

HEALTH POLICY IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD

POLSCI 4RR3 Term 2, Winter 2019

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Course Description

This course challenges students to take a critical view of health policy in Canada and other industrialized countries. This policy area is a significant and sometimes contentious component of public expenditures and often citizens' main point of contact with government. As Katherine Fierlbeck argues, health care "rightfully ought to be debated widely in the public realm. We cannot debate health care, however, if we do not understand how health care works" (2011, ix). This course aims to provide the necessary foundation of knowledge for engaged citizenship with regards to health policy, and possible future employment or graduate work related to health. It seeks to develop skills of critical evaluation of policy that will transfer to other areas of study by focusing on the identification of policy problems and possible solutions, and then the often more difficult task of adjudicating between solutions and understanding roadblocks to reform.

The course begins with a general introduction to health policy, and then in-depth discussion of the Canadian health system. We then discuss selected problems in health policy and compare the Canadian health system to two others (the United Kingdom and the United States).

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- demonstrate a good understanding of the key features of Canadian health systems regarding funding and decision-making, and explain how they differ from the UK and the US
- identify a specific health policy problem and describe its significance in a short policy memo
- propose possible policy solutions and discuss the costs and benefits of each in a short policy memo
- give a brief, informal presentation about the policy problem addressed in their written assignments

Required Materials and Texts

- Fierlbeck, Katherine. 2011. Health Care in Canada: a Citizen's Guide to Policy and Politics. University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division. A limited number are available from the Campus Store. Students may also purchase the book from major online retailers (\$27.10). It is on 2-hour reserve at Mills Library.
- All other articles and book chapters are available on the Avenue page

Class Format

One weekly seminar, 3 hours

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation, 15%, ongoing
2. Weekly reading posts, 10% ongoing
3. Discussion leadership, 5%, date determined first week
4. Topic statement and bibliography 10%, due Feb 11
5. Information note 25%, due Apr 12
6. Decision note 35%, due Mar 25

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation (15%, ongoing)

A central feature of a seminar is that students learn from each other through discussion. As such, it is essential that all students do the readings in advance of the seminar and come prepared to participate actively in the class discussion. I strongly encourage you to think about what insights you can gain from the readings, not just what's "wrong" with them, which can be one's first inclination. Think about how the readings fit together (or don't), how they relate to readings in previous weeks, and especially how they relate to the topic of your policy memos. I recognize that speaking in seminar can be intimidating at times, but it is a crucial skill in academia (and life!), and my goal is for our seminar to be an open-minded and considerate place to practice.

Students are expected to regularly read a newspaper with Canadian and international coverage and to contribute to class discussion on current events related to public policy.

Your participation grade will include the presentation of a **3 minute presentation** about the policy problem and proposal from your written assignments for our final seminar.

Participation bonus marks can be earned by (a) responding to your colleagues' posts in advance of class; and (b) bringing health-related current events for discussion in Avenue posts or in class. Consider both regular news sites (in Canada: CBC, Globe & Mail, Ipolitics; US/international: Politico, New York Times, Washington Post, BBC, the Economist) and health specific sites (**Healthy Debate.ca is a great option**). Paying attention to health policy issues in the news is a good way to find a topic for your written assignments.

Weekly reading posts (10%, ongoing)

To help you prepare for class, you are required to **post a brief (350-500 word) reading response by Monday at 11.59pm**. The response should include a preliminary answer to at least one question from the weekly guide I will post Fridays by 9am, at least one additional discussion question, and indicate familiarity with all the assigned readings. The best type of questions will be those that bridge, juxtapose, or somehow address multiple readings, highlighting theoretical or methodological similarities and differences. You should read your colleagues' responses before class. You can skip one week's response without notice or penalty.

Discussion leadership (5%, date determined first week)

You will take on the role of discussion leader for one week, in some cases in collaboration with a fellow student. It will be the discussion leader(s)' responsibility to review their colleagues' responses on Avenue and **compile a discussion guide, submitted to me by email no later than Wednesday at 3pm**. The guide should include my questions and a synthesis of student questions (so you will have to merge, edit, and organize according to the themes you identify). During class, the discussion leader(s) will introduce the questions and key themes, explain why they are interesting or important, and initiate the discussion by proposing some answers, and facilitate throughout the seminar. The discussion guide should be prepared jointly when there is more than one student assigned to the week.

Topic statement and bibliography (10%, Due February 13 at 11.59, by email)

1 page, single spaced, 12-point font + bibliography

In order to benefit from early feedback on your topic and a chance to discuss the problem with your colleagues, students should prepare a one-page overview of their proposed policy problem and an annotated bibliography of at least five sources. This assignment is due by email by midnight the day before our scheduled writing workshop so I can assign students a discussion partner for the workshop. Because this assignment will form the basis for collaborative work, late assignments are not acceptable.

Information note (25%, Due March 13 by 11.59pm, by email)

2-3 pages, single spaced, 12-point font + bibliography

Describe a health policy problem in a jurisdiction of your choice (Canadian province, federal level in Canada, international jurisdiction). Your memo should be addressed to a policy director in a government department of health and should be aimed at convincing them that the problem requires government attention. It should include appropriate citations to a variety of academic and non-academic sources.

The memo will include a statement of purpose (one sentence), a summary, context (what relevant policies exist, who are the main actors or affected groups), considerations (why the issue is problematic in terms of cost containment, efficiency, equity, or responsiveness or some other clearly articulated criteria) and next steps. We will discuss the components in more detail in class. Note that the problem may be specific to a certain policy (for example, high patient copayments for prescription drugs) or related to a linked set of policies (high surgical wait times), as long as it can be described in some detail in the space allotted.

Decision note (35%, Due April 8 by 11.59pm, by email)

3-4 pages, single spaced, 12-point font + bibliography

Your information note has convinced the department that action must be taken; now you need to prepare a decision memo for the minister or deputy minister. The format of the memo is similar to the standard decision memo in many Canadian governments, except it is somewhat longer (brevity is an advanced skill!) and should include citations like any academic work.

The memo will include a statement of purpose (one sentence), a summary, context (history of the problem – the highlights from your backgrounder), considerations (presentation of policy alternatives) and a recommendation. We will discuss the components in more detail in class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Jan 10) Introduction and course overview

No assigned readings

Module I: How does health policy work in Canada?

Week 2 (Jan 17) Why health policy?

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine preface, Ch 1 p.1-8, 40-43
- Reading, Jeffrey, Charlotte Loppie, and John O'Neil. 2016. "Indigenous Health Systems Governance." *International Journal of Health Governance* 21 (4): 222–28. doi:10.1108/IJHG-08-2016-0044.
- Rosen, Harvey et al (2003), Selections on insurance problems and health care, p.36-38 and 253-255, in *Public Finance in Canada*, 2nd Canadian edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson
- Stone, Deborah (2011). Moral Hazard. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 36(5), 887–896.

Week 3 (Jan 24) Who pays for health care?

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine Ch 1 Funding Health Care p.9-39
- Tuohy, Carolyn Hughes, Colleen M. Flood, and Mark Stabile. 2004. "How Does Private Finance Affect Public Health Care Systems? Marshaling the Evidence from OECD Nations." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 29 (3) (June 1): 359–396.

Week 4 (Jan 31) Who makes decisions about health care? Federal and provincial governments

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine Ch 2 Intergovernmental Relations
- Weaver, R. Kent. (1986). The Politics of Blame Avoidance. *Journal of Public Policy*, 6(4), 371–398.
- Blackstock, Cindy. 2016. "Toward the Full and Proper Implementation of Jordan's Principle: an Elusive Goal to Date." *Paediatrics & Child Health* 21 (5). Oxford University Press: 245–46. doi:10.1093/pch/21.5.245.

Recommended:

- Jordan, Jason. 2009. "Federalism and health care cost containment in comparative perspective." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 39 (1): 164–186.
- Other materials on Jordan's Principle available from the [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society website](#)

Week 5 (Feb 7) Who provides health care? the role of physicians and other health professionals

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine Ch 6 Health Human Resources
- Monavvari, Alan A, Colette Peters, and Perle Feldman. 2015. "International Medical Graduates: Past, Present, and Future." *Canadian Family Physician* 61 (3). The College of Family Physicians of Canada: 205–8 [opinion piece]

Week 6 (Feb 14) Writing Workshop

Note: Topic statement and bibliography due via email, 11.59pm on Feb 13

Required readings:

- peer evaluation guidelines on Avenue
- Pal, Leslie A. 2010. Chapter 4: Policy Instrument and Design. In *Beyond Policy Analysis. Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*. 4th ed. Toronto: Nelson. Pp. 143-171 and 190-193.

Winter Mid-Term Recess (Feb 21): NO CLASS

Module II: Selected health policy problems

Week 7 (Feb 28) Barriers to access

Required readings:

- Lawford, Karen. 2016. "View of Locating Invisible Policies: Health Canada's Evacuation Policy as a Case Study." *Atlantis* 37 (2): 147–60.
- Thomson, Mary Susan, Ferzana Chaze, Usha George, and Sepali Guruge. 2015. "Improving Immigrant Populations' Access to Mental Health Services in Canada: a Review of Barriers and Recommendations." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 17 (6). Springer US: 1895–1905. doi:10.1007/s10903-015-0175-3.

Week 8 (Mar 7) Changing approaches to mental health services

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine Ch 4 Mental Health
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2016). *Advancing the Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Framework for Action (2017–2022)*, Ottawa, ON: Mental Health Commission of Canada. Read Pillars 1-3, p.10-19. Available on the [Commission website](#).

Recommended:

- Mental Health Commission of Canada. 2012. *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: Mental Health Strategy for Canada*. Ottawa: The Commission. Read Strategic Direction 3, pages 52-75. Available on the [Commission website](#)

Week 9 (Mar 14) Pharmaceutical policy

Note: Information note due Mar 13 by 11.59pm, by email

Required readings:

- Fierlbeck, Katherine Ch 7 Drugs and Drug Policy, p.151-183 (omit "Regulatory Reform in Canada")
- Morgan, Steve. G. and Katherine Boothe. (2016). Universal prescription drug coverage in Canada: Long-promised yet undelivered. *Healthcare Management Forum*, 29(6), 247–254.
- Final Report of the Citizens' Reference Panel on Pharmacare in Canada (2016), pages 1-10. Available for download from the [Panel's website](#)

Recommended:

- Daw, Jamie R., Morgan, Steve. G., Thomson, P. A., & Law, M. R. (2013). Here today, gone tomorrow: The issue attention cycle and national print media coverage of prescription drug financing in Canada. *Health Policy*, 110(1), 67–75.
- Pomey, Marie P, S Morgan, J Church, P G Forest, J N Lavis, T McIntosh, N Smith, J Petrela, E Martin, and S Dobson. 2010. “Do Provincial Drug Benefit Initiatives Create an Effective Policy Lab? The Evidence from Canada.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 35 (5) (December 1): 705–742.

Module III: Health system comparisons

Week 10 (Mar 21) National Health Services - UK

Required readings:

- Fierbeck, Katherine Ch 9: Beveridge Systems – Britain, Sweden and the Internal Market (omit “Sweden’s Health Care System, p.234-237)
- Ham, Chris. 2012. What will the Health and Social Care Bill mean for the NHS in England? *British Medical Journal* 344:e2159
- Courea, Eleni. 2018. [“Brexit: Most Doctors and Nurses Now Think NHS Will Get Worse.”](#) *The Guardian*, October 13.

Week 11 (Mar 28) Market model? The special case of the US

Required readings:

- Fielbeck, Katherine Ch 11: Mandated Private Insurance: The United States and the Long Road to Reform
- Rovner, Julie. 2018. [“Timeline: Despite GOP’s Failure to Repeal Obamacare, the ACA Has Changed.”](#) *Washington Post*, April 5.

Recommended:

- Views on how the initial Obamacare reform happened from a political scientist who was involved: Hacker, Jacob S. 2010. “The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (03) (August 23): 861–876.
- Update on Texas judge’s ruling that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional: Mervosh, Sarah. 2018. [“Obamacare, Ruled Invalid by Federal Judge, Will Remain in Effect During Appeal .”](#) *New York Times*, December 30.

Week 12 (Apr 4) Research presentations

No required readings; each student will present a 3 minute overview of their research findings. Presenters are encouraged to explain the significance of the problem they have chosen, and outline the policy solutions they are proposing. The audience is expected to raise constructive questions. Slides are not permitted, and time limits will be strictly enforced!

April 7: Decision note due by 11.59pm, by email

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

All assignments should be typed using a standard 12-point font, single spaced, and standard 1 inch margins. All written assignments require formal citations and a bibliography. Any standard citation style is acceptable ([for example, APA or Chicago style](#)).

All written assignments are to be submitted in via email at the specified time on their due date.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

The weekly reading responses are an important element of students' participation grade. Because the student discussion leaders rely on their colleagues to submit discussion questions in a timely fashion, no late reading responses will be counted towards the participation grade.

There will be a penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) for late final papers. Late submissions of the topic statement and bibliography will not be accepted. This exercise involves working in a group/team environment, and by not submitting your work on time, you are seriously inconveniencing your colleagues. Students who do not submit their topic statement on time forfeit the opportunity to either receive a peer review in the writing workshop, or do one themselves. This is a kind of quid pro quo exercise, and given that it's done over email, there's no excuse for missing out. If you become seriously ill or experience an emergency in advance of this assignment, it is important

that you take steps to notify the instructor (me) about your situation so we can work something out.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Participation in discussion is a crucial element of student learning in this class, and the discussion suffers when contributors are absent. If students are unavoidably absent, they should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Unexcused absences will impact participation grades.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Policy on Children in Class

Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents.

- 1) All breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship.
- 2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
- 3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
- 4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable

notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.