Intro to Health Disparities and Health Policy  
PH 770E  
Spring 2013

Instructor: Tetine Sentell, PhD  
Course: PH 770E, Spring 2013  
Time: Tues 11:00-1:45 PM  
Location: BioMed D207

Office Hours: Monday 10AM-12 NOON and by appointment  
Office Location: BioMed D104-G  
Email: tsentell@hawaii.edu

Course Description
The goals of this course are to introduce students to major components of public health policy in the US, provide students with a firm grasp of the institutions that shape health policy, and familiarize students with tools for policy analysis. The course will analyze several federal health policy instruments and consider their development and implementation in the context of the US political system. Policy outcomes will be evaluated both in terms of their merits in achieving policy goals and in terms of the democratic nature of the processes that produce those policy outcomes. The course includes an assessment of US policy-making institutions as platforms for the creation and modification of health policy as well as an overview of methods of policy analysis. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading. Student mastery of the material will be evaluated based on a 15-page policy analysis and a final exam.

Additionally, as DrPH students, you will track bills, provide testimony and advocacy around a health policy topic of your choice, lead two classes, and write an additional paper for publication. You will also take turns giving us weekly updates regarding an interesting health policy development.

Required Texts


4. Readings on Laulima course Website
5. Frontline Documentary: Obama’s Deal
(http://video.pbs.org/video/1468710007/)

Course Requirements (see end of syllabus for more information on assignments)
---
1) Participation 10%
2) Discussion leading (5% each) 10%
3) 15-page paper 30%
4) Public Health Hotline 10%
5) Final exam 30%
6) Advocacy (5% each) 10%

Course Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Meeting Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Intro to the US Health Care System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus: Jan 16</td>
<td>Opening Day of HI Legislature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Theories of Policy Making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Reading lists due for Legislative Activity class 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Problem Definition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>First student-led discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Presidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td><strong>Legislative Activity</strong></td>
<td>Led by DrPH Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Health Policy in the Executive Branch</td>
<td>Policy Analysis Paper topics, thesis, outline, bib, due in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>Public Health Hotline outline, including authorship expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Public Opinion, Health Care Reform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Fragmentation and Venue Change</td>
<td>Reading lists due for Legislative Activity class 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Holiday!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Children’s Health Insurance</td>
<td>Policy Analysis papers due in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>The role of the courts</td>
<td>Public Health Hotline draft due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td><strong>Legislative Activity</strong></td>
<td>Led by DrPH Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review questions handed out in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Public Health Hotline Article due in Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All advocacy pieces must be in In-class review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Final Exam Due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Assignments

Discussions

All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss that week’s readings. Participation during these sessions will be factored into participation grades.

Individual papers: Policy Analysis

** The DrPH schedule is different than the MA schedule **

Write a 15-page policy analysis on a health policy issue of your choice. In this paper, you will follow Gene Bardach’s 8-fold path to structure your approach. We will read and discuss the 8-fold path in class so that you will be familiar with this approach. Your paper should define a policy problem and critically analyze 2-3 alternatives for addressing the problem. You should rely on data to make your argument and discuss the alternatives in light of their ability to satisfy the criteria you have set out.

A more detailed guide for the individual papers will be handed out and discussed in class. I will also post several excellent examples from last year’s papers to provide you with a model. You should note this assignment makes a large percentage of your final grade as it your chance to apply course concepts to a topic of interest to you.

There are several pieces of graded work that will go into the final paper. Late assignments will receive a grade penalty. Please keep track of the following deadlines:

Paper topics, thesis statement, outline, working bibliography, and preliminary reading list

Final paper

Due in class, Feb 26th

Due in class, April 2
DrPH Activities

Current Health Policy

You will each pick two weeks to bring a current health policy event/issue into class that will be introduced at the start of class. You should briefly share the event/issue with students and then have one or two discussion questions regarding this topic. Please let me know the weeks you intend to do by Jan 15.

Legislative Activity Classes

The DrPh students will specifically follow 2 state level initiatives and 1-2 federal level initiatives during the course of the semester and will lead two full classes on these topics. This will provide you will a more in-depth understanding of the process of health policy making on a state and federal level.

One of the state-level bills will be the sugar sweetened beverage tax. You can pick the other state level bill and you can pick the one or two federal bills you wish to follow.

On Jan 22, you will provide the class with at least one relevant, useful reading for each bill you choose. You can provide either a link or a hard copy. This will provide the course readings for the Feb 19th class.

On March 19, you will provide the class with at least one relevant, useful reading regarding the policy making process. This can be regarding your specific bills, or more generally about the policy making process. This will provide the course readings for the April 23rd class.

Some resources to track the bills:

Federal:
http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php

Hawaii:
http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/

Besides online /library searches, feel free to interview interested parties to gain more information about these bills. You can use these bills as the topic for your advocacy pieces (described below), if you like.

Class 1:

You will introduce:

- General history of each bill
  - Rationale for this bill
  - Organizations supporting and opposing this bill
- Legislative history of bill
  - Who introduced it
  - When it was introduced
  - Where it is now
• Current political context of each bill
• Models of these bills in other states/other countries (if relevant).

All DrPH students should be an active participant in this class and it should be dynamic. However, you do not all have to be active participants in all bills. Certain individuals can become experts in certain bills.

Class 2:

You will introduce:

• Updates regarding the bills you are following, including:
  o Legislative history of bill
  o Political context of each bill
• Additional models of these bills in other states/other countries (if relevant).
• Other models you might consider.
• Any testimony you provided regarding this bill.
• General thoughts regarding lessons learned from this exercise.
• Discussion for the full class regarding the lessons learned. For instance, what if these topics had been of a different subject.

Again, all DrPH students should be an active participant in this class and it should be dynamic. However, you do not all have to be active participants in all bills. Certain individuals can become experts in certain bills.

Advocacy

All DrPH students are required to submit two advocacy pieces by the final day of class. One of these must be testimony for a Hawaii bill. The other can be on any topic of your choice. It can be more testimony for a Hawaii bill, or a letter to the editor or to a federal policy maker. I am open to whatever is most useful to your topics of interest.

Individual papers: Public Health Hotline

Based on your tracking of this bill this semester, you will write a Public Health Hotline article to be published in 2013 based on the history and legislative history of the sugar sweetened beverage tax in Hawaii. Details of the requirements of the Public Health Hotline are available on Laulima. A final draft of this manuscript is due on the last day of class. However, if there are any updates before the close of legislature, these should be included in the final version. All DrPH students should be included as authors. You should decide the author order, particularly who will be the lead as they should take responsibility for turning in drafts, organizing responsibilities, and finalizing and submitting the manuscript. I will be the last author. This assignment will receive a group grade.

Outline Due in class, March 5th
Draft Due in class, April 16th
Final version Due in class, April 30th
WEEKLY LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: Introduction (Jan 8)


New York Times: Health Care Reform Overview

Also, from the “ARTICLES ABOUT HEALTH CARE REFORM” below, pick two current articles to read.

Citizens Guide to Testimony (Laulima)

Smith: Writing Public Policy (Laulima)

Optional:

Not Covered by Jeffrey Toobin

Baby Food: If breast is best, why are women bottling their milk? by Jill Lepore
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/01/19/090119fa_fact_lepore

Big Med by Atul Gawande
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/08/13/120813fa_fact_gawande

Week 2: Theories of Policy Making (Jan 15)


Week 3: Policy Analysis (Jan 22)

Optional:

Previous Student Papers to be posted on Laulima


Week 4: Problem Definition (Jan 29)


Week 5: Congress (Feb 5)


http://www3.interscience.wiley.com.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/cgi-bin/fulltext/118784100/PDFSTART


http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/354/22/2314.pdf


http://stripe.colorado.edu/~steinmo/stupid.htm

Week 6: Presidents (Feb 12)

Presidents and health reform: from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Barack Obama.  
Morone JA.  
http://content.healthaffairs.org.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/content/29/6/1096.long

Skocpol, Theda. 1995. The Rise and resounding Demise of the Clinton Health Plan.  
*Health Affairs* (Spring): 66—85.  
http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/14/1/66.pdf

*Health Affairs* (Spring): 86—98.  
http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/14/1/86.pdf

**Week 7: Legislative Activity (Feb 19)**

*** TBA

**Week 8: Health Policy in the Executive Branch (Feb 26)**

***Paper topics and preliminary reading list due in class***  
***Thesis statement, paper outline, and working bibliography due in class***


**Optional**


**Week 9: Interest Groups (March 5)**


Week 10: Public Opinion/Health Care Reform (March 12)


http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/20/2/33.pdf


HTTP://JHPPL.DUKEJOURNALS.ORG.ERES.LIBRARY.MANOAHAWAII.EDU/CGI/REPRINT/21/1/35?VIEW=LONG&PMID=8708342

FRONTLINE DOCUMENTARY: OBAMA’S DEAL

Week 11: Fragmentation and Venue Change in US Policymaking (March 19)


Week 12: Children’s Health Insurance (April 2)

***Policy Analysis Papers Due***


http://content.healthaffairs.org.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/cgi/reprint/28/3/w399

**Week 13: The Role of States (April 9)**


http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/12/2/31.full.pdf

**Week 14: The Role of the Courts (April 16)**


Optional


**Week 15: Legislative Activity (April 23)**

*** TBA

**Week 15: Obesity (April 30th)**

**Public Health Hotline Due**

** All advocacy pieces must be turned in**


***Take-home final exam passed out. Due May 7th. Details to follow. ***
DrPH Competencies Addressed

Advocacy and Policy Development

1. Serve as a liaison and advocate to the policy community for the diverse pressing public health issues.
2. Interact productively with stakeholders and decision-makers to have an impact on public policy.
3. Identify, develop, and apply policies, laws and regulations for public health improvement.

Critical Analysis and Systems Thinking

1. Critically analyze, use and synthesize information from multiple sources to address public health problems/issues.
2. Analyze and evaluate the impact of inter-relationships among systems that influence the quality of life of diverse populations in their communities.
3. Analyze the impact of local, national, and global trends and interdependencies on PH related problems and systems.

Portfolio Items

1. A paper that critically analyzes public health policy.
2. Two pieces of written advocacy, one of which is testimony to Hawai`i State Legislature or other lawmakers body.