Course Description and Objectives:

Political Science 309.01 will focus on federal and state laws, policies and institutional structures that impact the three pillars of health care: Access, Cost and Quality. The course will examine the current status, financing and delivery of health care, the political and social environments in which health policymaking occurs and the key policy actors that drive federal and state decisions regarding health care for all Americans.

The debates around the scope, practice, delivery and sustainability of health care have engendered policy disagreements and conflicts for decades. The passage of the Social Security Act of 1935 initiated the development of a complex system of health delivery that has continued to be the subject of contentious debate around the questions of “who pays? – and who benefits?” The passage of federal legislation to create Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) and the Medicare Prescription Drug Act all contributed to the development of a public “Safety Net” with regard to the delivery of American health care.

In March 2010 the 111th U.S. Congress passed, and President Barack Obama signed into law, the most comprehensive and far-reaching health policy legislation in decades- the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148, as amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (P.L. 111-152). This historic enactment followed a bitter partisan battle over health care reform and was passed with nearly unity opposed by the Republican members of Congress. The Affordable Care Act - (ACA), as the combined legislation is known - is considered a landmark legislative achievement in the history of health and social welfare policy in the United States, the most significant since the Social Security Act of 1935 and the Medicare and Medicaid Acts of 1965. However, as the question of reauthorization nears the bitter partisan divide continues on whether the legislation should be strengthened or abolished. If the latter position prevails, how will the millions of Americans currently covered receive the health care they need?

At the conclusion of the semester students should be able to (a) identify the historic and current policies that shape and inform the delivery of health care in America, (b) discuss the effect of these policies on the issues of access, cost and quality and (c) be able to make informed analyses regarding the effectiveness of current federal and state health care policies in addressing the healthcare needs of the American public.

Course Requirements
A. Regular class attendance is expected of all students. Attendance will be recorded via a daily sign-in sheet. Absences will be excused only if they are officially validated.

B. Expectations for class participation include reading assignments prior to class, joining in class discussions, respecting the opinions of others and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments will incur severe grade penalties.

C. The use of electronic devices during class is prohibited unless specific permission is granted to use these devices to take notes. Students who ignore this rule will incur severe grade deductions. Students granted permission to use electronic devices to take notes may at any time be required to submit copies of these notes to the instructor.

D. Students are encouraged to utilize posted office hours and/or schedule appointments to discuss assignments and readings.

E. Students who are receiving services through the Center for Disability Services are scheduled to travel with an athletic team or will participate in a student government or other official off-campus activity during the semester must present a letter of verification signed by the appropriate college official.

F. Students are encouraged to utilize the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, First Floor) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. The Center offers tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills and a variety of workshops; These services are available to you at no extra cost. You may visit the CSL website at http://csl.cofc.edu or call (843) 953-5635.

G. Students who schedule personal (i.e. non-emergency) off-campus trips prior to a scheduled exam (i.e. Midterm or Final) will not receive excused absences nor the opportunity to make up the examination.

H. All students are required to select a current health-related topic for research and study during the semester from a list provided by the professor. At the end of the semester students studying the same topic will be required to make a group presentation on the research topic; the presentation will include a group consensus on whether the solution proposed by the relevant health authority is an effective response to a contemporary health issue that is the subject of disagreement and/or conflict among the public.

Grades
Students are required to read, study, analyze and evaluate the role of major state and federal laws in shaping American health care policy. The semester grade will be based on (a) a five part policy research paper that examines the development and execution of a current health care policy; (b) a Mid-term Examination; (c) a Final Examination and individual and group class participation as follows:

a. Policy Research – Part 1  10%
b. Policy Research – Part 2  10%
c. Policy Research - Part 3  10%
d. Policy Research - Part 4  10%
e. Policy Research - Part 5  10%
f. Midterm Examination  15%
g. Final Examination 20%

h. Class attendance/participation 15%

Required Textbook

Additional recommended readings:
3. “The Uninsured – A Primer: Key Facts about Americans without Health Insurance”- the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured.
12. “Crossing the Quality Chasm: The IOM Health Care Quality Initiative:” The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science.
16. Goldberg, Janet and Doonan, Michael- Massachusetts Health Care Reform 2006- An Analysis of the Pros and Cons” – Health Policy Institute of Ohio.

August 2016
Wed 24 Introductions and semester overview
Fri  26 Review of semester research assignments
Mon 29 Defining Public Policy (Handout)
Wed 31 Defining Public Policy
**September 2016**

**Mon 5**  
Defining Health Care Policy - key concepts  
Knickman, Chapter One

**Wed 7**  
Defining Characteristics of the U.S. Health Care System  
Knickman – Chapter One

**Fri 9**  
Defining Characteristics of the U.S. Health Care System  
Knickman – Chapter One

**Mon 12**  
Major Issues in the U.S. Health Care System  
Knickman, Chapter One  
**Paper One Due**

**Wed 14**  
Major Issues in the U.S. Health Care System – Shared Responsibility  
Knickman, Chapter Two

**Fri 16**  
Health Care Providers- key stakeholders in health policy development  
Knickman, Chapter Eleven

**Mon 19**  
Health Care Providers and health policy development  
Knickman, Chapter Eleven

**Wed 21**  
Employers-key stakeholders in health policy development  
Knickman, Chapter Nine

**Fri 23**  
Employers and health policy development  
Knickman- Chapter Three

**Mon 26**  
Health Insurers- Key stakeholders in health policy development  
Knickman- Chapter Eleven

**Wed 28**  
Health Insurers – Key stakeholders  
**Paper Two Due**

**Fri 30**  
Insurers- Decoding the language of insurance (Handout)

**October 2016**

**Mon 3**  
U.S. Congress: Key stakeholders in health policy

**Wed 5**  
U.S. Congress: Key stakeholders in health policy

**Fri 7**  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services: Key stakeholder in health policy

**Mon 10**  
**Midterm Examination**

**Wed 12**  
The federal Health Care “Safety Net” (Handout)
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 14</td>
<td>The federal Health Care Safety Net</td>
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<td>Mon 17</td>
<td>The federal Health Care Safety Net</td>
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<td>Wed 19</td>
<td>State roles in health care policy</td>
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<td>Mon 24</td>
<td>State roles in health care policy</td>
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<td>Fri 28</td>
<td>The Mass. Health Care Act of 2006 – 6 years later</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Three Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 31</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act of 2010</td>
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<td><strong>November 2016</strong></td>
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<td>Wed  2</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act of 2010</td>
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<td>Fri  4</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act of 2010</td>
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<td>Mon  7</td>
<td><strong>Fall Break – No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Wed  9</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act - reauthorization challenges</td>
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<td>Fri 11</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act – reauthorization challenges</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Four Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 14</td>
<td>Future of health care delivery- Technology</td>
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<td>Wed 16</td>
<td>Future of health care delivery – Workforce</td>
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<td>Fri 18</td>
<td>Class presentation- Group One</td>
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<td>Mon 21</td>
<td>Class Presentation – Group Two</td>
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<td>Wed 23</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving Holiday- No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Fri 25</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving Holiday -No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 28</td>
<td>Class presentation – Group Three</td>
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<td>Wed 30</td>
<td>Class presentation- Group Four</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Five Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>December 2016</strong></td>
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<td>Mon  5</td>
<td>Last Day of Class- Final Exam Review</td>
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**Required Research Assignment**

This purpose of this required assignment is to study a current health issue with the potential for major impact on the access, cost and quality of health for Americans. Once you select a topic you will be required to write five papers on the subject and draw a conclusion as to whether (a) the current policy or administrative solution is effective in responding to the issue; (b) whether a new law or administrative solution is indicated; (c) whether the management of this issue should be left to federal, state or local authorities; (d) state your personal opinion on whether you support or oppose the stated solution as you begin your research and (e) whether your opinion became more informed, changed or remain the same at the conclusion of your research and what factors or information changed your opinion or helped you to maintain your original position. Several students will be researching the same topic and at the end of the semester there will be a group presentation to the class regarding whether the current solution solves the identified problem or presents additional problems for the government and/or the public.

You will select a topic from the four issues described below:

**Group 1 – Regulation of prescription drug pricing** – The EpiPen has become the prescription of choice for reversing life-threatening allergic reactions. Many states require schools and other public facilities to keep supplies of this drug on hand in case of an emergency. The price of a prescription for the EpiPen had risen rapidly in the last 4 years. The policy question – Should the federal government have authority to regulate price increases for the EpiPen and similar potentially life-saving drugs?

**Group 2 – Gun violence and Public Health** - The incidence of gun violence has reached epidemic proportion in America. The effects are devastating on families and communities. The Policy Question: Should the U.S. Congress declare gun violence to be a public health issue as well as a criminal justice issue?

**Group 3 – Regulation of Air Ambulances** - Current federal law bans states from regulating air ambulance companies, leaving families with exorbitant costs, as much as $80,000 one way, to transport critically ill patients to the necessary facilities. The Policy Question: Should the current federal law be revised to allow regulation of these companies?

**Group 4 – The Crisis in Rural Health Care** – The National Rural Health Association asserts that rural areas face major health disparities to health care not found in urban areas and that this situation has reached epidemic proportions. The Policy Question: Should state legislatures include establishing and supporting rural health as a specific policy responsibility?

**Outline for writing Research papers**

1. Papers 1 through 4 should be double-spaced; each should be a maximum of 5 pages, excluding charts, graphs or works cited.
2. Paper 5 should be double-spaced and not exceed a maximum of 10 pages, excluding charts, graphs or works cited.
3. Your papers must follow the outline below:

**Topic One: Regulation of Prescription Drugs Pricing**

1. Paper One - Identify the major life-threatening allergic reactions and the principal drug that treats these conditions. Give the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions annually according to the CDC, including how many of these reactions occur in children. Explain why the EpiPen is the prescription of choice in treating a major allergic reaction.

2. Paper Two - Identify the states that require public schools to purchase and store EpiPens so as to be responsive to an in-school event. What policy reasons are given for these mandates?

3. Paper Three - Identify the major company that produces the EpiPen, the increase in its pricing in the past five years and the increase in company profits directly from the sale of this drug. Identify the U.S. Senator who has requested the company to produce its pricing data and the Committee that he chairs.

4. Paper Four - Identify the federal agency requested by Senator Amy Klobuchar to investigate the company’s drug pricing procedure. Explain why this agency has jurisdiction over this issue.

5. Paper Five - Based on your research do you take a position in support or opposition to the U.S. Congress imposing pricing regulations on Mylan laboratories and other pharmaceutical companies that produce related drugs? If you were a member of Congress how would you vote on this issue?

**Topic Two: Gun Violence and Public Health**

1. Paper One - According to the Centers for Disease Control, state the number of firearms death in the U.S. in 2014 and in 2015. Identify how many of these fatalities involved children. State how many persons were injured in shootings in each of these years.

2. Paper Two - What is the position of the American Public Health Association on the effects of gun violence on children, families and the overall health of communities? What evidence do they provide for their position on this issue?

3. Paper Three - State the reason the APHA joined with the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence to co-host the 2014 Firearm Injury- Gun Violence Prevention Partner Forum in 2014. Provide the major recommendations from this Forum and the policymakers to whom they were directed.

4. Paper Four - On June 19, 2016, 58 national public health, medical and research organizations signed a letter to the United States Senate in support of two amendments to the Senate’s Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill. Identify the Amendments and their Senator sponsors. Identify 10 of the agencies that signed the letter.

5. Paper Five - Based on your research, do you support the two proposals contained in these amendments to mitigate the incidents and effects of gun violence? Do you agree with the APHA that gun violence is a public health as well as a criminal justice issue?
Topic Three: Regulation of Air Ambulances

1. Paper One – Identify the 1978 federal law that prohibits government from imposing any restrictions or rules on air ambulances. State the primary policy reasons for this law.

2. Paper Two- State the typical medical conditions for which air ambulances are necessary forms of transportation. State the reasons why the Association of Air Medical Services support the current law.

3. Paper Three- Explain the principal reasons why air ambulance services are so costly, including the role of insurance networks in cost calculations. Explain the current expenses to states for critically ill patients with no insurance.

4. Paper Four – U.S. Senators Jon Testor (Montana) and John Hoeven ( N.D.) recently introduced legislation to amend the current law. Explain their proposals and why they failed.

5. Paper Five – Based on your research, do you support changes in the current law to allow states to regulate air ambulances? If you were a sitting member of Congress would you support or oppose such regulations?

Topic Four: Crisis in Rural health Care

1. Paper One – Based on data from the National Rural Health Association, state the ten major problems currently faced by rural communities in comparison to urban communities.

2. Paper Two – The NRHA asserts that suicide rates are higher for men and increasing for women in rural areas than in rural ones. What are the primary factors that contribute to these statistics?

3. Paper Three – Rural Healthy People 2020 is a project funded by the federal Office of Rural Health Policy. State the principal findings from this project.

4. Paper Four – Identify the number of State Health Departments that have specific agencies focused on rural health issues.

5. Paper Five – Base on your research do you agree that rural health issues are significantly different from those of urban areas? Should rural health issues become a specific, articulated responsibility of each state? Give specific reasons why you support or oppose such a policy.