

Fall 2016

PPD 325: Fundamentals of Health Policy and Management

Mon & Wed, 2:00-3:50pm

VPD, Room 106

Instructor

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Office Hrs: By Appointment

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& by appointment

This course is the gateway to the Minor in Health Policy and Management and the Health Policy and Management track of the B.S., Policy, Planning, and Development. The course will be devoted to learning the institutions and processes affecting health care policy and the management of health care delivery in the United States; the historical and philosophical roots; access and quality issues; and responsiveness to public needs. More generally, it is a course about the evaluation of public policy, and the optimal design of such policy. Students will be exposed to 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:

Criterion	Percentage (%)
Class participation	10
In-class pop quizzes	15
Policy memo	25
Midterm exam	25
Final exam	25

Note: See the lecture schedule for key dates.

Format

The course meets twice a week. The professors will occasionally take roll so that they can get to know your names. It is paramount that students read the required chapters of the Feldstein textbook and assigned articles prior to class and be prepared to participate in discussion. Articles will be posted to Blackboard prior to class, and lectures will be posted to Blackboard after class. Students who do not regularly attend class will be at a substantial disadvantage and will be penalized in grading.

Readings

The required textbook is **Health Policy Issues: An Economic Perspective, 6th edition** by **Paul J. Feldstein, PhD.** (ISBN 13: 978-1567936964). This will be 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 Memorandum

Students will individually write a policy memorandum about a timely health policy issue and proposal. A handout will be distributed with specific instructions.

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 not test factual recall except in this context. In-class review sessions are scheduled for both the midterm and final examinations.

Visiting Speaker – Leonard D. Schaeffer – Friday September 16

Students will be expected to attend an additional session featuring Leonard D. Schaeffer as a guest speaker on Friday September 16 from 9-11:30am. Leonard D. Schaeffer was the founding Chairman and CEO of WellPoint (now Anthem) – one of the nation’s largest health insurance companies. He is currently the Judge Robert Maclay Widney chair and professor at USC. Room information will be posted on Blackboard.

General References

Well-written texts that provide general, nontechnical introductions to issues of the U.S. health care system include Victor Fuchs’ *Who Shall Live?* and *The Future of Health Policy* (especially the early and late chapters), and for a somewhat different perspective, Henry Aaron’s *Serious and Unstable Condition*. Health policy sometimes requires some knowledge of the details of diseases and their treatments. Detailed introductions to medical problems, written for interested non-physicians, include the *AMA Guide to Family Health* or similar online resources from the [Mayo Clinic](#), [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) and [Merck](#).

Finally, many government agencies provide useful material. The [Congressional Budget Office](#) evaluates many health care reform proposals using their in-house economic models. The [General Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) publishes a large number of reports with detailed background information on Federal policy issues. The [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#) publishes reports on the studies that they fund, and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reports on health insurance and employment (see also the reports published regularly by the Employee Benefits Research Institute). The [Medicare Payment Advisory Commission \(MedPAC\)](#) summarizes current financing problems and reform options for the Medicare program. All of these reports are available for free, or virtually free, and can provide good introductions to policy issues proposals to deal with them. 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; one good “snapshot” annual report is Health United States. Useful websites for finding relevant documents include the [Government Publishing Office](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), (which includes the National Center for Health Statistics). Other reading sources besides the medical and economics journals may be helpful. The [RAND Corporation](#) publications are germane. The [National Bureau of Economic Research \(NBER\)](#) Working Paper Series is also a good place to find health economics publications.

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.