Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the origin and development of health policies that affect older persons, diverse populations, and families. Specifically, the course will focus on 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. The problems and issues facing older persons, their families, and society in general require practitioners, researchers, public officials, and the general public to be familiar with health policy and to be able to evaluate the various proposals, reforms, and debates surrounding policy decisions affecting the elderly, diverse populations, as well as younger generations. 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 health 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. Health disparities, access to care, long-term care, health care delivery, income security, as well as policy decisions and politics associated with Medicare Reform, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, and Social Security highlight the importance of examining the development of health policies for an aging/diverse society and analyzing the current systems of programs and services for the population. 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.

Course Objectives

1. To provide students with theoretical frameworks to analyze the policy process.

2. To provide students with conceptual foundations i.e., demography, diversity, intergenerational claims for understanding the development of health policy for the elderly in the U.S.

3. To provide students with an understanding of how societal values e.g., adequacy, equity, and social justice have historically shaped and continue to shape health policy for the older adult population.
4. To provide students with an understanding of the major federal and state health and social policies, i.e. Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, Social Security and how they impact an aging, diverse population and their families.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Describe and apply theoretical models and frameworks for analyzing health policy.

2. Describe the role that U.S. values play in shaping health and social policy for the elderly.

3. Describe current health policy issues and policy decisions facing policy makers under Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and Social Security.

4. Articulate how current health policy proposals and issues affect the elderly, diverse populations, and families.

**Required Readings (Download)**

All readings are required and 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.

**Requirements**

The student’s grade will be based on the following:

1. Class Participation = 20% i.e., attendance, small group/individual presentations.
2. Midterm Exam = 40%
3. Final paper (Policy Issue Brief) = 40%

**Final Paper Assignment**

The final paper assignment will be to write a “Policy Issue Brief”. The topic of the brief will be your recommendations for the health 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 students “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 issue/s you believe should be addressed by U.S. policy makers over the next four years- e.g., older women's health, long term care financing, Medicare reform, racial/ethnic health disparities, changing eligibility requirements under Medicare.
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 the Kingdon, 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 should be 8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced. Final Paper is Due June 9, 2015 by 5:00pm.

Grading Policy

“A” indicates superior work that goes beyond the expectations of an assignment or a course and demonstrates innovation, scholarly analysis, clarity in writing and excellent class participation.

“B” indicates that a student has successfully comprehended the scope of an assignment or course, and has performed meritoriously in meeting course requirements, including organizational clarity in writing, and appropriate class participation.

“C” indicates that a student has met basic requirements for a course or assignment with a level of performance that is substandard for graduate level work.

The course will consist of didactic lectures, class discussion of readings, participation in small group discussions/presentations, and individual student presentations. Lectures by the instructor are designed to highlight and supplement content from the readings. Students will have the opportunity and are encouraged to share their perspective on all course topics and readings. It is expected that confidentiality of information shared in class will be observed always.

Course Outline and Assignment Schedule

Week 1: March 31, 2015
Introductions/ Overview of Course/ Professor and Student Expectations
Introduction to the Study of Health Policy: Demographics, Diversity, and Generational Claims

Week 2: April 7, 2015
The Demography, Diversity, and Intergenerational Claims of the U.S. Population


American Hospital Association (2010), When I’m 64: How Boomers will Change Health Care. http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/070508-boomerreport.pdf


Week 3: April 14, 2015
The Policy Process/ Agenda Building/ Theories of Public Policy/
Interest Group Theory, Elite Theory, Rational Theory,
Political Economy Perspective

Kingdon, J. W. Chapters 4-8

Week 4: April 21, 2015
The Development of Health Policy / Historical Antecedents/ Social Movements and Values: Tracing the History of Health Policy / The influence of Societal Values on Social Policy


**Week 5: April 28, 2015**

**Midterm Exam**
The exam will cover materials from weeks 1 through 4

**Week 6: May 5, 2015**
The Economic Status of the Elderly: How well are the elderly "really" doing? The Link between Socioeconomic Status and Health/Social Security Reform/ Privatizing Social Security/ Is the safety net frayed? /Social Security Politics: Ideology and Reform


**Week 7: May 12, 2015**

Health Status of the Elderly/Health Disparities/ Public Health Perspectives on Aging/ Context and Health/Racism and Health


US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Merck Institute, The State of Aging & Health in America, (2013). 


http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/20/2/187


**Week 8: May 19, 2015**

Medicare/ Medicaid/ Financing Health Care for the Elderly/ Medicare Reform/ the Affordable Care Act

www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/health/2013/medicare-program-brief-overview-AARP-ppi-health.pdf


**Week 9: May 26, 2015**

Long Term Care/ Financing Long term care/ Long Term Care insurance/ Community Based Care: How to solve the Long Term Care Dilemma/Caregiving and the Impact on Families


**Week 10: June 2, 2015**
The Future of Aging Policy/ Wrap Up/Presentation/Discussion of student papers

