

**Healthcare Policy**  
Political Science 448  
University of Montana  
Online Course  
Spring 2019

**Instructor Information**

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In-Person Office Hours: Wednesday 2:20 – 3:30 and by appointment  
Virtual/Phone Office Hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

This course will provide students with an overview of: the American healthcare system and its organization; the historical development of public health and medicine; the roles, motivations, and behaviors of key actors (i.e., patients, providers, payers, administrators, and policy makers); the quality and accessibility of health care services; and key contemporary policy challenges. Special attention will be given to the Affordable Care Act (aka, Obamacare) and the reforms it brought to the U.S. healthcare system. Prior familiarity with the field of health policy isn't required. Learning expectations include: 1) demonstrating sophisticated writing, critical thinking, research, and analytical skills; 2) understanding the major concepts and schools of thought surrounding health policy; 3) understanding the differences and overlaps between public and private aspects of the U.S. healthcare system; and 4) understanding the challenges facing the U.S. healthcare system

**Please note:**

**This is an online course, so we won't be meeting in person. It is therefore essential that students be able to access and use the course's Moodle website. If you have questions about Moodle, please contact UM Online at (406) 243-4999 or [umonline-help@umontana.edu](mailto:umonline-help@umontana.edu).**

**Readings**

Please acquire the following three books:

- Steven Brill, *America's Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System* (Random House, 2015).
- Andrea Louise Campbell, *Trapped in America's Safety Net: One Family's Story* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- Paul Starr, *Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle Over Health Care Reform*, Revised Edition (Yale University Press, 2013).

All other course material, unless otherwise noted, will be posted on the course's Moodle website according to the Course Schedule and organized by week. The instructor reserves the right to add, eliminate, or alter course materials. In the event of any changes to the syllabus, students will be notified as soon as possible.

## **Course Assignments and Grading**

Students are evaluated according to their performance in the following areas:

### **1. Outlines (15% of final grade)**

Outlines demonstrate students' command of the course material and help facilitate discussions. *The goal of these Outlines is not to regurgitate what you have read, but rather to analyze ideas you found compelling in the week's material.* Over the course of the semester, *students are required to submit four Outlines.* Full information on the format and expectations of Outlines is available on the course's Moodle page.

### **2. Weekly Discussions (20% of final grade)**

Students are expected to follow the Course Schedule (listed below) and use the listed materials as the basis for Weekly Discussions. Full information on the format and expectations of Weekly Discussions is available on the course's Moodle page.

### **3. Midterm Exam (20% of final grade); due March 7**

There is a take-home Midterm during Week 8. You are permitted to use materials for the course, including notes, readings, and discussions; however, the exams must be completed without assistance from anyone else. Because the exam is take-home and is listed in the course schedule, make-up exams aren't available.

### **4. Policy Memo (20% of final grade); due April 29**

Students will research and write a professional Policy Memo targeted to members and staff of their state legislature or Congress on the future of a health-related issue of their choice. More information on the Policy Memo assignment will be posted on the course's Moodle page.

### **5. Final Exam (25% of final grade); due May 1**

There is a take-home Final Exam. You are permitted to use materials for the course, including notes, readings, and discussions; however, the exams must be completed without assistance from anyone else. Because the exam is take-home and is listed in the course schedule, make-up exams aren't available.

**Grades:** Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A	93-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D+	67-69.9	below 60	F
A-	90-92.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9	D	63-66.9		
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9	D-	60-62.9		

**\*\*\*\* All course assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.\*\*\*\***

## **Other Items**

### **Help with Technology**

Please make sure your Internet browser settings meet the requirements to be Moodle compatible. Contact UM Online at (406) 243-4999 or [umonline-help@umontana.edu](mailto:umonline-help@umontana.edu) if technological problems arise. There is no on-call assistance during nights and weekends. Your instructor cannot provide IT support, so please contact the appropriate University staff if an issue arises.

### **Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. [The Code is available here](#). Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

### **Accessibility**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact the instructor as soon as possible and must contact DSS in order to arrange for a letter of approval for accommodations to be provided to the instructor. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154; phone: (406) 243-2243.

### **Optional PSCI 400 Writing Project**

All Political Science majors are required to take PSCI 400, Advanced Writing in Political Science (1 credit), in conjunction with an upper-level PSCI course prior to their graduation. Students may do so as part of this course. *This opportunity is strictly optional and has absolutely no influence on your performance in, or grade for, PSCI 448: Healthcare Policy.* Students wishing to enroll in this co-requisite option must meet (or talk by phone) with the instructor prior to starting their project to discuss its aim, scope, sources, and style. Such a meeting/discussion should occur in the first few weeks of the semester.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 (Jan. 14-19): Introduction**

### **Part I: The Ideas and History Behind Healthcare Provision in the United States**

### **Week 2 (Jan. 21-26): The Big Picture: Thinking Philosophically About Healthcare and American Society**

**Week 3 (Jan. 28-Feb. 2): The Historical Development of Public Health and the U.S. Healthcare System**

**Week 4 (Feb. 4-9): Reform Efforts that Set the Stage for the Affordable Care Act**

**Part II: Overview of the Contemporary American Health Care System**

**Week 5 (Feb. 11-16): The Structure and Cost of Healthcare in the U.S.**

**Week 6 (Feb. 18-23): Medicare and Medicaid, Part 1**

**Week 7 (Feb. 25-Mar. 2): Medicare and Medicaid, Part 2**

**Week 8 (Mar. 4-9): Midterm Exam**

**Part III: The Affordable Care Act**

**Week 9 (Mar. 11-16): Designing the Affordable Care Act**

**Week 10 (Mar. 18-23): Implementing the Affordable Care Act**

**Week 11 (Mar. 25-30): Spring Break**

**Part IV: Selected Contemporary Challenges in Health Policy**

**Week 12 (Apr. 1-6): Long-Term Care and End of Life**

**Week 13 (Apr. 8-13): Addressing Inequality in Health Outcomes: The Oregon Medicaid Experiment**

**Week 14 (Apr. 15-20): The Opioid Crisis**

**Part V: Conclusion**

**Week 15 (Apr. 22-27): Lessons Learned and Policy Memo Proposal**

**Finals Week (Apr. 29-May 3): Final Exam and Policy Memo Submission**