

**HBEH 775: Introduction to Public Health Policy and the Policy-Making Process**  
*UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health*  
**Syllabus (Spring 2017)**

**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**

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**Course Description**

Public health professionals are increasingly working on policy, systems, and environmental solutions to health problems. Students will progress through four modules during the semester: A) Problem Definition; B) Policy Development; C) Policy Enactment; and D) Policy Implementation. This course introduces students to skills they will need to effectively assess and influence a policy change process. Course content will include:

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 select (or structure) and 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. **Preparation for and participation in class discussions and activities** – 20% of final grade
  - a. 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.
  - b. Inform the instructors of any absences in advance of the class so they can adjust activities accordingly.
  - c. 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.
2. **Report on your observation of a public meeting.**
  - a. **All students' meeting-observation papers must be uploaded to Sakai by 8pm Thursday - March 23, 2017 (see file naming protocol below).**
  - b. Write a 3-4 page report of your observations after attending a meeting of a decision-making government entity at the local, state or federal level. Such an 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. The meeting could be a standard meeting or a public hearing for a proposed project. The meeting topic does not have to be linked to your final paper topic. We recommend you choose a governance entity that conducts substantive discussion pertaining to health or social issues.
  - c. Paper structure:
    - i. Describe the issue under discussion (1/2 page)
    - ii. List some key stakeholders of the problem and their unique perspective on the problem (1/2 page, could be a table)
    - iii. List any solutions already being proposed for the problem (1/2 page)
    - iv. Identify any bureaucratic implementation concerns or problems (1/2 page)
    - v. Describe any decisions made during the meeting (1/2 page)
    - vi. Provide your critical perspective on the entity's process in terms of efficiency, equity, effectiveness at communication, and awareness of the public health impact of their decisions

- d. Your meeting-observation paper must be uploaded to Sakai for the Instructors and your colleagues to read.
  - i. **File naming protocol:** LastName\_FirstName\_Topic\_Jurisdiction (e.g., *Emery\_James\_Waste Reduction\_Durham County*)
  
- 3. **Policy Paper (completed in three parts):**
  - a. Students will work independently to write a paper that will be submitted in three installments. The purpose of the 3-part paper is to give students an opportunity to concisely define a public health problem and compare a few legislative and/or administrative (implementation) solutions.
  - b. **Part 1. Topic description** (3-4 double-spaced pages). **Must be posted on Sakai by 8pm Wednesday - February 1, 2017 (see file naming protocol).**
    - i. Content your paper must include:
      - 1. Briefly describe the public health problem you want to explore with some background and/or historical context; include 1-2 pieces of salient evidence (1 page).
      - 2. Describe the types and sufficiency of evidence available that could be useful when more thoroughly describing the health problem in a later paper (1/2 page).
      - 3. Identify a jurisdictional level of focus (i.e., federal, state, local) and specific location (e.g., Orange County, Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System) and describe the problematic policy/regulatory aspects that you plan to investigate. Include a brief description of any potential policy/regulatory controversies or conflicts (e.g., economic, government procedure or role, scientific uncertainty, or political dynamics) (1-2 pages).
      - 4. List and briefly describe 2-4 mutually exclusive solutions you plan to investigate in Parts 2 and 3 of the policy paper. The solutions should be classifiable as: state/local public policies (which can include legislation or implementation procedures including rules and regulations); private organizational policies; inter-organizational systems; or built environments). Identify the decision-making body for each solution; and, if known, mention the progress status for each solution (e.g., proposed, in committee, enacted) (1/2 to 1 page). (**NOTE:** “mutually exclusive” solutions are unique from one another, not merely variants of the same solution. For example, two mutually-exclusive solutions to childhood obesity include: mandatory school PE for all grades; prohibiting junk food vending on school property.)
      - 5. Using APA format, appropriately footnote all sources used to reference the problem or list potential solutions.
    - ii. **File naming protocol:** LastName\_FirstName\_Part1.
    - iii. This paper is ungraded. Instructors will review topic, provide feedback, and either approve topic or provide guidance to adjust topic.

- c. Part 2. Problem definition paper (5-7 double-spaced pages). **Must be posted on Sakai by 8pm Wednesday - March 8, 2017 (see file naming protocol below).**
- i. Content your paper must include:
    1. Use a 3-part structure to define the public health problem.
      - a. Part 1-A: *the public health problem*) Incorporate limited, relevant evidence to define the health or social problem so that it suggests the need for a policy/system/environmental solution (1-2 pages).
      - b. Part 1-B: *the policy/regulatory challenge*) Describe the policy or implementation concerns/needs at a specific jurisdictional level (e.g., what new policy is needed; what existing policy needs changing; what implementation aspects are failing). Identify how the policy or implementation structures and/or procedures need redress in your opinion (1-2 pages). Also explain the authorities that an entity/agency would need to make improvements to the policy problem as you have characterized it (1/2 page).
      - c. Part 2: *stakeholders*) Use a table to identify 5-10 key stakeholders that represent different stakeholder types and different perspectives on the issue for your selected jurisdictional level, and identify the values that motivate their interest in the issue and its potential solutions (1 page).
      - d. Part 3: *potential solutions to compare*) List and briefly describe the 2-4 mutually-exclusive, potential solutions that you plan to compare to the “status quo” in the next paper using a policy analysis procedure, and provide a rationale for including each solution (1-2 pages). (**NOTE:** “mutually exclusive” solutions are unique from one another, not merely variants of the same solution. For example, two mutually-exclusive solutions to childhood obesity include: mandatory school PE for all grades; prohibiting junk food vending on school property. “Status Quo” is the situation as it currently exists without any change.)
      - e. Using APA format, appropriately footnote all data, information and/or media sources.
    - ii. **File naming protocol:** LastName\_FirstName\_Part2.
    - iii. Instructors will grade your paper and provide feedback.

d. Part 3. Policy Analysis paper (12-15 double-spaced pages). **Must be posted on Sakai by 8am – Saturday, April 29, 2017 (day after last class) (see file naming protocol below).**

    - i. Content your paper must include:
      1. Use the Instructors’ feedback on your previous papers to enhance your concise definition of the health or social problem (1-2 pages).
      2. List and briefly describe the 2-4 specific legislative or implementation solutions 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 (1-2 pages).
      3. To compare the solutions and status quo, structure two analytic tables: a) **Stakeholder Power Analysis** of several key stakeholders that encompass interest groups, elected/appointed officials, and administrative

implementers; b) **Impact Analysis** to compare/contrast the solutions and include several decision criteria which you have operationalized as indicators (4-5 pages). Describe each table and summarize your conclusions from each table. (*NOTE: You are not required to include data within the cells since you are not conducting the policy analysis per se, but if you want to try “guesstimating” the data within the cells, it could help you get a sense for the functionality of your tables. You will not be graded on the guesstimated data.*)

4. Compare the implementation feasibility of the solutions by listing in a table the implementation needs and challenges for the solutions you identified. Summarize your conclusions from that comparison (1-2 pages).
  5. List and describe the implementation planning considerations that could help you resolve those challenges for each solution, including any lessons learned from other locations that have implemented similar policies (1-2 pages).
  6. Close your paper by describing some advocacy strategies you could use to gain support for and enactment of the solution (2-3 pages).
  7. Using APA format, appropriately footnote all data, information and/or media sources.
- ii. One reference to help you structure this part of your paper is: *CDC Policy Analysis Framework* (specifically Table 1: Policy Analysis Key Questions) to guide your critical thinking. It is included in the assigned readings for the course.
  - iii. **File naming protocol:** LastName\_FirstName\_Part3.
  - iv. Instructors will grade your paper and provide feedback.

### **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. Report on an observation of a public meeting (20% of final grade)
3. Policy Paper completed in three parts:
  - a. Part 1 (ungraded)
  - b. Part 2 (20% of final grade)
  - c. Part 3 (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 a header with the Paper file name so it can be printed for grading purposes. The header can be customized with 0.3" distance from edge.

### **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.
  - Apply "systems thinking" for resolving organizational problems.
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.
  - Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
  - Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
  - Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.
  - Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.
- Communication and Informatics
  - Use informatics and communication methods to advocate for community public health programs and policies.
- Systems Thinking
  - Identify characteristics of a system.
  - Identify unintended consequences produced by changes made to a public health system.
  - 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.

### Required Readings

Assigned readings are listed in a separate required reading list. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and to bring the readings to class for discussion and reference.

### Class Sessions

| <b>Introduction</b>   |
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| <b>Class #1 (January 13, 2017) – Introduction</b>   |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe course scope</li><li>2. Identify course requirements</li><li>3. Describe the health promotion paradigm enhancement from behavioral to ecological models</li><li>4. Identify structural interventions</li></ol>  |
| <b>Module A) Problem Definition</b>   |
| <b>Class #2 (January 20, 2017) – Problem Definition (Part 1)</b>  |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the social construction process of defining health problems</li><li>2. Use evidence and data to characterize a health problem</li><li>3. Use social determinants of health and inequities to clarify root causes of health problems</li></ol>                   |
| <b>Class #3 (January 27, 2017) – Problem Definition (Part 2)</b>  |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe systems thinking methodologies including:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Soft-systems</li><li>b. Systems Dynamics Modeling</li></ol></li><li>2. Interpret a system map</li><li>3. Describe how systems change</li></ol>                                |
| <b>Class #4 (February 3, 2017) – Stakeholder values</b><br><i>REMINDER: Policy Paper part #1 due February 1, 2017 on Sakai by 8:00pm.</i>   |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Define and use four socio-political values as criteria for policy-related activities</li><li>2. Define paternalism and understand when it might be justifiable for public health needs</li><li>3. Distinguish between social utility and social justice values</li></ol> |
| <b>Class #5 (February 10, 2017) – Framing the problem</b>   |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Construct problem definitions using a template</li><li>2. Use six framing elements to analyze and structure message frames</li><li>3. Frame and reframe messages</li><li>4. Critically assess problem briefs</li></ol>   |
| <b>Module B) Policy Development</b>   |
| <b>Class #6 (February 17, 2017) – Population-based Solutions (P,E,S)</b>  |
| <b>Learning Objectives</b> – Upon completing the class, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify three types of structural interventions (i.e., policy, built environment, systems)</li><li>2. Describe examples of structural interventions</li><li>3. Use system mapping techniques to prepare for identifying change opportunities</li></ol>                  |
| <b>2/24/2017 UNC Minority Health Conference – no class</b>  |

**Class #7 (March 3, 2017) – 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 10, 2017) – Policy Analysis (Part 1)**

**REMINDER: Policy Paper part #2 due March 8, 2017 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

**3/13-17/2017 SPRING BREAK week – no class**

**REMINDER: Meeting observation paper due March 23, 2017 on Sakai by 8:00pm.**

**Class #9 (March 24, 2017) – Policy Analysis (Part 2)**

**REMINDER: Meeting observation paper due March 23, 2017 on Sakai by 8:00pm.**

**Learning Objectives** – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:

1. Identify 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

**Module C) Policy Enactment**

**Class #10 (March 31, 2017) – Politics of Policy Solutions**

**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 7, 2017) – 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?

**Learning Objectives** – Upon completing the class, students will be able to:

1. Use three strategies to “stay on message” when being interviewed
2. Identify policy and media advocacy strategies and describe tactics for each strategy
3. Use an advocacy planning template

**4/14/2017 HOLIDAY – no class**

**REMINDER: Policy Paper part #3 due Saturday, April 29, 2017 on Sakai by 8:00am.**

## **Module D) Policy Implementation**

### **Class #12 (April 21, 2017) – 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 28, 2017) – Rules and Regulations**

**REMINDER: Policy Paper part #3 due Saturday, April 29, 2017 on Sakai by 8:00am.**

**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