INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Suad Ghaddar, PhD
Email: suad.ghaddar@utrgv.edu (preferred communication)

Email Policy: For all communication, please use my email (suad.ghaddar@utrgv.edu) and NOT course messages. Generally, I will respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them. Make sure to communicate via your UTRGV email accounts. I will not respond to emails from non-UTRGV accounts.

Office Phone: (956) 665-7937
Office Hours: If you need to discuss any course-related issues, please send me an email to schedule a phone call or a meeting.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the development of U.S. health policies and laws and how they affect health care delivery, impact health disparities, and shape population health. Special attention will be given to discussions of current national health policy debates. The course also introduces students to various international health care system models.

Prerequisites: None

TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Essentials of Health Policy & Law
Third Edition: 2017
Joel B. Teitelbaum and Sara E. Wilensky
- ISBN-10: 1284087549
- Publisher: Jones & Bartlett Learning

SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIRED READINGS

The textbook chapters will be supplemented by other readings including journal, newspaper or magazine articles and will vary from week to week. Given the rapidly evolving health policy debate, the supplemental readings will be announced as we progress in the course. All articles or links to the articles will be provided.

USEFUL WEBSITES WITH HEALTH POLICY CONTENT

American Public Health Association
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Families USA
Kaiser Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Small Area Health Insurance Estimates
The Commonwealth Fund
LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the policy making process
2. Identify the key institutions and stakeholders in the U.S. health care system
3. Describe the causal pathways through which the social determinants of health contribute to health disparities
4. Discuss the role of health policies in influencing health disparities
5. Analyze the different perspectives shaping the health policy and health reform debate

WEEKLY OVERVIEW AND CALENDAR

Each week, a new set of readings, PowerPoint slides, assignments, etc. will be available for students to review on Blackboard. In this course weeks begin at 12:00 am (Central Standard Time) each Wednesday and end at 11:59 pm (Central Standard Time) on the following Tuesday. Announcements will be posted regularly. Make sure to check the Announcements section frequently for any schedule changes and general comments addressing student issues. The following is a tentative schedule of each week’s topics.

Table 1. Tentative Weekly Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Starting Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Policymaking Process, Law, and the Legal System</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overview: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>U.S. and International Health Care Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Public Health Institutions and Government Health Insurance Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>Social Determinants of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>November 22</td>
<td>Health Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Final Exam: Health Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

GRADING POLICY
The overall passing grade for this course is 70%.

The deadlines on all quizzes, discussion boards, and assignments (due on Tuesdays at 11:59 PM CST) are hard deadlines; work submitted beyond the deadline will be subject a late submission penalty. Please be sure to give yourself enough time to complete your work well before the deadline to account for any technical or unforeseen issues you may encounter.

- Late work policy: You will be penalized 10 points for one-day delay, 15 points for two-day delay. I will NOT accept assignments submitted two days after the deadline.
- In the case of unforeseen emergencies or circumstances, please contact me within 24 hours for special arrangements.

DISCUSSION BOARDS
You will have six Discussion Board prompts to discuss and contribute opinions to. With the exception of Week 1 Discussion Board, your arguments should be supported by at least two references from reliable sources.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR POSTING TO DISCUSSION BOARDS

- Read the instructions carefully.
- Write clearly and professionally. The Discussion Board is not an informal chat room or texting thread. Your answers and replies should utilize proper language and grammar.
- Utilize at least two references to support your point. References should be cited APA style.
• Health policy discussions in the public arena are sometimes politically charged. Make sure that you maintain a professional tone that is constructive and respectful even when you disagree with the opinions of others.
• I highly recommend that you post your answers first in Microsoft Word or another word processing program to avoid spelling and grammatical errors and/or any connection glitches while you are composing. Once completed, copy and paste your answers to the Discussion Board.

ASSIGNMENTS
You will have five assignments in this course requiring different levels of data collection and/or critical thinking analysis.

QUIZZES
You will have six multiple-choice quizzes. Quizzes can be accessed in the quizzes area. All quizzes are open-book. Keep in mind that if you do not have a good grasp of the material, you will not be able to answer the questions or to finish on time. So make sure to prepare well before attempting to take the quizzes. All quizzes open on Monday of each week.

Important note on common glitches while taking your quizzes: In the past students would experience being kicked out of the quiz while taking it. I reported the issue to COLTT and they alerted me to the following potential user-end issues:
• If the student is going in and out to other tabs, then he/she is likely to have this problem
• If the student is taking the quiz (it opens in a new window) and closes the main blackboard window
• If the student closes the quiz thinking they can go back in and resume
• If the student is using a connection that is accessible by many persons (the broadband is distributed by strength of signals coming in, hence, getting kicked off the network by a “bigger truck” is going to happen when it is full). Please avoid the above. If you still get kicked out, please email me or your coach so that we can address the problem.

FINAL EXAM
The Final Exam for this course is a policy analysis paper. It is a group project. You will need to utilize the whole seven weeks to coordinate, plan, prepare, and submit the Final Exam. Following the schedule below will ensure that you are successful at submitting a well-thought out paper deserving of an A. Part of the grade requires that you evaluate the performance and contribution of your group members.

Table 2. Final Exam Assignment Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</table>
| Week 1 | • Get to know your group members. A group discussion board and a Collaborate room has been created for every group. Feel free to establish additional modes of communication. During this week, make sure that you connect with everyone in your group and that you access your group’s Collaborate room and discussion board.  
• Read Chapter 14  
• Submit recording of your Collaborate meeting | 2      |
| Week 2 | • Identify and submit a policy focus for your group’s policy analysis paper | 5      |
| Week 3 | • Identify one stakeholder/group member who is relevant to your health policy focus.  
• Start conducting interviews  
• Submit list of anonymous interviewees; identify interviewees by profession/health system role | 5      |
| Week 4 | • Research your topic | -      |
| Week 5 | • First draft due | 30     |
| Week 6 | • Refine your paper |        |
| Week 7 | • Finalize and submit Health Policy Analysis paper  
• Submit a Peer Assessment for each member of your group | 48 10  |
| Total Points | | 100    |
### GRADE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards (6 @ 4% each)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (5 @ 5% each)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (6 @4% each)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Final grades for this course will be assigned as follows:
- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- F = Below 70%

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

#### COMPUTER HARDWARE

To participate in this online course, you should have easy access to a computer less than 5-years old with high-speed internet connection via cable modem, LAN or DSL. To ensure you are using a supported browser and have the required plug-ins please refer to Supported Browsers, Plugins & Operating Systems for Blackboard Learn from Blackboards resource page.

#### STUDENT TECHNICAL SKILLS

You are expected to be proficient in installing and using basic computer applications and to have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

#### SOFTWARE

- Microsoft Office’s Internet Explorer (latest version)
- Mozilla’s Firefox (latest version; Macintosh or Windows)
- Google Chrome (recommended)
- Adobe’s Flash Player & Reader plug-in (latest version)
- Virus protection
- Microsoft Office

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:
- Submit a Blackboard Helpdesk Ticket
- COLTT Help Desk Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support)
  - Location: Brownsville Campus, Rusteberg, 108, (956) 882-6792
  - Location: Edinburg Campus, Education Complex 2.202, (956) 665-5327
  - Hours: Monday – Friday 7:30AM – 6:00PM

24/7 Blackboard Support: Blackboard phone and chat support is now available 24/7. You can call COLTT main office numbers, 956-882-6792 or 956-665-5327, at any time and speak to a support representative.
The UTRGV disability accommodation, mandatory course evaluation statement and sexual harassment statement are required on all syllabi. Additional policy statements are optional, such as those covering attendance, academic integrity, and course drop policies.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. **Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD**

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (myUTRGV); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

- **Fall 2017 Module 1**  Oct. 5 – Oct. 11
- **Fall 2017 Module 2**  Nov. 29 – Dec. 5
- **Fall 2017 (full semester)**  Nov. 15 – Dec. 6

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**SEXUAL HARRASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIOLENCE**

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at Office of Institutional Equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**COURSE DROPS**

Please consult with the UTRGV Withdrawal Calendar for information on key dates related to drop/withdrawal and corresponding refunds.