

Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs
PSC224.LH-US HEALTH CARE POLICY

SECOND SUMMER SEMESTER 2008

Monday and Wednesday, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Hall of the States

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OVERVIEW

Without doubt, health care is one of the most complex and controversial subjects facing Washington policy makers and politicians. At the core, health care is the provision of health care services to a patient in need. We used to call this the doctor-patient relationship. Today, the relationships in health care are far more intricate involving numerous actors whose roles greatly impact the quality of care a patient receives. These complex interrelationships make up a broader field of greater political consequence we will term, health care coverage.

This course will focus, as extensively as can be done in a few weeks, on several critical topics in health care coverage. We will explore both the policy and politics of each important issue. During each session we will discuss jurisdiction, the role of various political actors, the statutory origins, and the future of the issue. In keeping with the spirit of the legislative affairs program, we will be approaching the topics from a legislative perspective, trying to decipher the legislative consequence of potential policy changes in the various topics. The goal of this class is to raise the level of expertise of the student so that they could take on the role of health LA, health policy specialist for an association, or health policy advisor for a campaign.

GRADING

There are four types of assignments for which you will be graded.

- You are responsible for making one or two class presentations. The class presentation is worth 30% of your final grade. During each topic session, students will make (up to) twenty minute presentations to the class on a question about the topic. You are encouraged to use as many outside sources as appropriate in an effort to fully explain the question.

- You are responsible for writing one eight-page paper discussing an aspect of any health care topic *not discussed in class* in greater depth. The paper is worth 30% of your grade. The paper should provide a thoughtful explanation of the topic describing issues of structure, controversy, and future possibilities. It is due at the beginning of class on Monday, August 11th.
- There will be a take-home final exam covering the entirety of the course. It is worth 30% of your final grade. It is due Friday, August 15th at 5:00pm.
- You are responsible for regularly attending class and actively participating in class discussions. Class contribution is worth 10% of your final grade.

REQUIRED READINGS

Please purchase the following book from the George Washington University bookstore:

Health Care Politics and Policy in America. (2006) Patel, Kant and Mark E. Rushefsky. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. 3rd Edition.

Throughout the course, there will be extensive references made to secondary sources including Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office, Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org), Commonwealth Fund (www.cmwf.org), and numerous others.

SYLLABUS

Session 1-2 (July 7)	<u>Introduction:</u> Class Overview and Objectives. Introductory Conversation about Health Care Policy and Politics.
Sessions 3 (July 9)	<u>Topic 1:</u> Understanding the current Structure of the Health Care Coverage System <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapters 1 & 2.
Sessions 4-5 (July 14-16)	<u>Topic 2:</u> Medicare <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapter 4.
Sessions 6 (July 21)	<u>Topic 3:</u> Supplementing Medicare with Prescription Drug Coverage <i>Readings:</i> CRS Supplement (I'll email it around if you remind me)
Sessions 7-8 (July 23-28)	<u>Topic 4:</u> Medicaid <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapter 3.
Sessions 9 (July 30- August 4)	<u>Topic 5:</u> Private Coverage Issues <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapters 6 & 10.
Sessions 10 (August 6)	<u>Topic 6:</u> The Uninsured and Strategies for Providing Coverage in America <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapters 5 & 9.
Session 11 (August 11)	<u>Topic 7:</u> The FDA and Strategies to Improve Health Care Quality. <i>Readings:</i> P&R, chapter 8; CRS Supplement. Paper Due
Session 12 (August 13)	<u>Conclusion:</u> The Future of Health Care in America Final Exam Distributed