

Instructor

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Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course is a gateway to the Minor in Health Policy and to the Health Policy and Management track of the B.S. in Public Policy. The course will be devoted to:

- Learning the institutions of health care delivery and financing
- Evaluating key health policy issues
- Understanding and using economic, statistical, and mathematical tools as ways to inform health policy issues.

The class will consist of a mixture of lectures and discussion of issues, always with an emphasis on topical health policy questions.

Grades

The course grade will be based on the following criteria:

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Class participation	10%
Policy debates	15%
Policy project	25%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%

Note: See the lecture schedule for key dates

Grading Scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Format

The course meets twice a week. The professor will occasionally take roll so that he can get to know your names. It is paramount that students read the required chapters of the textbook and assigned articles prior to class and are prepared to participate in discussion. Articles will be posted to Blackboard prior to class, and lectures will be posted to Blackboard after class.

Readings

The required textbook is **Health Economics** by **Jay Bhattacharya, Timothy Hyde, and Peter Tu** (ISBN 9781137029966), available in the University Bookstore. There will be additional articles and other readings, which will be posted on **Blackboard** a few days prior to class. Some of these will be required reading in preparation for the lectures, while others will be optional material.

Policy Project

Students will work on a group project about a timely health policy issue. Students will be required to prepare a policy memorandum and make a classroom presentation. Example topics of the policy memorandum include: (a) How can we reduce opioid addiction? (b) How can we reduce medical errors? (c) How can we improve mental health care? The policy memorandum and presentations should cover the following sub-topics:

- Description of the problem and its consequences
- The reasons why it arises
- Pros and cons of potential policy solutions to address the problem
- Your preferred approach for solving the problem

The policy memo is expected to be at least 4,000 words and the class presentation is expected to be about 50 minutes long including Q&A.

Policy Debate

Each health policy debate will be about 12 minutes. Each participant will give prepared remarks for 3 minutes. Prepared remarks will be followed by discussion and Q&A. The instructor will moderate the debate. Potential debate topics include: (a) Medicare should negotiate drug prices, (b) We should increase taxes on soda, and (c) We should make USC a tobacco-free workplace.

Class Participation

Class participation grades will be based in part on participation classroom activities such as classroom discussion and quizzes. Students who do not regularly attend class will be at a substantial disadvantage and will be penalized in grading.

Midterm and Final Examination

The in-class midterm and final examinations will test your ability to formulate relevant health policy hypotheses, support them with evidence, summarize the relevant behavioral responses to policy change, and to cogently support policy recommendations. They will test basic institutional knowledge about delivery and financing of health care in the US. In-class review sessions are scheduled for both the midterm and final examinations.

General References

Some useful resources on health policy include:

- The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) produces issue briefs and reports on current health policy topics.
- The [Congressional Budget Office](#) evaluates many health care reform proposals using their in-house economic models.
- [Health Affairs](#) is the leading health policy journal and publishes peer reviewed research on health policy .
- The [General Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) publishes a large number of reports with detailed background information on Federal policy issues.
- The [Medicare Payment Advisory Commission \(MedPAC\)](#) summarizes current financing problems and reform options for the Medicare program.
- The [National Center for Health Statistics](#) publishes reports regularly related to the health, health care, health insurance, and health behavior of the U.S. population.

Academic Integrity

Students should strictly adhere to standards of academic integrity, as described in **SCAMPUS** <http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus>. More information can be found on the USC Office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards website. In particular, the University recommends strict sanctions for plagiarism.

Course Schedule			
Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	January 10	Syllabus Overview; Health Care Spending Overview	Syllabus, Lecture 1 Slides
	January 12	Economic v. Public Health Perspective	Who pays for obesity , Health Insurance Expansions and Pharmaceutical Markets , Lecture 2 Slides
2	January 17	Theory of Insurance and Adverse Selection;	JB Chapters 7, 8; Adverse Selection and Health Insurance Exchanges , The Case for Mandating Health Insurance , Lecture 3 Slides
	January 19	Theory of Insurance; Moral Hazard	JB Chapter 11; Value Based Insurance Design , Lecture 4 Slides
3	January 24	Empirical evidence on effects of health insurance: RAND HIE, Oregon, CDHPs, Insurance in developing countries	JB Chapter 2; CHDPs , Insurance Literacy, Insurance in India , Lecture 5 Slides
	January 26	Demand for Health: Theory, Disparities	JB Chapters 3, 4; Lecture 6 slides
4	January 31	Physicians	JB Chapter 5; Physician Payment , Telehealth , Provider Networks , Lecture 7 Slides
	February 2	Drugs	JB Chapter 12; Offlabel Drug Promotion ; Antibiotic Resistance ; Value Based Pricing ; Follow the Money, Lecture 8 Slides
5	February 7	Health Technology Assessment	JB Chapter 14; Lecture 9 Slides
	February 9	Empirical Health Policy Analysis	Lecture 10 Slides
6	February 14	Provider Reimbursement	Lecture 11 Slides, PAC papers ; Bundled Payments
	February 16	Hospitals; <i>Guest: John Romley</i>	JB Chapter 6; Hospital Productivity; ACO
7	February 21	Economic Epidemiology	JB Chapter 21
	February 23	REVIEW	
8	February 28	MIDTERM (in class)	
	March 2	Health Policy Debate I	
9	March 7	Health Policy Debate II	
	March 9	Economics of Obesity; <i>Guest: Ashlesha Datar</i>	Datar Readings
10	March 21	Opioids; <i>Guest: Sarah Axeen</i>	Axeen Readings
	March 23	Class projects	
11	March 28	Class projects	
	March 30	Class projects	
12	April 4	Class projects	
	April 6	Degree programs in Health Care (student panel)	
13	April 11	Careers in Health Care (practitioner panel)	
	April 13	Mergers; <i>Guest: Erin Trish</i>	Trish Readings
14	April 18	Malpractice; <i>Guest: Seth Seabury</i>	Seabury Readings
	April 20	REVIEW	
		FINAL – date TBD	