HEALTH POLICY AND THE AGED
CHS 291 - - - Spring 2014
Thurs Noon-3pm Room CHS 41-235
https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/14S-COMHLT291-1

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Overview

It is impossible to ignore older adults when examining health policy issues. The increasing number of elderly in the United States, lengthening lifespans, and the predominance of chronic illness and disability as the most common health problems all draw attention to how health policy and the aging of the American population interact. Specifically, the focus of this course will be how the aging, increasing diversity, and intergenerational claims of the U.S. population have shaped and will continue to shape health policy. The aging and increasing diversity of the American population poses major challenges to public policy makers at all levels of government. Fiscal pressures and changes in the relationships among governments at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as between the public and private sectors, ensure that programs and services for an aging and diverse population will be major factors in the actions, decisions, and proposals of elected and appointed officials, advocacy groups, the media, and government agency personnel. We will examine both current controversies involving health policy for older persons and critical issues that are not currently in the news. In particular, we will look at the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on older Americans. This course is designed to provide students with skills in both policy process and policy analysis as applied to key policies that affect the health and health care of older persons and their families within the context of increasingly diverse populations.

"American medicine... stands now on the brink of chaos. Much of US medical care... is inferior in quality, wastefully dispensed, and inequitably financed... The time has come for radical change." Forbes 1970.

Required readings (download):

All readings are available on-line and must be downloaded by each student to read on-line or printed to read as paper copy. If a URL is not provided on the syllabus, the reading will be available on the class member-only section of the class website.

(Optional) For those who want to know more about the full range of aging services

For those who need a basic introduction to American politics and policy

The best history (to 1999) of Medicare is:

Learning Objectives:

1) Describe selected current issues facing policy makers in health policy as it affects the aged, with a special emphasis on current health care reform issues.

2) Articulate a historical perspective on the relationship between health policy and the health care system as a means for understanding the current underdevelopment of preventive and social health measures.

3) Use different perspectives to analyze public policies, including adequacy, efficacy, and justice.

4) Analyze different strategies for influencing health policy for the elderly and others.

Requirements:

Paper Assignments

Assignment 1: Framing Policy Issues: 2 op-ed essays (persuasive essays based on facts, but appealing to common values as well). Due weeks 4 and 6. Communicating ideas with policy makers and the general public requires that you present arguments in a clear and succinct manner. Your first assignment is to pick a health policy topic relevant to the older population (a problem or a solution) and write two different editorials using two different frames from different perspectives. For example, death with dignity is a human right that requires allowing a physician to hasten the end-of-life versus
physician assisted suicide is unethical since it requires a doctor to hasten death and has a high risk of abuse. Each essay should be around 750 words long (about 2 pages double spaced). Assume the reader knows little about your topic, i.e. avoid jargon and technical terms, explain what key programs are, take a clear position, make your argument as clear and accessible as possible. Not included in your op eds page limit is a stand alone page that gives a bibliography of the material that you have drawn from. You need to turn in a paper copy of the assignment in class and also post the essays on the class website.

For examples of pro versus anti government intervention in the health care system, see:

Paul Krugman, The Medicare Killers, NYTimes.
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/31/opinion/Krugman.html and
Grace-Marie Turner, Obama administration in denial on Part D. The Hill.
http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/199320-obama-administration-in-denial-on-part-d

George McGovern on Medicare for All, Washington Post.
www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/11/AR2009091102406.html and
Sara Palin on Death Panels, Wall Street Journal.
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203440104574400581157986024.html

Assignment 2: Policy and politics analysis, 12-14 pages (not including references)

The final paper assignment will be your recommendations for the aging issues that should be addressed by U.S. policy makers as we move forward in the 21st century. The purpose of this assignment is to make you “think” about the social, economic, and political importance of the health policy issues currently being faced by our aging society.

The paper should address the following areas:

1) Describe the health or health care issue/s you believe should be addressed by U.S. policy makers over the next six years - e.g., older women’s health, long term care financing, Medicare reform, racial/ethnic health disparities, changing eligibility requirements under Medicare, privatizing Medicare, nursing home reform.

2) Provide justification for why these issues should be addressed. Discuss why the issues you have raised are important. What are the economic, political, and social implications/ramifications associated with the issues?

3) Analyze the feasibility of the issues reaching the national agenda utilizing Kingdon’s theory of agenda setting. In this section you should also address how current values and ideologies might impact whether or not the issues reach the national agenda.
The paper double-spaced, and carefully proofread. Grades are based on whether you have developed a clear and convincing line of analysis (both technically and logically), cover the issues asked for in the assignment, provide original and/or creative ideas on the topic, and provide good documentation of your information. In addition, the op-ed essay is also graded on its use of nonacademic language.

Class Participation

Beginning the second class session, each student will prepare one discussion question for each of the required chapters or articles for each class period (see end of syllabus for examples of questions). These questions are due by 9 pm the night before class. We will use these questions as the basis for class discussion of the required materials. They should be e-mailed swallace@ucla.edu and vvilla@ucla.edu.

Everybody who makes an honest effort on the questions gets a check (full credit). Incomplete or mechanical questions get a "minus" (half credit). A particularly insightful, synthetic, or discussion-provoking SET of questions gets a plus (extra credit). For students whose final grade is borderline (e.g. A versus A-), the score on the discussion questions will be the deciding factor by counting towards your class participation grade.

Grading

Op-eds – 20% each Due: April 24 & May 15 & post to course website
Final paper - 50% June 12
Class participation - 10% Each class after first class
Class Topics & Readings:

1. **April 3: Introduction**


2. **April 10: Medicare and the Affordable Care Act**


   (this pair of webpages counts as one article)


and READ op-ed pieces [no discussion questions needed]

www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/health/2013/medicare-program-brief-overview-AARP-ppi-health.pdf [no discussion questions needed]

3. April 17: Demography, Diversity, Intergenerational Claims and the Context of Health Policies


http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/070508-boomerreport.pdf


Data to review and for reference:


www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/03/10-projections-for-the-global-population-in-2050/

http://www.agingstats.gov
US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Merck Institute, The State of Aging & Health in America, 2013.  

4.  **April 24: Social insurance versus Personal Responsibility**


http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2007.12.003

5.  **May 1: Agenda Setting and the Politics of Policy**

Kingdon, J.W. 2003. Chapters 4-8

TBA

6.  **May 8: Interest groups and power of the elderly**

** Aging Advocacy annual meeting in downtown LA


7. **May 15: Long-term care services and supports**


8. **May 22: How we got here: Historical Perspectives on Health Policy and Aging**


(standard)


The Older Americans Act Nutrition Program Sets a New Table. American Society on Aging. posted 03.04.2014 www.asaging.org/blog/older-americans-act-nutrition-program-sets-new-table


June 12: final papers due (5 pm)
Some Basic Style Rules for Papers

11. Please type your paper, double space, 1" margins. Include a title page with your name, assignment title, and course number. On the paper itself include page numbers but do not repeat your name (a different running head is OK).

12. Avoid using the passive voice. Money was raised to solve the problem (passive voice). The community raised money to solve the problem (active voice).

13. Avoid the "royal we." If you alone did something, say "I did it."

14. Avoid gendered language when you are speaking generally. E.g. "humanity" for mankind, people live longer vs. man lives longer, personnel vs. manpower.

15. Descriptive subheadings are useful to help guide the reader through the text and ease transitions between topics.

16. Be sure to cite the source of your ideas and data that come from material you have read. You need the citation whether you are using a direct quote or not. Include a bibliography of works cited within the paper. Be sure to include the authors, year, full title, publisher's location, and publisher (for books); authors, year, full title, full journal name, volume number, and page numbers (for journals).

17. ALWAYS cite required class readings where appropriate.

18. Make sure you follow the instructions for the paper fully. If the directions say to "compare and contrast," be sure that you have a section comparing, and another contrasting.

19. STYLE: If you are already familiar with a standard academic style (e.g. APA), you can follow those guidelines. If you are unsure about style, several excellent reference works include: the Chicago Manual of Style (the most comprehensive) http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html; The Elements of Style by Strunk & White (most common short work); the American Psychological Association style manual http://www.apastyle.org/ (comprehensive, common in psychology and medicine); You can also look at any journal, like the Gerontologist or AJPH, to see how they format articles. The last page of most journals gives a brief description of how to format citations. Whatever style you follow, be consistent.

Sample Questions (week 1)

Note: The point of the questions is to apply information and concepts from the readings and to generate class discussions on relevant topics. The following are examples of different types of questions that you could raise.

1) Concepts

Can we talk about “Healthy Aging” and ways to promote it without including a focus on disease and disability? Is it as compelling to a policy maker to pass laws that promote healthy aging as it is to pass laws that reduce a dread disease like Alzheimers?

2) Implementation and policy implications of ideas

The CDC’s agenda to promote healthy aging is admirable and the ideas expressed in the Lang et al. paper sound like great recommendations. I am however skeptical about the possibility of their implementation. The article mentioned a lot of research being done but did not mention in detail how these ideas would be integrated in existing structures and where funding from such programs would come from. Who would advocate for these ideas and how would they attract policy attention?

3) Comparisons / cross-article issues

Both “Public Health Perspective on Aging” and the CDC Agenda article set out directions for policy and practice. What are the key differences between the two?

4) OK to ask clarification questions, too

Note: questions that draw on multiple articles, especially including articles from earlier class periods, are particularly good!
# PH Competencies: Map of course objectives to competencies*

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<tr>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
<th>Corresponding Competencies</th>
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| 1. Describe selected current issues facing policymakers in health policy as it affects the aged, with a special emphasis on current health care reform issues. | ● Demonstrate ability to read and apply public health literature to community health issues.  
● Identify and explain how social, behavioral and environmental factors affect health of individuals, communities and populations.  
● Diversity content and competence |
| 2. Articulate a historical perspective on the relationship between health policy and the health care system as a means for understanding the current underdevelopment of preventive and social health measures. | ● Understand and apply theories, models, and concepts from the social and behavioral sciences to community health issues. |
| 3. Use different perspectives to analyze public policies, including adequacy, efficacy, justice. | ● Understand and apply theories, models, and concepts from the social and behavioral sciences to community health issues.  
● Apply basic principles of biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, and health policy and management to community health issues.  
● Ethics in research and practice |
| 4. Analyze different strategies for influencing health policy for the elderly and others. | ● Describe, explain and apply evidence-based procedures for planning and implementation of community health programs, policies and interventions.  
● Describe strategies for collaboration and partnerships among individuals and organizations focused on community health issues. |

* Based on draft updated competencies specific to UCLA FSPH Community Health Sciences program