SOC POL 351- Topics in Social Policy: Social Policy and the US Health Care System  
Winter Quarter, 2004  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Location: Annenberg 345

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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 issues. Interactive lecture, focused discussions and class activities relevant to assigned readings and special topic areas will be the format for the course.

Requirements:

Students must have completed SOC POL 201, Introduction to Social Policy, or SESP 202, Introduction to Community Development.

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

One paper and two presentations will be assigned. One short paper will be assigned on topics related to health disparities, and teams of students writing on the same issue will be scheduled to make group presentations. One group presentation will be assigned related to the health policy platforms of the US presidential candidates.

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 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Disparities Paper and</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidential Platform Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Attendance is expected. 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, 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, 2004**

**January 5 Session 1**  
*Review Syllabus and Assignments*

**January 7 Session 2**  
*Overview of the US Health Care System*

**Readings**


**January 12 Session 3**  
*Health Disparities*

**Readings**


(Optional) View the video ‘You Can’t Tell by Looking.’ Access www.amafoundation.org. Click on ‘Health Literacy.’

Assignment

Divide into groups to write individual papers and do group presentations on health disparities. Identify issue to instructor by January 14. Group presentations are February 2 and 4, individual papers are due February 4.

Diabetes/Latinos
Asthma in Urban Populations
Infant Mortality/Low-income and minority
Heart Disease/African-Americans
AIDS in Africa
Breast Cancer/Caucasian Women and African-American Women
(other topics may be chosen if sufficient interest exists)

January 14 Session 4
Health Disparities
Arrange groups for health disparities presentations and papers

Readings


January 19 Session 5 (Martin Luther King Day)
Discussion regarding NCHS tables 30, 32, 45, 46, 47 and 63.

Readings

(*) Health, United States, 2002, National Center for Health Statistics. Access www.cdc.gov/nchs/ From home page, click on ‘Health, United States,’ under
‘Information Showcase.’ Click on ‘2002 Trend Tables.’ Review in particular tables 30, 32, 45, 46, 47 and 63 for class discussion.

January 21 Session 6
_Construct for review of social policies/health policies_

January 26 Session 7
_Construct for review of social policies/health policies_

January 28 Session 8
_Discussion_

**Assignment**

Mid Term Essay Exam assigned due February 9


February 2 Session 9
_Health Disparities Presentations_

February 4 Session 10
_Health Disparities Presentations_

**INDIVIDUAL PAPERS ON HEALTH DISPARITIES DUE**

February 9 Session 11
_Federal Health Policy-Making_

**MIDTERM EXAM DUE**

February 11 Session 12
_Federal Health Policy-Making
Researching Federal Health Policy_

**Assignment**


February 16 Session 13
_Health Insurance: Basic Concepts and History_

**Readings**


Assignment

Volunteers divide into groups to research different solutions for the uninsured

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

**February 18 Session 14**

*Health Insurance: Medicare and Medicaid*

**Readings**


**Assignment**

Divide into groups to research US Presidential candidates’ platforms on health care. Presentations on March 1.

**FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE**

**February 23 Session 15**
Managed Care

Readings


February 25 Session 16
Discussion: Solutions to the Uninsured

Readings


FINAL PAPER RESEARCH PLAN DUE

March 1 Session 17
Presentations on Health Care Platforms of US Presidential Candidates

GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON HEALTH CARE PLATFORMS OF US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES DUE

March 3 Session 18
Special Populations: Homeless, HIV, Immigrants/Refugees

Guest Speakers
Ralph Pothel, MD, Heartland Health Outreach
Wendy Siegel, Millennia Consulting

Readings

O’Connell, J, (1999). ‘Utilization and Costs of Medical Services by Homeless Persons,’ Health Care for the Homeless Branch, Division of Programs for Special
Populations, Bureau of Primary Health Care, US Department of Health and Human Services.


March 8 Session 19

*The Uninsured*

**Guest Speaker**

To be determined

FINAL PAPER PROBLEM DEFINITION DUE

March 10 Session 20

*Group Discussion: Health Policy Final Paper Topics*

*Complete CTEC Evaluation*

March 17

FINAL PAPER DUE