

POLS/UEP 209: Health Policy
Course Syllabus
FALL 2020

Course Title: POLS/UEP 209: Health Policy

Meeting schedule: The course will meet on Thursdays from 1:30 to 4:25 PM. The course will be taught mostly synchronously via Zoom. The Zoom link for the course is: <https://occidental.zoom.us/j/98797668383>
The passcode is 12345.

Office hours: Office hours are available virtually upon request.

Course Instructor: Corey Davis, JD, MSPH

Contact Information: The best way to reach me is via email at cdavis2@oxy.edu.

Course Description

Why does the United States spend more on health care per person than other developed countries and still have worse health outcomes? American health care costs (including drug prices) are higher and we have a much greater use of expensive medical technology than in other countries. This course will examine the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to health care delivery and financing, including private, single-payer and universal systems. Students will analyze the impact of these approaches on access, cost, quality, and disparities. They will also examine the historical, economic, social, and political factors that have led the U.S. to adopt its current health system, how care is delivered, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and examine the different proposals for reforming it.

This course is intended to provide an overview of health planning, health service delivery, health policy, and health ethics, and provide students with a framework for understanding the goals, politics, and barriers to health care improvement. At the conclusion of the course, students will understand the legal and ethical bases for government regulation of health and health care, the current makeup of the American health care system, the history of health reform in the United States, the ways in which American political realities impact health policy, how health care is delivered in other industrialized countries, and potential paths forward for the United States.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the process through which health policy is made in the United States, including the role of legislators, judges, government agencies, non-government organizations and for-profit actors;
2. Understand the unique nature of the American system of health care delivery, and the historical forces that shaped it;
3. Explain how health policy and health care policy in the US compares to that in other countries; and

4. Formulate actionable strategies for improving the equitable delivery of health care in the United States.

Course materials

There is one required book for the course:

- Bradley and Taylor, [The American Healthcare Paradox: Why Spending More is Getting Us Less](#)

Another book is optional:

- Johnson, Stoskopf, and Shi, [Comparative Health Systems: A Global Perspective](#), 2nd Edition (ISBN 1284111733)

We will also read a number of news articles, journal articles, fact sheets, and cases as noted on this syllabus. They will either be linked from the syllabus or posted on [Moodle](#). We will also utilize the [Constitution of the United States](#). Unless otherwise noted, please use the abridged cases posted on Moodle, not the full text of cases that might be available online (of course, you're welcome to read the full cases as well if you wish). I also recommend that students subscribe to Vox's health care newsletter, VoxCare, which you can sign up for [here](#).

Course Structure and Requirements

This semester, this will be a distance education course that will utilize live lectures, student presentations, in-person discussion, and group activities. This is a four credit course. It is expected that students devote approximately 12 hours per week, on average, to course activities.

Reading

This is a reading-intensive course. Students are expected to read all assigned texts prior to the class in which they'll be discussed, and be prepared to engage in informed discussion regarding those texts.

Student-led activities and class discussion

Discussion is an integral part of the course. Students can be expected to be called on at random, and are expected to be able to provide intelligent discussion regarding the readings, integrating their own knowledge and experience. There will also be several in-class group-based activities in which students are expected to substantially contribute their knowledge and expertise.

Beginning in the second week of class, one small group per class will provide a short (~10 minute) summary and informed analysis of a recent publication or event regarding health care or health policy. This can be an article in the popular press, a journal article, a blog post, online video, policy statement, etc. of the student's choosing.

The small group should email the relevant article, video, etc. to me by the Tuesday night prior to the class in which they present. During class, the small group will provide a brief explanation of how this publication or event relates to health care/health care policy/social determinant of health, with reference to the concepts and ideas we've learned to date, and utilizing outside sources as applicable.

Additionally, there will be a graded larger group exercise in which the group will research and explain the health care delivery system of another country in the 13th week of the course.

Writing

Informed analysis delivered through written work will also be a key component of the course. There will be two writing assignments, and both the midterm and final will contain writing components. Writing assignments are as follows:

1. An important skill for anyone interested in working in the policy field is the ability to summarize complex issues and to articulate concise arguments. To show your competence with this skill, each student will be required to submit a brief (~1,000 word) analysis based on a publication (of any kind, including articles, videos, lectures, etc) that focuses on a health care or health policy issue related to COVID-19.

This analytical document should use the media as a jumping-off point to discuss the relevant health policy issue. The document must discuss the importance of the topic discussed to health equity and an informed perspective on the issue discussed. It must also include specific recommendations for addressing the issue discussed. Outside references are permitted but not required.

2. One of the goals of this course is to gain an understanding of the health care systems in other countries, to understand how and why they differ from the American system, and to examine what lessons they might hold for America. To demonstrate your competence in these areas, the second writing assignment is a 2,000 – 2,500 word essay analyzing whether and how the health care system of another country might be adopted by or inform health care policy change in the United States. This country may be but need not be one of the countries that we discussed in class. It may be the same country you will examine in your group project, but it is a separate assignment and the content of the two should be different.

In this paper, each student should briefly a) present an overview of how healthcare is funded and delivered in the chosen country; b) explain the health care system's major actors and institutions; c) explain how well the system is working, being sure to note the perspective of a group in the country that has limited healthcare access; and d) provide a reasoned opinion as to whether the system of the country you've chosen would work in the United States and/or how it can inform health care policy reform in America, with emphasis on individuals and groups that are currently under-served by the American health care system.

This paper must make reference to the current US health care system as well as the political and historical realities discussed in class. It will be evaluated on the clarity and quality of the writing, the reasoned perspective you bring to the topic, and your recommendations or policy suggestions. Where relevant, you may integrate ideas and concepts from the group work, but the final product must be solely your own work. Outside sources are required. This paper is due November 12.

All written work products should be single spaced in twelve-point font. They are expected to have a clear thesis, contain persuasive evidence, and show independent thought and analysis. No particular citation method is necessary, but please cite each source in the text after the sentence in which it's

referenced and list each cited source at the end of the document. For example: Health policy is the best class ever! (Everyone, 2020).

Exams

There will be three quizzes, a midterm, and a final. The exams will cover the readings as well as class discussions. The examinations will test key concepts learned in the course, your knowledge of the assigned readings, and your ability to summarize the policy relevance of health issues. The midterm may consist of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions. The final exam will comprise a combination of short answer and short paragraph response questions.

Grading

Points will be allocated as follows:

- Quiz 1: 10% (Sept. 17)
- Paper 1 (COVID-19 and disparities): 5% (Sept. 24)
- Midterm: 15% (Oct. 1)
- Quiz 2: 10% (Oct. 22)
- Quiz 3: 10% (Nov. 5)
- Paper 2 (Comparative health systems): 10% (Nov. 12)
- Group comparative country presentation: 10% (Nov. 19)
- Ongoing group presentations: 5%
- Final: 20%

Grades will be assigned on the following scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-70; D: 63-67; F: 0-63.

Extra Credit

There are a large number of high-quality popular books on American health care and health policy. If you desire, you are invited to read one of the below books and either submit a paper summarizing and analyzing the text or present the book and your insights to the class. This paper should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words in length, and should briefly summarize the key points of the text and then place the information you learned in the context of our class discussions and your own experiences. You must also provide specific recommendations informed by the reading. Alternatively, you may present your findings and analysis to the class in a presentation at least 20 minutes but no more than 30 minutes in length. I'm not looking for a book report (I've read the books!); I'm interested in your analysis, ideas, and recommendations. The eligible books are:

- Steven Brill, [America's Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix our Broken Healthcare System](#)
- Ezekiel Emanuel, [Reinventing American Health Care](#)
- Jill Quadagno, [One Nation, Uninsured: Why the U.S. Has No National Health Insurance](#). A great overview of how we got where we are, available for a few dollars used.
- T.R. Reid, [The Healing of America](#)
- Elisabeth Rosenthal, [An American Sickness](#)

- Paul Starr, [The Social Transformation of American Medicine](#). While almost 30 years old, this is still one of the best explanations of why the American health care system is the way it is. You should be able to pick up a used version for less than ten dollars.

If you choose to submit a paper or present to the class, you will earn between two and five points added to the midterm exam grade.

Title IX statement

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced sexual or interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual harassment, as a designated Responsible Employee, I must notify the Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at Oxy and reporting options both on and off-campus.

If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus:

- Marianne Frapwell, Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (young@oxy.edu)

The sexual misconduct policy, along with additional resources, can be found at:

<http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-respect-title-ix/policies-procedures>. If you would like to contact the Title IX Office directly, you can email Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

Special Accommodations/Learning Differences

No matter the mode of course instruction, approved academic accommodations remain in effect. Students with documented disabilities and learning differences who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester, or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience

Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the

identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website:

<https://www.oxy.edu/office-religious-spiritual-life>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to strictly adhere to the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and to maintain the highest levels of academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and using the correct procedures for acknowledging and identifying sources of borrowed material. Failure to properly credit sources in all or part of work presented in draft or final form to anyone is plagiarism, regardless of whether it occurs as a result of dishonest intent or carelessness and regardless of the course credit attached to it. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, all course assignments must be completed individually. Any unsanctioned collaboration constitutes academic misconduct. Consistent with College policy on [discrimination, harassment, and retaliation](#), I seek to maintain an environment of mutual respect among all members of our community. Collegial disagreement is welcome, but learners are expected to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

Wellness

Emmons Wellness Center is committed to providing the students of Occidental College with accessible, culturally sensitive, and high quality medical care, psychological counseling services, and student-driven wellness education. 24/7 Confidential Hotline: [\(323\) 341-4141](tel:323-341-4141); Appointments: [\(323\) 259-2657](tel:323-259-2657); Email: emmons@oxy.edu

Late work and Missed Exams / Assignments

All work is due when assigned. Any work not submitted on the date and time assigned will receive a reduction of a minimum of one letter grade unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor or exigent circumstances exist. If you have a medical issue or family emergency please let me know; I recognize that other life issues can sometimes arise unexpectedly. If you must miss class due to an official Oxy event, or due to reasons of faith or conscience, please let me know as early in the semester as possible.

Class	Topic	Reading assignment	Assignments/Activities
<p>Class 1 Aug. 27</p>	<p>Topic 1: Course overview, introduction to health policy</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This syllabus • Kaiser Family Foundation, Health of the Healthcare System: An Overview • Anderson et al., Measuring the U.S. health care system: A cross-national comparison <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCHS, Health insurance and access to care • Commonwealth Fund, Mirror, Mirror 2017: International comparison reflects flaws and opportunities for better US health care • Rubin, US dead last among developed countries when it comes to paid maternity leave 	
<p>Class 2 Sept. 3</p>	<p>Topic 1 continued</p> <p>Topic 2: Constitutional basis for health policy; mechanisms of policy creation</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 1 • O. Kerr, How to read a legal opinion • Nat’l Meat Ass’n v. Harris, 565 U.S. 452 (2012) • Gonzales v. Raich, 545 U.S. 1 (2005) • South Dakota v. Dole, 483 U.S. 203 (1987) <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rutkow and Vernick, The U.S. Constitution’s Commerce Clause, the Supreme Court, and Public Health • Pomeranz & Pertschuk, M. State Preemption: A Significant and Quiet Threat to Public Health in the United States • Gonzales v. Raich Summary (5 min video) • TED-Ed, How is Power Divided in the United States Government? (4 min video) 	<p>Group 1 short presentation</p>

<p>Class 3 Sept. 10</p>	<p>Topic 2 continued</p>	<p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liptak, Corporations find a friend in the Supreme Court • The FDA and graphic cigarette-pack warnings – Thwarted by the courts • Parmet, et al. The Curious case of the docs vs. the Glocks (Wollschlaeger I) • Volokh, E. Eleventh Circuit en bank strikes down restriction on doctors’ speech to patients about guns (Wollschlaeger II) 	<p>Group 2 short presentation</p> <p>Class 3 recording Passcode: =M.s*5#u</p>
<p>Class 4 Sept. 17</p>	<p>Topic 3: Rights, duties and restrictions on gov’t to protect & improve health</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacobson v. Massachusetts, 197 U.S. 11 (1905) • Jones and Mayer, Paternalism and its discontents: Motorcycle helmet Laws, libertarian Values, and public Health • Sullum, The tyranny of public health • Parmet et al., Individual rights versus the public’s health – 100 Years after Jacobson v. Massachusetts (on Moodle) <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galea, Paternalism and Public Health (short blog post) • Andrew Busch, Is health care a right? • CDC, VaxView • Greenberg, In jail, pads and tampons as bargaining chips • Gruskin et al., History, principles, and practice of health and human rights • CT court rules against teen who doesn’t want chemo (video) 	<p>Group 3 short presentation</p> <p>Class 4 recording Passcode: gp&vW4\$1</p> <p>Quiz 1</p>
<p>Class 5 Sept. 24</p>	<p>Topic 3 continued</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 2 • Parmet, The Law and Limits of Quarantine • Gostin & Wiley, Governmental public health powers during the Covid-19 pandemic: Stay at home orders, business closures, and travel restrictions 	<p>Group 4 short presentation</p> <p>Class 5 recording Passcode: !f%\$H9q8</p> <p>First paper due</p>

		<p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiley & Benfer, Health justice strategies to combat COVID-19: Protecting vulnerable communities during a pandemic • Deshaney v. Winnebago County, 489 U.S. 189 (1979) • Greenhouse, The Supreme Court and a Life Barely Lived (about <i>Deshaney</i> and its effects) • Jew Ho v. Williamson, 103 F. 10 (1900) • Prince v. Massachusetts, 321 U.S. 158 (1944) 	
<p>Class 6 Oct. 1</p>	<p>Part 1: Midterm</p> <p>Part 2: Mid-course review, <i>Where to Invade Next</i></p>	<p>Required task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for midterm 	<p>Midterm</p>
<p>Class 7 Oct. 8</p>	<p>Topic 4: Health care financing, cost and quality</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 3 • Atul Gawande, The cost conundrum: What a Texas town can teach us about health care • Bodenheimer & West, Low-Cost lessons from Grand Junction, Colorado (on Moodle) <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presser, When Medical Debt Collectors Decide Who Gets Arrested • Eli Saslow, Washington Post, The Follow-Up Appointment • Wiley & Benfer, Health justice strategies to combat COVID-19: Protecting vulnerable communities during a pandemic • Frakt, Hidden from view: The astonishingly high administrative costs of U.S. health care • 	<p>Group 5 short presentation</p> <p>Class 7 recording Passcode: G0%8r^j&</p>
<p>Class 8 Oct. 15</p>	<p>Topic 4 continued</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don Berwick, The Triple Aim: Care, Health, and Cost 	<p>Group 6 short presentation</p>

	<p>Guest speaker: Social emergency medicine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll, The “Iron Triangle” of health care: Access, cost, and quality <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Medicine, Crossing the Quality Chasm (Summary) • Mehrotra, I’m the perfect person to price shop for an operation. But the process went terribly • Vox, Giving birth costs a lot. Hospitals won’t tell you how much. (video) • Oberlander, Throwing darts: Americans’ elusive search for health care cost control • Melnick, Blame Emergency Rooms for the Out-of-Control Cost of Health Care <p>Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Samuels, MD, MPH, MHS, Brown University Department of Emergency Medicine</p>	
<p>Class 9 Oct. 22</p>	<p>Topic 5: Healthcare delivery: Medicare and Medicaid</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHS, What is the difference between Medicare and Medicaid? • CBO, An overview of the Medicaid program • Baicker et al, The effects of Medicaid coverage – learning from the Oregon experiment (On Moodle) • Allen et al, Medicaid Expansion and Health: Assessing the Evidence after 5 years (on Moodle) <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiser Family Foundation, Understanding the intersection of Medicaid and work: What does the data say? • CMS, Brief summaries of Medicare and Medicaid (skim pp. 8-34) • Vox, Medicaid, explained • Dubay & Kenney, Expanding public health insurance to parents: Effect on children’s coverage under Medicaid 	<p>Group 7 short presentation</p> <p>Quiz 2</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kodjak, From Birth to Death, Medicaid Affects the Lives of Millions • Kaiser Family Foundation, A primer on Medicare • Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicare and Medicaid at 50 (video) • Goldsmith, Mosley, & Davis: Medicaid Managed Care: Lots of Unanswered Questions 	
Class 10 Oct. 29	Topic 6: Health reform	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 5 • John Oberlander, Unfinished Journey: A Century of Health Care Reform in the United States • Kaiser Family Foundation, National health insurance: A brief history of reform efforts in the U.S. <p>Further reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starr, What happened to health care reform? (re: Clinton-era reform efforts) • Kaiser Family Foundation, Summary of the Affordable Care Act • KFF, Health reform infographics (peruse) • KFF, Health care reform: a retrospective tutorial (video) • KFF, Health reform quiz • Scher, How Democrats won the health care war • Brown, The elements of surprise: How reform happened • PBS, Obama's Deal (56 minute video) • Karen Palmer, A brief history: Universal Health Care Efforts in the United States • Kaiser Family Foundation, A Guide to the Supreme Court's Affordable Care Act decision • Lemieux, How the Supreme Court screwed Obamacare • Oberlander, Implementing the Affordable Care Act 	Group 8 short presentation

<p>Class 11 Nov. 5</p>	<p>Topic 7: Private insurance, managed care plans</p> <p>Guest speaker: Drug policy</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosenthal, Apprehensive, many doctors shift to jobs with salaries Abelson, Employer health insurance is increasingly unaffordable, study finds <p>Guest speaker: Peter Davidson, PhD, University of California San Diego School of Medicine</p>	<p>Group 9 short presentation</p> <p>Quiz 3</p>
<p>Class 12 Nov. 12</p>	<p>Topic 8: Health equity, social determinants, and the role of law and policy</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 6 Woolf et al, Where health disparities begin: The role of social and economic determinants and why current policies may make matters worse Tirado, Why poor people stay poor Pazzaneze, The costs of inequality: Increasingly, it's the rich and the rest of us Lillie-Blanton and Hoffman, The role of health insurance coverage in reducing racial/ethnic disparities in health care <p>Further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kristof and WuDunn, The way to beat poverty IOM, Unequal treatment: Confronting racial and ethnic disparities in health care (Summary, pp. 1-23) Harris, How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime (TEDMED) Pletcher, Trends in opioid prescribing by race/ethnicity for patients seeking care in US emergency departments Chatterjee, Kids who suffer hunger in first years lag behind their peers in school Seirawan, The impact of oral health on the academic performance of disadvantaged children McGinley, Childhood cancer survivors face 'financial toxicity' Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 (1857) 	<p>Group 10 short presentation</p> <p>Second paper due</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hip Hughes, The Dred Scott Decision Explained (video) • Csete et al., Public health and international drug policy (read executive summary and review graphics) • Williams, For native American women, scourge of rape, rare justice 	
Class 13 Nov. 19	Global Health & Comparative health systems: Student presentations	Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley & Taylor, Chapter 4 Further reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vox, Everybody Covered (Profiles of several country health systems) • Commonwealth Fund, International profiles of health care systems • WHO, Health system reviews (Detailed overviews of many European countries) • Squires, The U.S. health system in perspective: A comparison of twelve industrialized nations • Frontline, Sick around the world (video) • UNHRC, Fact Sheet 31: Right to Health • Reid, Five myths about health care in the rest of the world • Commonwealth Fund, Taking the pulse of health care systems • Coghlan, US ranked worst healthcare system, while NHS is the best • Kelley Lee, How do we move forward on the social determinants of health: the global governance challenges 	Group presentations
Final exam	Comprehensive exam		Final exam

This syllabus was last modified October 5, 2020.