SOC POL 351  
Topics in Social Policy: Social Policy and the US Health Care System  
Winter Quarter, 2007  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00 p.m. to 5:20 p.m.  
Location: Annenberg XXX

Adjunct Faculty: Heidi Romans Nelson  
Daytime Phone: 773-751-4107  
Evening and Weekend Phone: 847-424-0171  
E-mail: hnelson@heartlandalliance.org  
Office hours by appointment

Course Description: This course will introduce the student to the health care delivery system in the United States through a review of US health policy issues. A construct for review of major health policy issues will be introduced and current health policy issues will be examined through this lens. Special attention will be paid to health disparities for low-income and minority populations; and how policy decisions exacerbate or relieve these disparities. Interactive lecture, focused discussions and student exploration and presentation will be the format for the course.

Requirements:

SESP students must have completed SOC POL 201, Introduction to Social Policy, or SESP 202, Introduction to Community Development. Others may enroll with permission from SESP or the instructor.

Students are expected to attend and participate in class sessions. Bring assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them.

One paper will be assigned on topics related to health disparities, and teams of students writing on the same issue will make group presentations.

Students will also be assigned to groups to research and discuss comparative international health systems, solutions to the problem of uninsurance, and the health policy platforms of the major political parties in the U.S.

Additionally, there will be an essay exam for the mid-term and a final paper analyzing a national or state health policy issue.

Readings:

Required:

A packet of copied readings will be available in Annenberg 123, Student Affairs Office. A copying fee will be charged for this packet.
Some of the required readings are available on the internet; instructions for accessing these documents are included in this syllabus. Internet readings are marked with an asterisk (*).

**Optional:**

It is recommended that students read a daily newspaper or news website for articles related to health policy. National Public Radio is also a good resource for information on health policy issues.


**Course Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Disparities Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Health Systems, Solutions to Uninsurance and Party Platform Discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance is expected and missing class without prior notice to the instructor will affect class participation grade. Students are responsible for all material and assignments presented in class, as well as in required readings. Lectures may supplement, highlight or bring something completely different from what is in the required readings.

All work assigned is due at 4:00 p.m. on the specified due date. Assignments are submitted by delivering a hard copy to the instructor, and sending an electronic copy via electronic mail. In the event of a documented emergency, late assignments will be accepted. Any student with a legitimate excuse for missing class or submitting a late assignment must contact the instructor prior to class time. Unexcused late assignments will be downgraded, and participation grade will be downgraded for unexcused absences.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to
contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. SSD also has an excellent website which is viewable at: http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/

**Academic Integrity**

Northwestern University students are expected to comply with policies found in the booklet Academic Integrity at Northwestern. A copy of this booklet is found in section four of the SESP handbook or on-line at http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/. Infractions may result in a grade of ‘F’ and/or probation or dismissal from the university.

**Plagiarism**

All papers submitted for credit for this course must be sent as electronic mail attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content.

**Course Calendar and Assignments**

**Winter, 2007**

**January 3 Session 1**

*Introductions*
- Review Syllabus and Assignments
- What do you want to get out of this course?
- Overview of the US Health Care System

**January 8 Session 2**

*Typhoid Mary and Health Policy*

**Readings**


**Assignment**

Divide into groups to explore comparative health systems for discussion on January 17 (Session 4).

Countries: United States, Germany, Canada, Great Britain
What to Explore:
Health Care Delivery System (hospitals, physicians)
Financing
Outcomes (cost, health indicators)

January 10 Session 3
Health Disparities

Readings


View the video ‘You Can’t Tell by Looking.’ Access www.amafoundation.org. Click on ‘Health Literacy,’ then ‘Health Literacy Videos.’

Assignment

Divide into groups to write individual papers and do group presentations on health disparities. Identify issue to instructor via e-mail by January 16. Group presentations are January 29 and January 31, individual papers are due January 31.

Diabetes/Latinos
Asthma in Urban Populations
Infant Mortality/Low-income and minority
AIDS in Africa

IDENTIFY COUNTRY FOR NATIONAL SYSTEMS COMPARISON DISCUSSION
1/17

January 15 (Martin Luther King Day) CLASSES CANCELLED
Health Disparities

Readings


(*) Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions. www.sullivancommission.org Read Executive Summary

January 17 Session 4
* Arrange groups for health disparities presentations and papers
* Discussion: Comparative Health Systems

January 22 Session 5
* Construct for review of social policies/health policies


January 24 Session 6
* Federal Health Policy-Making
* Researching Federal Health Policy

Assignment

Mid Term Essay Exam assigned due February 7


January 29 Session 7
* Health Disparities Presentations

January 31 Session 8
* Health Disparities Presentations

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS ON HEALTH DISPARITIES DUE
February 5 Session 9
Health Insurance: Basic Concepts and History

Readings


February 7 Session 10
Health Insurance: Basic Concepts and History

Readings


MIDTERM EXAM DUE

February 12 Session 11
Health Insurance: Medicare

Readings


Assignment

**February 14 Session 12**  
*Health Insurance: Medicaid*

**Readings**


**Assignment**

Divide into groups to research different solutions for the uninsured. Do preliminary research before February 19 (Session 13). Discussion on February 28 (Session 16).

- National Health Insurance
- Employer Tax Credits
- Individual Tax Credits
- Expansion of Medicare and Medicaid

**February 19 Session 13**  
*Discussion: Solutions to the Uninsured*

**Guest Speaker**  
Margie Schaps, Health and Medicine Policy Research Group

**Readings**


**FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE**

**February 21 Session 14**
*Discussion: Medical Malpractice ‘Crisis’*

**Readings**


**Assignment**

Research the health policy platform of the U.S. Representative from your home congressional district for discussion February 28.

**February 26 Session 15**
*Special Populations: Homeless*

**Guest Speaker**
Bechara Choucair, MD, Medical Director, Heartland Health Outreach

**Readings**


FINAL PAPER RESEARCH PLAN DUE

February 28 Session 16
Discussion: Solutions to the Uninsured and the Health Care Platforms of Major US Political Parties

March 5 Session 17
Special Populations: Immigrants/Refugees

Guest Speaker
Elizabeth Colon, Director, Cross-Cultural Interpreting Services, Heartland Health Outreach

Readings


March 7 Session 18
Group Discussion: Health Policy Final Paper Topics
Careers in Health and Health Policy
CTEC Evaluation

March 14

FINAL PAPER DUE