentence in the body of the paper.
   c. Content your paper must include (NOTE: we suggest using headers to make these sections obvious to the reader):
      i. **Public health problem** (1 page)**.** <u>Briefly</u> describe the public health problem you want to explore with some background and/or historical context; include 1-2 pieces of salient evidence.
      ii. **Policy aspect of the problem** (1/2 page). Briefly describe the policy/regulatory, environmental or system aspects of the problem that you plan to investigate

further, and anything you currently know about how it contributes to the problem.

    iii. **Available evidence** (½ page). List the types of evidence available to you when more thoroughly describing the health problem in a later paper. Suggest whether that evidence will be sufficient to make the case for it as a "problem."

    iv. **Potential solutions** (2 pages). List and briefly describe 2-4 solutions you plan to investigate in the Problem Definition paper and the subsequent Policy Analysis paper. For each solution, identify a jurisdictional level of focus (i.e., federal, state, local), specific location (e.g., Chapel Hill, NC), and the decision-making body that would be enacting the change. Focus on solutions that are distinct from each other (not just slight variations on the same theme). The solutions should be structural, such as:

- State/local public policies (which can include legislation or implementation procedures including rules and regulations)
- Private organizational policies
- Systems within one organization, or encompassing multiple organizations
- Built environments (human-created)

3. **PROBLEM DEFINITION paper** – 20% of final grade
   a. **Must be uploaded on Sakai by 8pm – Monday, March 19, 2018**
   b. Paper formatting:
      i. Calibri 11-point font
      ii. 5-8 double-spaced pages with 1" margins
      iii. Header and footer with 0.3" margins. Header should include your Last name, First name, and the title: "Problem Definition." Footer should include page numbers.
      iv. Include a title page with your name, "HBEH 775 Spring 2018," "Problem Definition paper," and the public health topic that you are addressing.
      v. References should be cited and bibliographically compiled using APA format.
      vi. If you include a table or figure, be sure to give it a formal title (e.g., "Table A. Stakeholders of the Problem") and introduce it with a sentence in the body of the paper.
   c. Content your paper must include (NOTE: we suggest using headers to make these sections obvious to the reader):
      i. **Public health problem** (1 page). Incorporate limited, relevant evidence that describes the health or social problem, and characterizes the scope and urgency of the need.
      ii. **Root causes and inequities** (1 page). Provide evidence that helps you identify underlying social determinants of health and/or any inequities that need redress.
      iii. **Structural inadequacy** (1-2 pages). Link the problem to underlying structures (e.g., policies, environments, and/or systemic processes) that need improvement. Describe the type of change that might positively influence the problem (e.g., policy enactment, policy language that needs strengthening, implementation challenges that need fixing), and identify the decision-making body that would be responsible for making the improvements (e.g., a legislative body, an executive body that administrates existing policy).

        iv. **Stakeholders** (1-2 pages). Use a table to identify 8-10 key stakeholders of the problem who are categorized into three groups (i.e., interest groups, elected officials, government administrators). For each stakeholder, identify their primary motivation in life, how the problem affects them, and the core values by which they would judge the type of solutions you think might be needed.

        v. **Potential solutions** (1-2 pages). List and <u>briefly</u> describe 2-4 potential solutions that you plan to compare to the "status quo" (current conditions with no change) in the Policy Analysis paper. Try to identify solutions that are distinct from each other (not just slight variations on the same theme). For each solution, provide a rationale for its inclusion. If any solutions are currently under consideration by the decision-making body, describe its current status in the process.

4. **CRITIQUE OF PUBLIC MEETING paper** – 20% of final grade
   a. <u>**Must be uploaded on Sakai by 8pm – Monday, April 9, 2018**</u>
   b. Attend a public meeting of a decision-making government entity at the local, state or federal level, and write a 3-4 page critiquing their meeting process.
      i. The entity could be the NC General Assembly (or one of its committees), a county commission, a city or town council/aldermen, a local committee that serves an elected body (e.g., a Board of Health, Board of Education, a planning or finance committee), or a regulatory commission. We recommend choosing an entity that conducts substantive discussion pertaining to health/social issues.
      ii. The type of meeting should be a regularly scheduled, monthly meeting that includes making decisions or taking action. Do not attend a strategic planning session, information session, or staff retreat.
   c. Here are some examples:
      i. **NC General Assembly:** This next session opens on February 20. Each day has many committee meetings (verify that they are open to the public before trying to attend). Usually in the small font size is the general session business work by the chambers. http://www.ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/
      ii. **Chapel Hill Town Council:** Tends to hold their business meetings about every 2 weeks. http://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/government/council-minutes-and-videos
      iii. **Carrboro Alderman:** Seem to meet and conduct business almost every week. https://carrboro.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx
      iv. **Carrboro Town Committees:** There are various working committees that also hold meetings and make decisions on a smaller scale (for example, they decide what to recommend to the Alderman). http://townofcarrboro.org/AgendaCenter
   d. Many public meetings will discuss several disparate items or topics; pick one of the more substantive items/topics (NOTE: the topic does not have to be related to your other papers). Observe their meeting process, the quality of their discussions, and how they formulate decisions or action steps. Use your paper to reflect critically on the quality of their grasp of the problem and any proposed solutions (i.e., Did they explore the problem enough prior to making decisions? Did they demonstrate a sensitivity to the various stakeholders involved?)
   e. Paper formatting:
      i. Calibri 11-point font
      ii. 3-4 double-spaced pages with 1" margins

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   iii. Header and footer with 0.3" margins. Header should include your Last name, First name, and the title: "Meeting Observation". Footer should include page numbers.

   iv. Include a title page with your name, "HBEH 775 Spring 2018," "Meeting Observation paper," the entity that is meeting, and the date of the meeting.

   v. References should be cited and bibliographically compiled using APA format.

   vi. If you include a table or figure, be sure to give it a formal title (e.g., "Table A. Types of Stakeholders Speaking at Meeting") and introduce it with a sentence in the body of the paper.

  f. Content your paper must include (NOTE: we suggest using headers to make these sections obvious to the reader):

   i. **Problem** (½ page)**.** Describe the issue under discussion.

   ii. **Stakeholders** (½ page). List some of the apparent stakeholders of the problem and their unique perspective on the problem. This could be a table.

   iii. **Potential solutions** (½ page)**.** List and briefly describe any solutions already being proposed for the problem.

   iv. **Implementation concerns** (1 page)**.** Discuss any administrative implementation concerns which they identified and discussed, or which you identified but they failed to mention.

   v. **Decisions** (½ page)**.** Describe any decisions made during the meeting.

   vi. **Critical reflection** (1 page)**.** Provide your critical perspective on the entity's process in terms of meeting efficiency, their effectiveness at communication, their sensitivity to inequities, and their seeming awareness of the public health impact of their decisions.

 5. **POLICY ANALYSIS paper** – 40% of final grade

  a. **Must be uploaded on Sakai by 8am (morning) – Sunday, April 29, 2018**

  b. Paper formatting:

   i. Calibri 11-point font

   ii. 11-15 double-spaced pages with 1" margins

   iii. Header and footer with 0.3" margins. Header should include your Last name, First name, and the title: "Policy Analysis". Footer should include page numbers.

   iv. Include a title page with your name, "HBEH 775 Spring 2018," "Policy Analysis paper," and the public health topic that you are addressing.

   v. References should be cited and bibliographically compiled using APA format.

   vi. If you include a table or figure, be sure to give it a formal title (e.g., "Table A. Stakeholders of the Problem") and introduce it with a sentence in the body of the paper.

  c. Content your paper must include (NOTE: we suggest using headers to make these sections obvious to the reader):

   i. **Public health problem** (1 page)**.** Use the Instructors' feedback on your previous papers to improve (i.e., concision, precision, and style) your description of the health or social problem. Identify any root causes or the problem, and any social or health disparities arising from the problem.

   ii. **Structural inadequacy** (1 page)**.** Concisely identify the policy aspects of the problem that need redress. Describe any observable inequities in the existing structures that might be driving the disparities (e.g., a policy that safeguards wealthy neighborhoods, but fails to protect poor neighborhoods). Be as specific

as you can about the policy gaps, weaknesses, and/or implementation challenges that need fixing. Identify the jurisdictional level that would be appropriate for resolving the policy concerns. *(Do not merely copy from your Problem Definition paper. Improve and add value.)*

iii. **Political constraints** (½ page)**.** For the jurisdictional level you identified, briefly describe any political constraints that might pose a barrier or challenge to the improvements (e.g., a Governor who has banned any new agency regulations; or a state law preempting local governments' ability to enact regulatory ordinances).

iv. **Proposed solutions** (1 page)**.** List and briefly describe 2-4 legislative and/or organizational policies that you will compare to the "status quo" in the policy analysis. If appropriate, briefly describe how the solutions have passed or failed in other locations or jurisdictional levels.

v. **Stakeholder Power Analysis** (2 ½ pages)**.** Use a table to analyze the public acceptability (interest groups) and policy feasibility (elected officials and government administrators) of your proposed solutions. You can use the template provided to you as Worksheet 1 from class #8, or design your own as long as similar information is conveyed. For each stakeholder (categorized into interest groups, elected officials, government administrators), your analysis should compare the proposed solutions to the status quo.

vi. **Impact Analysis** (2 ½ pages)**.** Compare the solutions to the status quo using decision criteria categorized by the relevant values. You can use the template provided to you as Worksheet 2-B from class #8, or design your own as long as similar information is conveyed.

   1. Include a title for your table, and introduce the table with at least one sentence of text.
   2. Usually, the data within the cells would come from published research or analyses, or from proxy data. For your purposes in this paper, provide an estimate for the impact in each cell of the table (i.e., use an adjective, such as "improve," or "decrease," and after each word , write a 1-sentence brief rational for your estimate). For example in a tobacco problem, if the criteria was "Disease Incidence," the impact adjective might be "Decrease" with a brief rationale for one solution being, "This regulation would decrease the tobacco behavior which would ultimately decrease the number of new disease cases").
   3. Compare the impact across solutions, interpret your findings, and then state your conclusion.

vii. **Recommendation** (½ page). Concisely and clearly make a recommendation for one (or more) of the solution(s) that you analyzed).

viii. **Suggestions for Implementation** (2-3 pages)**.** Identify key steps that need to happen to implement your recommended solution(s). Be as specific as is necessary to inform policymakers of the feasibility for implementation. Identify any challenges to that implementation, and offer suggestions for the challenges. You can include lessons learned from other locations that have implemented similar policies.

ix. **Advocacy strategies** (1-2 pages)**.** Close your paper by describing some advocacy strategies you could use to gain support for enactment of the solution. Use your Stakeholder Matrix as a guide to identify the advocacy targets and select strategies most likely to influence them.

Course Grading
Each assignment will receive a score that proportionately contributes to the cumulative 100-point score for the final course grade. Assignment proportions are as follows:

1. Participation in class discussions and activities (20% of final grade)
2. Problem definition paper (20% of final grade)
3. Critique of a public meeting (20% of final grade)
4. Policy analysis paper (40% of final grade)

Final course grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:
> **H** – High pass; clearly demonstrates excellence in graduate-level work (90-100%)
> **P** – Pass; satisfactory demonstration of graduate-level work (75-89%)
> **L** – Low Pass; inadequate demonstration of graduate-level work (60-74%)
> **F** – Fail (<60%)

Work should be completed using your own words (i.e., direct quotes should only be used when necessary), and your ideas should be supported with well-cited evidence and theory. You will be graded on the comprehensiveness and quality of your research, analysis, writing organization and style. The UNC Writing Center provides resource sheets and one-on-one writing assistance (http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/). Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, professional format, and use of bibliographic citations are expected for all assignments. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins using Calibri 11-point font. Include headers and footers as stipulated.

UNC Chapel Hill Honor Code
Course assignments are all subject to the UNC Honor Code as promulgated in *The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* (available at: http://instrument.unc.edu). As a student at UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the university's honor code. It is your responsibility to learn about and abide by the code. While the honor code prohibits students from lying, cheating and stealing, at its essence it is a means through which UNC maintains standards of academic excellence and community values. Receiving a degree from a university with a reputation for academic integrity conveys increased value to that degree. Abiding by the honor code takes many forms. In all written assignments, students should take care to appropriately credit ideas that are not their own, treat the opinions of others with respect, and work independently on non-group assignments. UNC treats suspected Honor Code violations very seriously. Instructors are required to report suspected violations of the honor code, including inappropriate collaborative work or problematic use of secondary materials, to the Honor Court. Honor Court sanctions can include receiving a zero for the assignment, failing the course and/or suspension from the university. If you have questions about the application of the honor code in this course, you can ask the instructors. Additional information about the honor code at UNC is available through the following resources:
- *UNC honor system tutorial*: http://studentconduct.unc.edu/students/honor-system-module/
- *UNC Library's plagiarism tutorial*: http://www.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism/
- *UNC Writing Center handout on plagiarism*: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/

CEPH Core Competencies
This course will contribute toward the following MPH Core Competencies as defined by the Association of Schools of Public Health (http://www.aspph.org/educate/models/mph-competency-model/):

- Health Policy and Management
    - Discuss the policy process for improving the health status of populations.

- o   Apply "systems thinking" for resolving organizational problems.
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
    - o   Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.
    - o   Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
    - o   Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
    - o   Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.
    - o   Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.
- Communication and Informatics
    - o   Use informatics and communication methods to advocate for community public health programs and policies.
- Systems Thinking
    - o   Identify characteristics of a system.
    - o   Identify unintended consequences produced by changes made to a public health system.
    - o   Explain how systems (e.g. individuals, social networks, organizations, and communities) may be viewed as systems within systems in the analysis of public health problems.

Assigned Readings

Assigned readings are listed in a separate reading list that is available on the course's Sakai website. Students are expected to complete the required readings prior to class, and to bring those readings to class for discussion and reference during class activities. For a few classes we have provided supplemental readings that provide additional helpful information but are not required for the course.

Class Sessions

Introduction

Class #1 (January 12, 2018) – Introduction

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Describe course scope
2. Identify course requirements
3. Describe the health promotion paradigm enhancement from behavioral to ecological models
4. Identify structural interventions

Module A) Problem Definition

Class #2 (January 19, 2018) – Problem Definition (Part 1)

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Describe the social construction process of defining health problems
2. Use evidence and data to characterize a health problem
3. Use social determinants of health and inequities to clarify root causes of health problems

Class #3 (January 26, 2018) – Problem Definition (Part 2)

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Describe systems thinking methodologies including:
    a. Soft-systems
    b. Systems Dynamics Modeling
2. Interpret a system map

Class #4 (February 2, 2018) – Stakeholder values
REMINDER: Topic Submission due January 31, 2018 on Sakai by 8:00pm.

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Define and use four socio-political values as criteria for policy-related activities
2. Define paternalism and understand when it might be justifiable for public health needs
3. Describe social justice as a public health value

Class #5 (February 9, 2018) – Framing the problem

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Construct problem definitions using a template
2. Use six framing elements to analyze and structure message frames
3. Frame and reframe messages
4. Critically assess problem briefs

Module B) Policy Development

Class #6 (February 16, 2018) – Population-based Solutions (P,E,S)

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Define structural solutions to health problems
2. Identify and describe types of structural interventions (i.e., policy, built environment, systems)
3. Describe how system change works

2/23/2018 *UNC Minority Health Conference – no class*

Class #7 (March 2, 2018) – Policy Strategy: Influencing Agendas

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Consider political criteria for a policy focus
    a. Stakeholder power and social image
    b. Policy benefits and costs
2. Use three theories to identify windows of opportunity for influencing policy agendas

Class #8 (March 9, 2018) – Policy Analysis (Part 1)
REMINDER: Problem Definition paper due Monday, March 19, 2018 on Sakai by 8:00pm.

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Describe the basic policy analysis process
2. Identify multiple types of policy analyses
3. Identify at least two types of information used in policy analysis
4. Use matrices to organize data for policy analysis
5. Describe how to synthesize disparate information to inform policy decisions

3/12-16/2018 *SPRING BREAK week – no class*

Class #9 (March 23, 2018) – Policy Analysis (Part 2)

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Describe multiple types of policy sub-analysis
    a. Cost-Benefit
    b. Cost-Effectiveness
    c. HIA
    d. Geospatial (GIS)
2. Use a matrix template for rapid analysis
3. Describe the Bill analysis process
4. Critically review a policy brief

3/30/2018 *HOLIDAY – no class*

Module C) Policy Enactment

Class #10 (April 6, 2018) – Politics of Policy Solutions
> *REMINDER: Meeting Critique paper due Monday, April 9, 2018 on Sakai by 8:00pm.*

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Identify ethical considerations for partnership on public health projects
2. Identify key entities/offices involved in the development of public and organizational policy
3. Describe the general process for creating public and organizational policy
4. List forms of external and internal control in the policy process

Class #11 (April 13, 2018) – Policy Strategy: Influencing Policy Enactment

HOMEWORK to bring to this class
For a public health problem (you can use the topic which is the focus for your papers), write a 15-30 second spoken response to each of the following questions – as if a reporter was interviewing you:
1. Briefly describe the problem.
2. Who is primarily affected, and why?
3. What is the solution?
4. How do the values of "human potential" and "community" help to convey your solution? (Refer to the AHA-RWJF 2017 reading, page 7).

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Identify policy and media advocacy strategies and describe tactics for each strategy
2. Use an advocacy planning template
3. Use three strategies to "stay on message" when being interviewed

Module D) Policy Implementation

Class #12 (April 20, 2018) – Planning for Implementation

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Define policy implementation and describe its key functions
2. Identify types of implementation authorities
3. Plan for the implementation of an enacted policy

Class #13 (April 27, 2018) – Rules and Regulations
> *REMINDER: Policy Analysis paper due Sunday, April 29, 2018 on Sakai by 8:00am (morning).*

Learning Objectives – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:
1. Identify the stages of rulemaking
2. Monitor the progress of developing rules and regulations using governmental websites
3. Identify major political games that influence the implementation process

Background information (Civics 101)

The following materials could be useful to refresh your Civics 101 knowledge. Some of these have been uploaded to the corresponding classes as supplemental readings.

1. **How a Bill becomes a Law** (United States)
   - https://www.congress.gov/legislative-process
   - https://lowenthal.house.gov/uploadedphotos/highresolution/db7257e2-5b5a-4424-9169-4e63175843df.jpg

2. **How a Bill becomes a Law** (North Carolina)
   - http://www.ncleg.net/ncgainfo/Bill-Law/bill-law.html
   - https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/course_materials/General%20Assembly%20Handout%20-%20Master_0.pdf

3. **Budget making.** The U.S. budget-making process has been explained by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (founded during President Jimmy Carter's administration): http://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-introduction-to-the-federal-budget-process

4. **State Preemption of Local Policy-making.** For those of you analyzing local policy solutions, you might want to see this report, especially page 4, to see if the state legislature has limited the ability of local government (city, county) to enact policies. North Carolina has a preponderance of limitations compared to other states in the country. If your issue is listed for your state, you can still propose locally-based policy solutions to compare, but will need to include in the political challenges the fact that the state legislation has currently preempted local policy action.
   http://nlc.org/sites/default/files/2017-03/NLC-SML%20Preemption%20Report%202017-pages.pdf