

PSC 464: The Politics of Health Policy

ten Hoor 113
11—12:15pm
Spring 2022

Contact information

Instructor: Dana Patton, Ph.D.

E-mail: dana.patton@ua.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1 – 2:00pm; Tuesdays 1 – 2:30pm; Thursdays 8:30 – 9am.

Please use this link to reserve your meeting time with me during office hours. All meetings are via Zoom due to COVID-19. Once the weather improves, I may offer some office hours outside, but I do not anticipate holding office hours in my office unless there is a dramatic change in the case counts. If you are unable to meet during my available scheduled office hours, email me to suggest other days/times to meet. https://calendly.com/danapatton_meeting/15_minutes

Description of Course

We examine health policy, with particular focus on the interdependence of the national, state, and local governments to provide healthcare services. The political environment of health policymaking and implementation is explored, with a strong focus on health outcomes and vulnerable populations. Health policies such as Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act will be examined, as well as other policies that affect health. We compare the US health care system with systems in other industrialized democracies.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain health policies such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and Medicare.
- Discuss the causes and consequence of health disparities.
- Identify the roles of various governmental and non-governmental actors in health policy and politics.
- Critique specific health policies and the political and governance issues surrounding them.
- Compare the United States to other industrialized democracies in the areas of health policy and health outcomes.

There are many other learning objectives. Too many to mention! These are the primary ones that cover a lot of ground.

Required Texts

You may purchase hardcover, paperback, or e-text. Whatever works best for you. The ISBNs provided are for either hardcover or paperback. All books are available on Amazon and the Super Store.

- Bradley, Elizabeth H. and Lauren A. Taylor. 2013. “The American Health Care Paradox: Why Spending More is Getting us Less.” ISBN: 978-1-61039-548-9
- Case, Anne and Angus Deaton. 2020. “Deaths of Despair: And the Future of Capitalism.” ISBN: 978-0-691-19078-5
- Cohn, Jonathan. 2021. “The Ten Year War: Obamacare and the Unfinished Crusade for Universal Coverage.” ISBN: 978-1-250-27093-1
- Dawes, Daniel E. 2020. “The Political Determinants of Health.” ISBN: 978-1-421-43789-7
- Emanuel, Ezekiel J. 2020. “Which Country Has the World’s Best Health Care?” ISBN: 078-1-5417-9773-4
- Michener, Jamila. 2018. “Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics.” ISBN: 978-1-316-64958-9
- Additional readings may be posted in Bb.

Course Policies and Requirements

Blackboard

- Blackboard is a critical part of this course. I will post Announcements on Bb, which will also be delivered to your Crimson email account. You will engage in discussions and submit assignments on Bb.

Email

- All email correspondence should be professional. If you aren't sure how to write a professional email to your professors, google it. There are a lot of articles and YouTube videos you can watch to master this essential life skill.

Attendance

- I expect you to attend class. There will be a sign-in sheet passed around during every class. Attendance is not, however, part of your formal grade.

Electronic Devices

- iPads and laptops may be used to take notes, though I recommend taking notes by hand. The research is very clear about this. Students who take notes by hand better understand and retain the material compared to students who take notes on a laptop.
- Cell phones are not permitted during class. Cell phone ringers must be turned off. If you have a personal situation that requires you to monitor your phone, please notify me prior to the beginning of class. Again, the research is clear. I do not want to see your cell phone. Put it completely away. Seeing a cell phone on a desk creates a distraction – even if it is not in use.

Reading

- You should plan to devote a significant amount of time to carefully reading the assigned material. I encourage you to take notes on the reading in whatever format you think will be most helpful to you (chapter outlines, notes on important terms or concepts, etc.).
- I do NOT cover everything from the reading material in lecture.
- All reading material is fair game for exams whether I cover it in lecture or not.

- You are responsible for purchasing or renting or borrowing the books by the time they are scheduled for reading in the syllabus. No extensions will be given on assignments or exams due to failure to acquire access to the books. I am unable to share my books with students or scan chapters. Please look at the reading schedule carefully and plan when you will purchase the required books. Be aware that just because Amazon says a particular book can be shipped to you in 3 days right now does not mean when you need the book in April that you will be able to get the book in 3 days! Again, NO extensions on assignments or exams due to not being able to complete the reading.

Lectures

- Lectures may or may not correspond directly to the assigned reading. It's important to attend class and be attentive during lectures. If you are unable to attend class, you should get notes from a classmate.

Discussion Posts

- In addition to an introduction post, which requires responding to at least two classmates, you will post a discussion question/comment prior to every class meeting about the reading assigned for that day. Discussion posts are due by 11:59pm the night before the class meets.

Policy on Late Submission of Discussion Posts

- Discussion posts may be submitted up to the start of class the day after they are due (e.g., A discussion post due by 11:59pm on Monday may be submitted by 11am on Tuesday when class begins. The penalty for late submission (between midnight to 11am) of a discussion post is a one letter-grade deduction after grading.

Policy on Discussion Post Due Date/Time Extensions

- If you or a family member are seriously ill, please contact me prior to the due date/time to discuss an extension. I may request documentation.
- Inability to meet a due date/time due to University-approved events should be discussed with me in advance. Documentation is required.

Writing Assignments

- You will complete multiple assignments throughout the semester rather than a final paper or project. The assignments will take the form of brief policy memos, newspaper op-ed pieces, blog posts, book reviews, and critical reading reflection. These assignments will require similar, if not more, time and commitment to research and writing than a long paper due at the end of the semester. See Bb for additional information about writing assignments.

Policy on Late Submission of Writing Assignments

- Writing assignments may be submitted up to 24 hours past the due date/time. The penalty for late submission of writing assignments is a one letter-grade deduction for each 12 hours late. At the point of 24 hours late, a grade of zero will be assigned.

Policy on Writing Assignment Due Date/Time Extensions

- If you or a family member are seriously ill, please contact me prior to the due date/time to discuss an extension. I may request documentation.
- Inability to meet a due date/time due to University-approved events should be discussed with me in advance. Documentation is required.

Exams

- There will be three exams. The exam format is short answer and essay.

Policy on Missed Exams

You may schedule a make-up exam with me if you meet the following conditions:

1. You must notify me **prior to the exam** that you are unable to attend due to death of a family member, illness, or an approved University trip with the proper paperwork.
 2. If there was a death in your family, you must provide me with documentation (sorry, I know that sounds harsh, but there is often an amazing number of family deaths at exam time).
 3. If you are too ill to take the exam, you must have a doctor's note that verifies your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time.
 4. If you are in quarantine or required isolation due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, you must have a doctor's note that verifies your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time.
- Those are the only conditions under which a make-up exam will be given. If you do not notify me **PRIOR TO THE EXAM** that you cannot attend for one of the reasons listed above, I will *not* give you a make-up exam. The make-up exam must be taken within one week of the missed exam or a grade of zero will be assigned. The one-week time limit is waived if you have documentation from a doctor that you are still unable to take an exam.

Grading Summary

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Exam 3:	20%
Discussion Posts:	10%
Writing Assignments:	30%

Final Grade Calculation

A+	*	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	≤59
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		

A- 90-92 B- 80-82 C- 70-72 D- 60-62

*Grades of A+ are rare and only given when students meet an exceptionally high bar on all written work, exams, attendance, consistent demonstration of engagement with the course material, and exhibit outstanding critical thinking skills.

University Policies and Resources

These are the boilerplate policies required to be in all syllabi. Please know that I take ALL of these policies very seriously, especially academic misconduct. I will report plagiarism to the Dean's Office even though it is a LOT of paperwork. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. If you aren't sure, you should ask me and I will make sure you understand.

At the end of this section of the syllabus, you will see "Wellness Resources". College can be stressful in the best of times, and we not in those right now! The CDC has recently released a lot of information about adolescent mental health crises during the pandemic. Most of this is focused on children and teens, but most of you are not so far removed from the upper-end of that age group. Please mind your mental health and seek assistance if you are not feeling well. Look out for each other too. Help your friends get help if they are struggling. Sometimes this is as easy as just being there for them and letting a friend know that you notice they are struggling and offering to talk.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (www.ua.edu/uact) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, hate or bias incidents, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Statement on COVID-19

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at studentaccounts.ua.edu and financialaid.ua.edu.

UA students, faculty and staff are required to comply with University Spring 2022 Operations (<https://healthinfo.ua.edu/news/university-spring-2022-operations/>) guidance regarding face coverings and other measures.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to [Protect Our Herd](#). COVID-19 vaccines are being administered by the [University Medical Center, the Student Health Center](#) and various businesses and healthcare providers.

Wellness Resources

College can be a stressful time

If you or someone you know is facing a challenging time or dealing with academic or personal stress, anxiety, depression, or other concerns, we strongly encourage and support you to seek assistance or to help friends find the care that they may [need](#).

Also, If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need urgent assistance, you can also contact the following resources:

Counseling Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-3863).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak with the on-call counselor).
- You may also text BAMA to 741-741 to text with a trained volunteer.

Women and Gender Resource Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-5040).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak to the on-call advocate for the WGRC).

Reading Schedule

This is a tentative reading schedule and subject to change depending on course progress. Any changes to the reading schedule will be announced in class, posted on Bb, and sent via e-mail.

Week 1: January 13

- Introductions

January 19: Last day to add a course. Last day to drop a course without a W.

Week 2: January 18, 20

- Explore: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>
- Explore: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Explore: <https://www.kff.org/>

Week 3: January 25, 27: Bradley and Taylor: “The American Health Care Paradox”

The reading for this week should be completed before class on the 27th.

- Chapter 1: The Paradox
- Chapter 2: Historical Perspectives
- Chapter 3: Front-Line Insights
- Chapter 4: Learning from Abroad
- Chapter 5: Home-Grown Innovations
- Chapter 6: An American Way Forward
- Chapter 7: Continuing the Discourse (optional)

Week 4: February 1, 3: Emanuel: “Which Country Has the World’s Best Health Care?”

Please read the Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 before class on the 1st; Chapters 4 and 5 before class on the 3rd.

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: United States
- Chapter 2: Canada
- Chapter 3: United Kingdom
- Chapter 4: Norway
- Chapter 5: France

Week 5: February 8, 10: Emanuel: “Which Country Has the World’s Best Health Care?”

Please read Chapters 6, 7, and 8 before class on the 8th; Chapters 9, 10, and 11 before class on the 10th.

- Chapter 6: Germany
- Chapter 7: Netherlands
- Chapter 8: Switzerland
- Chapter 9: Australia
- Chapter 10: Taiwan
- Chapter 11: China

Week 6: February 15, 17: Dawes: “The Political Determinants of Health”

EXAM 1 ON FEBRUARY 15

Please read Chapters 1, 2, 3 before class on the 17th.

- Chapter 1: The Allegory of the Orchard: The Political Determinants of Health Inequities
- Chapter 2: Setting the Precedent: America’s Attempts to Address the Political Determinants of Health Inequities
- Chapter 3: The Political Determinants of Health Model

Week 7: February 22, 24: Dawes: “The Political Determinants of Health”

Please read Chapters 4, 5 before class on the 22nd; Chapters 6 and 7 before class on the 24th.

- Chapter 4: How the Game is Played: Successful Employment of the Political Determinants of Health
- Chapter 5: Winning the Game That Never Ends: Success Means Continuous Employment of the Political Determinants of Health
- Chapter 6: Growing Pains: Tackling the Political Determinants of Health Inequities during a Challenging Period
- Chapter 7: The Future of Health Equity Begins and Ends with the Political Determinants of Health

Week 8: March 1, 3: TBD: Michener: “Fragmented Democracy”

Please read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 before class on the 1st; Chapters 4, 5, and 6 before class on the 3rd.

- Chapter 1: Medicaid, Political Life, and Fragmented Democracy
- Chapter 2: Democratic Citizenship and Contextualized Policy Feedback
- Chapter 3: Federalism, Health Care, and Inequity

- Chapter 4: State policy and Political Mis(Education)
- Chapter 5: Particularistic Resistance in County Contexts
- Chapter 6: People, Places, and Social Policy in the City

Week 9: March 8, 10: Michener: “Fragmented Democracy”

MEET THE AUTHOR ON MARCH 8

On March 8th from 11 – noon, Prof. Michener will join our class via Zoom in a “meet the author” session. <https://government.cornell.edu/jamila-michener>

EXAM 2 ON MARCH 10

Please read Chapters 7 and 8 before class on the 8th.

- Chapter 7: Policy Advocacy across a Fragmented Polity
- Chapter 8: Federalism and Political Inequality

Week 10: March 15, 17

- **SPRING BREAK! NO CLASSES!**

Week 11: March 22, 24: Cohn: “The Ten Year War”

Please read the Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, and 3 before class on the 22nd; Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 before class on the 24th.

Part I: 1991 – 2008

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: The Last Failure
- Chapter 2: America’s Path
- Chapter 3: A Right to Health Care
- Chapter 4: Harry and Louise
- Chapter 5: The Freedom Trail
- Chapter 6: Audacity
- Chapter 7: The Argument
- Chapter 8: Workhorses

March 30: Last Day to Drop a Course with a Grade of "W" for Spring Full Term

Week 12: March 29, 31: Cohn: “The Ten Year War”

Please read Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 before class on the 29th; Chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17 before class on the 31st.

Part II. 2008 – 2010

- Chapter 9: Hard Things are Hard
- Chapter 10: Yes We Can
- Chapter 11: Party Lines
- Chapter 12: House Rules
- Chapter 13: On the Bus
- Chapter 14: Death Panels
- Chapter 15: Madam Speaker
- Chapter 16: March or Die
- Chapter 17: A Big F***ING Deal

Week 13: April 5, 7: Cohn: “The Ten Year War”

Please read Chapters 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 before class on the 5th; Chapters 23, 24, 25, 26, and Conclusion before class on the 7th.

Part III. 2010 – 2018

- Chapter 18: The Last Stand
- Chapter 19: This Honorable Court
- Chapter 20: The Anti-Universal Club
- Chapter 21: Purification
- Chapter 22: Shock
- Chapter 23: Sabotage
- Chapter 24: Make Health Care Great Again
- Chapter 25: The Boy Scout
- Chapter 26: Thumbs-Down
- Conclusion

Week 14: April 12, 14: Case and Deaton: “Deaths of Despair”

Please read Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 before class on the 12th; Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 before class on the 14th.

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: The Calm before the Storm
- Chapter 2: Things Come Apart
- Chapter 3: Deaths of Despair
- Chapter 4: The Lives and Deaths of the More (and Less) Educated
- Chapter 5: Black and White Deaths
- Chapter 6: The Health of the Living

- Chapter 7: The Misery and Mystery of Pain
- Chapter 8: Suicide, Drugs, and Alcohol
- Chapter 9: Opioids

Week 15: April 19, 21: Case and Deaton: “Deaths of Despair”

Please read Chapters 10, 11, 12 before class on the 19th; Chapter 13, 14, 15, and 16 before class on the 21st.

- Chapter 10: False Trails: Poverty, Income, and the Great Recession
- Chapter 11: Growing Apart at Work
- Chapter 12: Widening Gaps at Home
- Chapter 13: How American Healthcare is Undermining Lives
- Chapter 14: Capitalism, Immigrants, Robots, and China
- Chapter 15: Firms, Consumers, and Workers
- Chapter 16: What to Do?

Week 16: April 26, 28

This week is reserved for review and/or catch-up.

Exam 3: Friday, May 6, 10:30 – 12:30pm. I’m sure a Friday final exam is inconvenient for many of you for a variety of reasons. I will have a sign-up in Bb for students who wish to take the exam earlier in the week and will see if I can secure a room. This is not guaranteed.