The College of Charleston

POLI 309.01- Health Policy

(Prerequisite: No)

Fall 2021

Tuesday- Thursday : 10:50 A.M. – 12:05 P.M.

On Line - Via Zoom

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Instructional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Public policies are the legal and administrative actions of federal, state and local governments that reflect the judgments, values and goals of elected and appointed policymakers. Through the lawmaking process- judicial, legislative or administrative – they define both the functions of government and the mechanisms by which these activities are carried out. Under our dual system of government -commonly described as federalism- some of the functions are assigned to the federal government by the United States government (primarily the Tenth Amendment); some are under the purview of state governments based on their individual constitutions and some are carried out by both.

Public Health policy falls into the third category. The major national health “Safety Net” has been largely developed by federal legislation to address broad national health concerns while states bear principal responsibility for the agencies and programs that impact the health and welfare of their individual citizens. States, in turn, delegate the implementation of these policies to their local government partners, including hospitals, clinics, departments of health and professional staff.

To fully understand the health policy issues in America, we must consider that the public health delivery system includes a federal government, 50 state governments, 3,000+ counties, 3,000 local health departments and numerous related agencies. As the nation has grown from 1 million persons in 13 colonies along the Eastern seaboard in 1790 to 330 million in fifty states and 6 territories today, health care has emerged as a major policy debate with a central unresolved question: Is health care a right for all Americans to be secured by the federal government- or a privilege for some to be determined by individual states based on their public priorities?
The current policy debates are anchored in three issues:

- **Access** – Should federal policy require that universal health care be available and accessible for 330 million Americans?
- **Cost** – Who benefits the most from public health care- and who should pay the cost of maintaining the system?
- **Quality** – What are the minimum infrastructures and standards that define equity and excellence in the American public health system?
- **As we consider the above issues, there is an additional policy question:** Is American public health a universal, integrated system with some defining characteristics- or a disjointed, state specific set of activities with no central goal or infrastructure?

As these questions continue to be debated among federal, state and local governments, the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing a new set of specific policy questions, including the following: can the United States achieve its aim of managing the COVID-19 epidemic without initiating a mandatory vaccination policy?

At the end of the semester students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a firm understanding of the basic theories and policies that drive the policymaking process;
- Demonstrate familiarity with the major federal laws, institutions and infrastructures that currently comprise the federal health care safety net;
- Define the critical state institutions that form the health care delivery system;
- Fully comprehend the current policy debates around COVID-19 and
- Assess and determine the impact of all of these policy activities in shaping
  - Who has access to the American health care system;
  - who pays for the development, maintenance and distribution of health care, and
  - Determine and define the measures of quality that are related to positive health outcomes.

**Attendance Policy** – This is an on-line twice-weekly class. Attendance will be tracked and recorded through the appropriate web-based technology. Students who miss class due to personal COVID-19 related illness, a requirement that they need to isolate or quarantine, the need to care for a family member who is ill due to COVID-19, other significant medical or family emergencies, are responsible for directly contacting the instructor. Students who fail to meet the stated deadline dates for any written mandatory assignments without a confirmed acceptable reason may incur a serious grade deduction. **Except for validated illness or emergencies, students who meet no grade requirements by the Mid-term will receive an “F” and be excluded from further participation in the class. The dates for receipt of assignments and/or exams are listed in this syllabus in the appropriate sections.**
Grading Policy

Grades will be based on the following assignments:

- Paper # 1 20%
- Paper # 2 20%
- Paper # 3 20%
- Paper # 4 20%
- Final Examination 20%

Grade values will be assigned as follows:

- A= 93-100
- A-= 90-92
- B+= 88-89
- B= 83-87
- B-= 80-82
- C= 78-79
- C= 73-77
- C-= 70-72
- D+= 68-69
- D= 63-67
- D-= 60-62
- F= 59 and below

Required readings

No textbook is assigned for this class. It is expected that students will utilize the following on-line resources during the course of this semester. Please note: this list is intended to be representative, not exhaustive. You may find many more relevant and useful sources as you investigate the mandatory assignment.

2. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
3. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General
4. Healthy People 2020
5. Healthy People 2030
6. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
7. FDA Emergency Use Authorization and Guidance for Industry
8. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) 3/23/2010
10. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
11. The National Governors Association- the COVID-19 Library
13. The Journal of Health Affairs
14. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
15. The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)
16. Selected articles as assigned by the instructor on federal, state and local policies regarding the development, distribution and/or outcomes of the national COVID-19 pandemic vaccination policy in the U.S.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

The College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require special accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center for Disability Services (SNAP) or contact me so that accommodations can be made.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines that the student’s actions are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by the instructor who may design an intervention or assign a grade reduction to prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed by both the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Problem specific elements – This course consists of on-line lectures and discussion, a four-part policy research paper and a Final Take-Home Examination.

Required Assignment to assess student learning outcomes:

Mandatory policy research: The COVID-19 Pandemic-The Policy Question: Should the federal government mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for all U.S. adults 18+ years of age as national health policy?

This semester you are required to research and write a four-part policy paper on what is widely considered to be a public health policy dilemma as variations of the COVID-19 virus continue to wreak havoc across the country. Major policy questions are raised such as: does the concept of “herd immunity” hold up during a pandemic? Does the federal government have a national commitment to public health that outweigh the wishes of individual American citizens who refuse to be vaccinated? Under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, public health is a state responsibility so should individual states continue to assert their sovereignty during a pandemic? At what level of government
should this issue be decided? What ultimately is the balance between public health and individual rights?

Your paper will be written in four parts. Each part is designed to assess your understanding and utilization of the cyclical public policy process.

**Paper One – Problem Identification** – What is the public health policy problem the federal government is trying to solve? What is the magnitude of the issue?

1. Define the term “Pandemic” and determine the specific characteristics that distinguish it from an “Epidemic.”
2. Provide the specific scientific reasons why this pandemic is named COVID-19 and the federal authority that provided the name.
3. Identify the date on which COVID-19 was recognized as a public health emergency in the U.S., the federal agency that made the official declaration of this fact and the statutory authority under which it acted.
4. Provide the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. based on the currently acceptable scientific information regarding origin and transmission patterns of the disease.
5. State the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic as a public health problem in the U.S. between the date of official declaration as a public health emergency and August 15, 2021 as indicated by (a) hospitalizations and (b) deaths.

**Paper Two - Issue Analysis** – What are the critical issues involved? What evidence has been provided to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the following American institutions: Provide at least one example/data/statistic under each category below:

A. The American Economy
   a. Small businesses financial losses/ closures
   b. Management and operations of major American businesses
   c. Other representative examples

B. Public Education:
   a. K-12 Education

C. Institutions of Higher Education:
   a. Public Colleges and Universities

D. The Health Delivery system:
   a. Hospitals
   b. Nursing Homes
   c. Medical staffing/first responders

E. States and Local governments
   a. Executive orders
   b. State health care budgets
   c. Professional staffing

(F) Provide the total number of 2021 COVID-19 related deaths as of September 30, 2021 as declared by the Centers for Disease Control.
**Paper Three - Agenda Setting, Policy Formation and Policy Adoption:** What are current policy solutions? What has been the impact of these solutions?

1. Track the evolution of the COVID-19 vaccine development in the U.S.
2. Cite the federal agencies that have policy responsibility/authority for managing specific aspects of the COVID-19 vaccines including (a) vaccine development, (b) funding sources for research and production costs for each vaccine, (c) approval for public use (d) distribution procedures and (e) tracking results of vaccinations.
3. Provide the names of the current COVID-19 vaccines that have received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).
4. Summarize the process by which EUA is granted to COVID-19 vaccines.
5. Explain the term “Herd Immunity” and provide two principal assumptions around this term.
6. Explain the term vaccine “variant” and identify the most widely discussed variant to date.

**Paper Four - Policy Adoption and Implementation:** Based on your research, what policy solutions seem most promising? If mandatory vaccination is adopted by the federal government, what agency would be authorized to issue the mandate? How should the major policy proposal be implemented?

1. Provide a summary of your principal findings and conclusions about the effect of the COVID-19 vaccine on the American economy, its education system, and our key social interactions.
2. What is the current position of the CDC on masking (a) in public spaces? (b) in federal institutions? (c) in educational institutions?
3. What is the current policy of the CDC on social distancing?
4. Cite the percentage of Americans who have received at least one vaccination as of October 30, 2021 and the numbers who have received full vaccination status.
5. Name the states that have issued mandatory vaccination requirements for all citizens, government buildings, and or public spaces and the recorded rate of COVID-19 infections as of October 30, 2021.
6. Name the States that have refused to issue the above orders and the recorded rates of COVID-19 infections in each.
7. The percentage of Americans who have refused to be vaccinated as of the above date.
8. State the most persuasive arguments made by (a) proponents and (b) opponents for whether or not this public health issue warrants intervention by the federal government. (c) State which argument you support as most persuasive.
9. Based on your position stated above, which of the following public policy solutions do you support: (1) In the interest of public health, the federal government should mandate that all eligible Americans 18 plus age be vaccinated against COVID 19 or (2) the individual decisions of Americans to be vaccinated or not, should outweigh the public policy goal of mandating vaccinations as the best currently available solution to managing the COVID-19 epidemic?

Each paper should not exceed ten (10), double-spaced pages, excluding charts, graphs, and appendices.
You are required to submit at least five (5) references for each paper. The MLA citation format should be used for works cited.

All assignments will be submitted via the OAKS Drop Box.

**OAKS**

OAKS will be used for this course throughout the semester for the syllabus, class materials and grades for each assignment. Class lectures will be regularly posted in the Drop-Box.

**Recording of Classes via Zoom**

Class sessions will be recorded via both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

**Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction**

If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. A student must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone and internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

**Center for Student Learning**

The Center for Student Learning (CSL) academic support services provide assistance in study strategies, speaking and writing skills and course content.

Services include tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills appointments and workshops. Students of all abilities have become successful using these programs throughout their academic careers and the services are available at no additional cost. For more information, please visit the CSL website: http://csl.cofc.edu or call (843) 953-5635.

**Semester Class Schedule**

**August 2021**

Tu 24 Class Introductions and Syllabus Review
Th 26 Overview of Semester Assignment
Tu 31 Public policy defined
September 2021
Th 2 Public Policy defined
Tu 7 Federalism defined (Attendance verification begins)
Th 9 Federalism and health policy
Tu 14 Evolution of the American Health Care System: A Snapshot
(Attendance verification closes)
Th 16 Evolution of the American Health Care system

Paper One Due
Tu 21 “Health Care” defined
Th 23 Health Care “Access” defined
Tu 28 Health Care “Access” defined
Th 30 Health Care “Cost” defined

October 2021
Tu 5 Health Care “Cost” defined
Th 7 Health Care “Quality” defined
Tu 12 Health Care “Quality ” defined

Paper Two Due
Th 14 The Federal Health Care “Safety Net”
Tu 19 Fall Break – No Classes

Wed. 20 Midterm grades posted
Th 21 The Federal Health Care “Safety Net”
Tu 26 The Federal Health Care “Safety Net”
Th 28 The Federal Health Care “Safety Net”

November 2021
Tu 2 State Responsibilities for Health Care (Handout)
Th 4 State Responsibilities for Health Care
Tu 9 State Responsibilities for Health Care

Paper Three Due
Th 11 Health Care Insurance: A glossary of terms (handout)
Tu 16    Health Care Insurance
Th 18    Insuring special populations: the incarcerated
Tu 23    Insuring special populations: the homeless
Th 25    Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class
Tu 30    Semester Recap

Paper Four Due

December 2021

Th 2    Final Examination Issued via Drop-Box (Take Home Exam)
Mon 6    Last Day of Spring Semester Classes
Tu 7    Reading Day
Th 9    Final Examination due in Drop-Box by 5 P.M.
Wed 15    Semester grades posted at Noon