University at Albany  
School of Public Health  
Department of Health Policy, Management, and Behavior  

HPM 501  
Introduction to Health Policy Analysis  

Fall 2011

Instructor  
Wendy Weller, PhD  
Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 or by appointment  
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Phone: (518) 402-0302

Schedule  
Wednesday 1:00-3:50  
Classroom C1

Overview  

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of health policy analysis and policy-making, including key issues in policy development, implementation, and evaluation. During the semester students will learn about policy formation and the factors (eg, economic, social, political) that influence policymaking, implementation, and modification as well as specific techniques for analyzing policy problems, developing alternatives to address problems, analyzing options, and recommending a course of action.

This class focuses on public policy however, students should recognize that policies are made and implemented in the private sector and private organizations are affected by public policy.

Goals  

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Appreciate the complexity of policy development and evaluation due to the interrelationship between political, social, legal, ethical, and economic goals.
  - Identify factors that can influence health policy and the health status of individuals and populations
  - Identify influences on the policy-making process (eg, interest groups) and identify different mechanisms for bringing about changes in policy
- Relate some of the basic frameworks that analysts and policy-makers use to develop and evaluate health policy
- Understand the interrelationship between the private and public sector in health care delivery and in shaping health policy
- Take a health policy problem, understand its origins and limitations and propose and evaluate policy options for consideration, including recommending a specific action, and communicate these analyses both verbally and written.

**Specific Course Competencies**

1. To provide students with an understanding of the public policy cycle in the U.S., from problem identification to policy modification.

3. Introduce students to the techniques of health policy analysis, including how to analyze and synthesize information about a problem, develop alternative solutions, and recommend a course of action.

4. To provide students with an opportunity to develop skills in preparing written policy documents and giving policy-relevant presentations.

**Methods/Course Structure**

The course will consist of some lectures, but the majority of the course will consist of discussions and in-class exercises. Policy analysis is a very applied field. Therefore, this class is structured to simulate activities policy analysts would be doing in a typical “policy shop”

Throughout the semester students will have the opportunity to actively engage in the steps of the policy cycle and the policy analysis process. Class discussions and in-class exercises to help students better understand and apply policy analysis concepts.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in discussions and to complete in-class exercise. This means completing all assigned reading and assignments PRIOR to class and actively participating during class discussions and exercises.

**Required Texts and Course Materials**

The following texts are available at the University Bookstore and Mary Jane’s. Amazon may also have these texts at lower prices.


*Daily Health Policy Report*: Prior to each class period, students should subscribe to or regularly read the Daily Health Policy report on the Kaiser Health News website (http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/). Students should come to class prepared to discuss health policy issues that were recently in the news. During the first 20-30 minutes of class we will discuss these issues.

It is important that students come prepared for discussion. Preparation and active participation in these discussions will count towards your participation grade.
**Required Readings**

Required course readings (ie, readings outside of the texts) will be available through the electronic reserves system. The direct link for the electronic reserves page is [http://eres.ulib.albany.edu](http://eres.ulib.albany.edu).

You can also access the electronic reserves through the library’s web page ([http://library.albany.edu](http://library.albany.edu)).

The course password is ‘**policy2011**’ (with no quotes, no bold). Some additional readings may be distributed in class.

All assigned readings are required and are to be completed prior to the class session during which they will be discussed. Some additional short readings may be distributed in class.

**On-line Tutorials**

In preparation for some class sessions, students will be required to view on-line tutorials/webcasts sponsored by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. These tutorials feature well-known policy experts and cover topics such as the legislative process, the federal budget, and other policy relevant issues. Rather than repeating the material covered by these tutorials in class, students are expected to come to class prepared to ask questions and discuss the tutorial.

**Supplemental Texts/Readings**

Students may find it useful to consult the following texts for additional information on health policy analysis methods. Occasionally, readings may be assigned from some of these books. However, any assigned readings from the texts below will be available through e-reserves or distributed in class.


**Overheads/Slides**

Lecture slides can be accessed through the course e-reserves page and are located in the tab named “overheads”.

Some lectures will be posted at the beginning of the semester. **However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes to the slides prior to class.** If changes are made to lecture slides, the instructor will make every attempt to post these changes on e-reserve at least one day before the lecture (ie, by Tuesday). In some cases, this may not be possible. Therefore students will need to take notes, but will have access to the revised slides after that week’s class.

Slides that have recently been revised will include the term “revised” in their filename on e-reserve (ie, if there are multiple files with slides for a given class on e-reserve, the file with “revised” is the most recent version).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “Obama’s Deal” (Health Care Reform) Memo</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Medicare Reform Memo 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>3. Medicare Reform Memo 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>4. Policy Analysis Paper Outline Memo</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Final Policy Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 30/December 7</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Final Policy Analysis Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>7. Class exercises and participation</td>
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**Course Requirements:**

Specific guidelines for all written and oral assignments will be distributed and discussed prior to the due date of the assignment. All students are expected to follow assignment guidelines.

1. **“Obama’s Deal” (Health Care Reform) Memo**

   Public policy making at any level of government is complicated and challenging especially when it comes to major health issues. Students will take a closer look at the federal legislative process by watching a recent edition of PBS’s Frontline, “Obama’s Deal”. The show addresses the deals required to pass health care reform legislation and the role of interest groups in the legislative process.

   Students will take on the role of advisor to President Obama and will write a 2-page memo addressing the advantages/disadvantages of accepting the “deals” offered by the insurance and pharmaceutical industries and recommendation whether or not the president should “accept” one or both of these deals. Specific guidelines and issues to be address in the memo will be discussed in class.

2. **Medicare Reform**

   From the Kaiser Family Foundation: Comparison of Medicare Provisions in Deficit-Reduction Proposals. July 22, 2011:

   “In response to concern about the nation’s rising debt and deficit, and increasing apprehension about the federal budget, prominent leaders and various commissions have come forward with recommendations to strengthen the economy and bolster the nation’s fiscal health. These proposals include both tax increases and spending reductions in discretionary programs, including defense, and in mandatory programs, such as Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare.

   Many of these proposals include recommendations to reduce the growth in Medicare spending over time. These proposals come on the heels of the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 which slowed the growth in Medicare spending by more than $400 billion between 2010 and 2019.

   Yet, with Medicare spending at 15 percent of the federal budget in 2010, and projected to grow
both as a share of the federal budget and the overall economy due to rising health costs and an aging population, additional measures to reduce Medicare spending are on the table once again.”

Each student will be assigned one of five proposals for reforming Medicare. Students will take on the role of one the leaders who developed the proposal. For example, the student assigned the proposal from the Debt Reduction Task Force will take on the role of either Alice Rivlin or Pete Domenici, the chairs of this task force.

Students will write two memos on Medicare Reform and engage in a class discussion from the perspective of the group they are representing. All assignments will be individual, but more than one student may be assigned to a given reform proposal.

a. **Medicare Reform Memo 1:** Students will submit a 2-page memo outlining major cost issues with the Medicare program, the context for reform, a description of previous attempts at reform, and explain the proposal you have been assigned.

b. **Medicare Reform Memo 2:** Students will submit a 2-page memo comparing your assigned proposal to 2 other different proposals for reforming Medicare.

c. **Medicare Reform Panel Discussion:** On November 2, 2011 we will have a class discussion of ways to reform Medicare. During the discussion, students will discuss the problem and solutions from the perspective of the group/proposal you were assigned. At the end of the class discussion we will develop recommendations for reducing costs of the Medicare program.

3. **Policy Analysis Paper**

Students will conduct an in-depth analysis of a single health policy issue and present the results in a final, written policy memo (10-12 pages in length plus appendices) as well as in an oral presentation. This final assignment will allow students to engage in each step in the policy analysis process (ie, problem statement, stakeholder analysis, etc).

Prior to completing any assignments students will submit a one-paragraph description of the health policy issue/problem they will be addressing and the policy setting they where they will be “working”.

A brief memo outlining parts of the final paper will be submitted and graded prior to submission of the final paper. Specifications for these assignments will be discussed in class.

a. **Policy Analysis Outline Memo:** Students will submit a 2-page memo that provides background on the problem they are addressing and major stakeholders and their views.

b. **Final Policy Analysis Paper:** Students will submit a 10-12 page policy analysis of their issue (definition of the problem, options for addressing the problem, analysis of each option, recommended option, and implementation plan). The main text of the paper will concisely present the major points of your analysis. Additional information to support your analysis will be included in appendices (e.g., full stakeholder/political analysis, cost analysis, etc).
c. **Final Policy Analysis Presentation:** Students will present the results of their final analysis to the class at the end of the semester. The PowerPoint presentations will be approximately 20 minutes with up to an additional 10 minutes for discussion. All students must submit both a hard copy and electronic copy of their presentation.

4. **Class Participation**

Class participation is measured not by who talks the loudest or most. Rather, it is a function of quality of what is said relevant to the given discussion. Demonstration of critical thinking and analysis of issues is particularly important. Policy analysts need to be able to communicate succinctly and thoughtfully. Comments that are supported by evidence will be graded highest.

Students are expected to attend and participate in each class session. **Missing one or two classes without an adequate explanation will hurt the student’s participation grade. Missing more than two classes without adequate explanation will result in a participation grade of 0 out of 10 points.** If a student does miss a class they should ask classmates for notes from that week.

**Graduate Level Writing and Performance**

Writing well is extremely important in policy analysis. As graduate students, you should approach written assignments professionally – present them as you would to an employer. This includes handing all assignments in on time (would you tell your boss that you couldn’t finish a project because you had too many other things going on??).

*Five points will be deducted for each day an assignment is late (this can quickly lead to zero points on assignments only worth 10 points).*

Writing must be clear and concise and should not be marred by grammatical or typographical mistakes. This means complete sentences, well-developed arguments, proper grammar and spelling, accurate citations to the literature, and all the other characteristics of professional level composition.

Students whose papers do not meet this standard will not do well in the class.

Additional guidance for good policy writing will be given in class.

**Electronic Devices**

- Students should turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices prior to class. Laptops may be used to take during class but are not to be used for surfing the Internet, writing on your FaceBook page, or other inappropriate activities.

**Academic Integrity**

Please refer to the University at Albany Graduate Bulletin and the pledge you signed when becoming a student in this school for academic dishonesty, course withdrawal, etc. **Please note that academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated in this class or at the School of Public Health.** Any
student engaging in academic dishonesty will receive a final grade of F in the course. Note that instructors are also required to report academic dishonesty to the School.

Please refer to the booklet: *Community Rights and Responsibilities* which you were given when you entered the school. If you do not have a copy, please see Ms. Caitlin Reid or refer to the following website

http://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/introduction.shtml

Examples of academic dishonesty most relevant to this class are listed and defined below.

**Examples of Academic Dishonesty**

**Plagiarism:** Presenting as one's own work, the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student's work as one's own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.

Examples of plagiarism include: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper's or project's structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person's data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one's own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

**Multiple Submission:** Submitting substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without receiving the prior explicit consent of the instructor to whom the material is being submitted the second or subsequent time.
### Course Calendar Overview
#### Introduction to Health Policy Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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| 1.   | August 31  | Course Introduction  
Overview of the Policy Cycle and Health Policy Analysis                                                                             |
| 2.   | September 7| Why Public Policy? Market Failure, Inequity, and Government Failure  
The Political Framework of Public Policy  
Class Discussion: The Politics of Obesity                                           |
| 3.   | September 14| Policy Making Phase I:  
Policy Formulation: Agenda Setting and Legislative Development  
**Medicare Reform Activities Discussed**                                            |
| 4.   | September 21| The Legislative and Budget Processes: Discussion  
Video: Frontline – “Obama’s Deal”  
Effective Policy Writing  
**Health Care Reform Memo Guidelines Handed Out and Discussed**                    |
| 5.   | September 28| NO CLASS                                                                                                                             |
| 6.   | October 5  | Policy Analysis: Defining the Problem  
Searching and Using Health Policy Information  
**Discussion of Medicare Reform Memos 1 and 2**  
**“OBAMA’S DEAL” MEMO DUE**  
SUBMIT FINAL PAPER TOPIC FOR INSTRUCTOR REVIEW                                     |
Evaluating Political Feasibility of Options  
**MEDICARE REFORM MEMO 1 DUE**                                                      |
| 8.   | October 19 | Evaluating Cost and Economic Efficiency of Policy Options  
Using Economic Evaluations in Policy Making                                          |
| 9.   | October 26 | A Closer Look at Other Evaluation Criteria Used in Policy Analysis  
Evaluating and Choosing Between Options  
**MEDICARE REFORM MEMO 2 DUE**                                                      |
| 10.  | November 2 | **MEDICARE REFORM CLASS DISCUSSION**                                                                                               |
# Course Calendar Overview
**Introduction to Health Policy Analysis**

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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>Policy Making Phase II: Issues in the Adoption and Implementation of Health Policy&lt;br&gt;Case Study: Implementation Issues in Health Care Reform&lt;br&gt;POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER OUTLINE MEMO DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>Policy Making Phase III: Policy Modification&lt;br&gt;Monitoring and Evaluating Health Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>November 23</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>FINAL PRESENTATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>FINAL PRESENTATIONS&lt;br&gt;FINAL POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE</td>
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Introduction to Health Policy Analysis and Management
Required Readings

Week 1: August 31
Course Introduction
Overview of the Policy Cycle and the Health Policy Analysis Process

Required Readings:

Skim the following:
Longest – Chapters 1 and 2
Kraft and Furlong – Chapters 1 and 3 and 4


Week 2: September 7
Why Public Policy? Market Failure, Inequity, & Government Failure
Policy and Politics: The Political Framework of Public Policy
Class Discussion/Exercise: The Politics of Obesity

Required Readings:

Longest – Chapters 3 and 4


Reading for In-Class Discussion / Exercise:


Also review discussion questions posted on e-reserve. The class will break into groups to discuss.
Week 3: September 14  

Policy Making Phase I:  
Policy Formulation: Agenda Setting and Legislative Development  
Medicare Reform – Individual Roles Handed Out and Discussed  

**Required Readings:**

Note: These readings will cover in-class material discussed during Weeks 3 and 4.  

Longest – Chapters 3 and 4  

**Background Reading for Medicare Reform Activities:**  
(NOTE: the first Medicare Reform Memo is not due until October 12, but I assigned the reading for this week, because several assignments are due in the next few weeks, and you may have more time to read it now)


Week 4: September 21  

The Legislative and Budget Processes – Discussion  
Video: Frontline – “Obama’s Deal”  
Effective Policy Writing

Come to class prepared to discuss the content of the following web-based “tutorials” from the Kaiser Family Foundation (all available at KaiserEDU, an affiliated Kaiser Family Foundation site).  

**Required Viewing**


c. Health Care Reform: A Retrospective (this mentions many of the same things as the U.S. Congress and health policy, but specifically applies the process to the Accountable Care Act; this is meant to supplement the in-class video “Obama’s Deal”) [http://www.kaiseredu.org/Tutorials-and-Presentations/Health-Care-Reform-A-Retrospective.aspx](http://www.kaiseredu.org/Tutorials-and-Presentations/Health-Care-Reform-A-Retrospective.aspx)

Familiarize yourself with the following websites. They are key websites for gathering information on and the activities of the U.S. Congress and NYS Legislature:  

Legislative Information from the Library of Congress (called THOMAS – allows one to track federal legislation, committee actions, etc) (www.thomas.gov)
Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov)
General Accountability Office (www.gao.gov)
NYS Assembly (http://assembly.state.ny.us/)
NYS Senate (http://www.nysenate.gov/)
http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menuf.cgi (useful for tracking NYS legislation)

Read the following for “tips” on writing in preparation for your first Memo:

Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN). Go to: http://www.plainlanguage.gov/index.cfm. Click on Examples, then Before and After Comparisons, the Government Letters, then Medicare Fraud Letter and browse the rest of the site.


Week 5: September 28 NO CLASS

Week 6: October 5 Policy Analysis: Defining the Problem
Searching and Using Health Policy Information
“OBAMA’S DEAL” MEMO DUE
SUBMIT FINAL PAPER TOPIC FOR REVIEW

Required Readings

Bardach, Part I, 1 and 2 (pp. 1-12) (note that Bardach is used for several of the class sessions on policy analysis – the full text of the book is on e-reserve; it is not broken into chapters on e-reserve)

Kraft and Furlong – Chapter 5 (pp. 125-138)


View the following KaiserEDU web-based tutorials:


Guidelines for Effective Graphics (note that this is useful information for exercises throughout the semester; it will also guide your final presentation). Available at http://www.kaiseredu.org/Tutorials-and-Presentations/Guidelines-for-Effective-Graphics.aspx
Week 7: October 12  

Policy Analysis: Developing Policy Options and Evaluation Criteria  
Evaluating Political Feasibility of Options  
*MEDICARE REFORM MEMO 1 DUE*

*Required Readings*

Bardach – Part I, 3 and 4 (pp. 12-27)

Kraft and Furlong – Chapter 5 (pp. 138-146) Chapter 6 (pp. 151-161, 175-176)

Oberlander J. The Politics of Health Reform: Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good Health Plans?  

Week 8: October 19  

Evaluating Cost and Economic Efficiency of Policy Options  
Using Economic Evaluations in Policy Making  

*Required Readings*

Kraft and Furlong – Chapter 6 (pp. 162-171)

*Note: Read the following to get a broad overview of cost-benefit and effectiveness analysis and for an appreciation of the technical aspects of these analyses. You do not need to read for every detail*

Drummond et al. – Chapters 2, 3 (up to p.45), Chapter 4 (up to p. 74), Chapters 5 and 7 (overview)

*Reading for In-Class Discussion*


Week 9: October 26  

A Closer Look at Other Evaluation Criteria Used in Policy Analysis  
Evaluating and Choosing between Options  
*MEDICARE REFORM MEMO 2 DUE*

*Required Readings*

Bardach, Part I, 5-7, (pp. 27-41)

Week 10: November 2  

*MEDICARE REFORM CLASS DISCUSSION*

*Required Readings*

No Readings
Week 11: November 9  
Policy Making Phase II:  
Issues in the Adoption and Implementation of Health Policy  
HCR Example: State Implementation of Health Care Reform

*Required Readings*

Longest – Chapters 5 and 6


Week 12: November 16  
Policy Making Phase III:  
Monitoring and Evaluating Health Policy  
*POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER OUTLINE MEMO DUE*

*Required Readings*

Longest – Chapter 7

Patton and Sawicki – Chapter 9

Week 13: November 23  
NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Week 14: November 30  
*FINAL PRESENTATIONS*

Week 15: December 5  
*FINAL PRESENTATIONS*  
*FINAL POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE*