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PSC 483.01: Political Psychology

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**UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
HEALTH POLICY PSC 483**

Instructor: Laura Dimmler, M.P.A.
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**FALL 2006
Three Credits**

Course Description

The intent of this course is to familiarize students with the sociopolitical environment influencing health policy in the United States. The essential issues include health politics and policy development, political structure and process, health care financing, public opinion and special interest groups, political leadership, policy reform and global health. Specific policy issues that influence health care delivery in Montana including rural and environmental health also will be a focus of this course.

The health care delivery system in the United States is something of an enigma. This nation is the only industrialized country that still does not ensure all citizens access to health care services or protection from the economic burden of poor health. Yet, the U.S. has a long history of centralized government involvement in the delivery of health services and health policy development, and today it is estimated that nearly 60 percent of health care costs are paid by government. This complex and intertwined relationship between government and health will continue well into the future, in spite of rapid change in the health care industry, and a desire to reduce public spending and restructure health care delivery toward the competitive private sector.

Required Readings

Textbooks: Governing Health: The Politics of Health Policy, by Carol Weissert and William Weissert. (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, (2006).

Federalism & Health Policy, by John Holahan, Alan Weil and Joshua Wiener (eds). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press. (2003).

Additional required readings will be posted in the course and listed in the reading schedule.

Course Objectives

1. To understand the role of the federal government and the states in health policy development, and the institutions and policy processes that contribute to it.
2. To familiarize students with the politics of health care and public health, and the important processes, outcomes, failures and successes.
3. To comprehend the importance of shaping future health policy initiatives as the U.S. confronts shifting demographics, changing epidemiological trends, economic constraints in health care delivery, increasingly expensive medical technology, and new threats to the nation's health.
4. To appreciate the social and economic impact of health policy formulation and implementation on various populations, especially those in Montana.

5. To realize the importance of international health issues in regard to maintaining public health in the United States, and the influence of emerging infectious diseases on U.S. health policy.

Grading

Class participation (writing assignments/online discussions): 20%

Book report: 30%

Mid-term exam: 25%

Final exam: 25%

An additional 15-page **Policy Analysis Paper** is required of graduate students only.

If the instructor detects any instances of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, misrepresentation, failure to appropriately attribute reference materials or the reuse of a student's written materials from other courses on any exam, paper, assignment or other work submitted by a student, or submit the work of another student as your own work, the result will be an immediate failure of the course, with a grade of F, and referral for possible institutional action (see the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct).

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if necessary at any time.

Course Reading Schedule

August 28

Health Politics and Policy in Perspective

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 1-11.

Holahan, et al., p.p. 1-57.

CDC on Infectious Diseases in the United States: 1900-1999.
(1999). *Population and Development Review*, 25 (3), pp. 635-640.

September 5

Political Structure

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 15-71 and p.p. 154-191.

Hammond, T. (1986). Agency Control, Organizational Structure, And Bureaucratic Politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 30 (2), 379-420.

September 12

Political Structure

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 72-109.

Holahan et al., pp. 399-418.

September 18

Public Opinion and Interest Groups

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 110-153.

September 25

Health Care Financing and Access to Care

Readings: Holahan et al., p.p. 111-143.

McCormick et al. (2004). Single-payer national health insurance. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 164, pp. 300-304.

Woolhandler, et al. (2003). Costs of health care administration in the United States and Canada. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 349 (8), pp. 768-775.

October 2

Medicaid and the States

Readings: Holahan et al., p.p. 59-109 and p.p. 145-248.

State Coverage Initiatives - *State of the States: Bridging the Health Coverage Gap* (January 2003).

October 9

Health Care Reform

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 192-241.

Holahan et al., p.p. 293-397.

Holahan, J., Moon, M., Welch, W.P., and Zuckerman, S. (1999). *Balancing Access, Costs and Politics: The American Context for Health System Reform*.

October 16

Mid-term exam (open-book essay)

October 23

The Elderly, Medicare and Medicaid

Readings: Holahan et al., p.p. 249-292.

Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003.

October 30

Health and the Policy Process

Readings: Weissert, p.p. 245-327.

November 6

Environmental Health Policy

Readings: Geo Year Book/United Nations Environment Programme (2004/2005).

Bowens, W.M., and Wells, M.V. (2002). The politics and reality of environmental justice: A history and considerations for public administrators and policy makers. *Public Administration Review*, 62 (6), pp. 688-698.

Murphy-Greene, C., and Leip, L.A. (2002). Assessing the effectiveness of Executive Order 12898: Environmental justice for all? *Public Administration Review*, 62 (6), pp. 679-687.

United States General Account Office. (2003). EPA's cleanup of asbestos in Libby, Montana, and related actions to address asbestos-contaminated materials. U.S. Government Printing Office, GAO-03-469.

Senate Bill 852: A bill to create a fair and efficient system to resolve claims of victims for bodily injury caused by asbestos exposure, and for other purposes. (2006).

November 13

Global Perspectives on Health

Readings: Global Resources. (2004). *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 112 (3), pp. 169-175.

WHO on Health and Economic Productivity, (1999) *Population and Development Review*, 25 (2), pp. 396-401.

Gro Harlem Brundtland on population, environment, and development. (1993). *Population and Development Review*, 19 (4), pp. 893-899.

Brundtland, G.H. (1989). For global cooperation on environmental problems. *Population and Development Review*, 15 (4), pp. 784-787.

Health care in poor countries: For 80 cents more. (2002). *The Economist* (August 17).

Payne, R.A. (1996). Deliberating global environmental politics. *Journal of Peace Research*, 33 (2), pp. 129-136.

Ravenholt, R.T. (1990). Tobacco's global death march. *Population and Development Review*, 16 (2), pp. 213-240.

November 20

Emerging Infectious Diseases/AIDS and Health Politics

Readings: U.S. Funding to Combat AIDS. (2001). *The American Journal of International Law*, 95 (1), pp. 155-156.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on emerging infectious disease threats. (1994). *Population and Development Review*, 20 (3), pp. 687-690.

November 27 Rural/Frontier Health Policy

Readings: Reschovsky, J.D. and Staiti, A.B. (2005). Does rural America lag behind? *Health Affairs*, 24 (4), pp. 1128-1139.

Readings: USDA Rural Development Research Report 97-1 (2003).

General Accounting Office Fact Sheet. (1993). Rural Development Profile of Rural Areas. GAO-93-40FS.

December 4 Book Reports Due

December 15 Final Exam Due (open-book essay) and Policy Analysis Paper Due (graduate students only)

Health Policy Book Report

Students will be required to write a ten-page, typed and double-spaced book report which will be due on December 4, 2006. (Examples of appropriate books will be listed in the course.) Students may select any book about a health policy topic covered in the course this semester, and they must submit for approval the title, author and a brief paragraph describing the book. Students will need to submit their selected topics and book titles to the instructor by September 11. This assignment represents 30% of the course grade.

Book Report Requirements

1. Select a book and submit a brief description of it to the instructor by September 11.
2. Read the book and using APA format, submit a ten-page, typed and double-spaced book report that includes:
 - a) A comprehensive description of the policy issue(s) covered in the book; include a brief history of the issue(s) - this should cover about 3-5 pages of the report.
 - b) Identify the stakeholders and in terms of the health policy issue described in the book, explain the impact of the health policy decisions on stakeholders; outline the role of policy makers and special interest groups in this process – this should cover about 3-5 pages of the report.
 - c) Evaluate the book – Did you like the book? Did it add to your knowledge? Did the book provide an accurate and comprehensive view of the issue(s)? Has the problem been resolved or exacerbated by the actions taken or decisions made? Did the author identify potential actions or solutions regarding the issue(s)? What course of action do you think still needs to be initiated to resolve

or improve the issue(s)? Provide any additional comments that are relevant to describing or evaluating the book – this should cover about two pages.

d) Be sure to include a reference list if you use any references for your report.

Policy Analysis Paper

(Graduate students only)

A 15-page (typed and double-spaced) policy analysis paper must be submitted by all graduate students by **December 15**. Students need to select an appropriate health policy topic from the range of issues covered in the course (i.e.; the issue of the uninsured, Medicare, environmental health concerns, end-of-life issues, etc.). The paper needs to address the nature of the problem, the historical context of the issue, an assessment of current policy, and recommendations for policy change, if warranted.