

The Public Policy Process

Political Science (POLS) 3351 – 003

CRN: 28059

Health Care Policy for Rehabilitation Sciences (DRSC) 3312 – 001 (cross-listed)

CRN: 28110

The University of Texas at El Paso

Spring 2019

MW: 3:30pm - 4:50pm

Health Science/School of NURS 211

Instructor: Dr. Gregory S. Schober

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Office Hours: Mon: 12:30pm – 3:00pm
 Tues: 10:00am – 12:00pm
 Wed: 1:30pm – 3:00pm
 (and by appointment)

Class Website: Blackboard through your MY UTEP PORTAL

Course Description

This course considers the public policy process, with a focus on health policy in the United States. We will study the different stages of the public policy process, with an emphasis on recent health care policy changes. The course is designed for both political science majors and rehabilitation sciences majors. We examine issues mostly at the national level, but we also will discuss applications for the state and local levels.

Throughout the course, we will focus on developing answers to the following four questions: (1) What are the main stages of the public policy process? (2) What were the main problems with the U.S. health care system prior to the Affordable Care Act? (3) How and why did the Affordable Care Act pass? (4) What roles do private individuals, health professionals, and nonprofit organizations play in implementing health policy and addressing community health problems?

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain the different stages of the public policy process.
- Compare and evaluate the major models of the public policy process.
- Identify the problems with the U.S. health care system before the Affordable Care Act.
- Explain how health policy in the United States has changed in recent years and evaluate the tradeoffs.
- Recognize the role of civic engagement in community health.

Also, by the end of the semester, students should make improvements in the following skill areas related to the UTEP Edge initiative:

- Social responsibility
- Leadership
- Communication
- Critical thinking

Required Readings (available at the UTEP Bookstore or elsewhere):

- **An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making**
 - Author: Thomas A. Birkland
 - 4th edition
 - 2016
 - ISBN-13: 978-0765646620
- **Sick: The Untold Story of America's Health Care Crisis – and the People who Pay the Price**
 - Author: Jonathan Cohn
 - 1st reprint edition
 - 2008
 - ISBN-13: 978-0060580469
- **America's Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System**
 - Author: Steven Brill
 - 1st edition
 - 2015
 - ISBN-13: 978-0812986686

Course Requirements

- **Midterm Exam**: The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions, and it will cover material from the course readings, class lectures, and/or class discussions up to the date of the midterm exam. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the following skills: communication and critical thinking (25% of grade).
- **Final Exam**: The final exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions, and it will cover material from the course readings, class lectures, and/or class discussions after the midterm exam. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the following skills: communication and critical thinking (25% of grade).
- **Progress Summary**: Students will be required to submit a short written summary of their progress on the civic engagement research project. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the following skills: communication and critical thinking (10% of grade).

- Civic Engagement Research Project: Students are required to write a research paper that analyzes local community resources for rehabilitation services and for diabetes education services. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the following skills: social responsibility, leadership, communication, and critical thinking (25% of grade).
- Class Attendance and Participation: Students will be able to earn participation points each class session by attending and participating in class discussions. Points will be awarded based on the quantity and quality of participation. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the following skills: leadership, communication, and critical thinking (15% of grade).

University Policies

This instructor abides by university policies, such as excused absences and attendance, as stated in the UTEP undergraduate catalog: <http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>. It is the student's responsibility to understand their rights and university policies. In addition to university policies, I add the following policies below.

Attendance Policy

UTEP expects that students will not miss classes without valid excuses. Students will be asked to sign an attendance sheet for each class meeting. It is expected that you do not miss classes, which will result in a penalty to your grade. More specifically, after two unexcused absences, I will begin to deduct points from your attendance and participation grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. Note that the class participation portion of each student's grade is left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

Here are specific situations of absence and whether or not excuses will be accepted as valid or not:

- Valid university excuses include religious holy days, officially recognized university activities (with Dean of Students letter), and military leave. Students must follow the required documentation procedure for each valid university excuse.
- The instructor reserves the right to accept, or not, excuses related to medical issues. Naturally, it is not usually feasible to document in advance any time lost due to illness. The exception is planned surgeries and appointments (not normal check-ups). Any class time missed will not be excused without medical or other valid documentation. Documentation from Mexico is permissible. Students with severe medical problems that result in missing a majority of the semester may want to consider a complete withdrawal from the university for medical purposes.
- Absences due to conflicts with work, child care, etc. that make it impossible for you to regularly attend this class are not permitted. If you know you will have scheduling conflicts with this class, then you should make other arrangements or postpone this class until a future semester.
- According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, "When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative

to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course drop deadline and with a grade of F after the course drop deadline.”

- Missed exams due to family hardship or family medical problems may not be accepted by the instructor as valid excuses. For example, helping family members move, picking up at the airport, driving family members to medical appointments when you know they conflict with class, and other such activities, will not be permitted as valid excuses. Emergencies such as deaths in the family must be documented, unfortunately.
- Missing any course assessments and work due to vacations and pre-booked travel arrangements are not valid excuses.

Final Exam Policy

The date of the final exam is listed below in the Schedule of Classes. The final exam is considered over when the instructor is no longer in the room (all other students present have completed the exam), so do not be late. The exam must be taken on this day unless you have a valid university accepted excuse.

Midterm Exam Policy

The date of the midterm exam is listed below in the Schedule of Classes. No make-up midterm exam will occur without a student having provided to the instructor valid documentation explaining or excusing the absence. The instructor has the discretion to decide if a make-up is allowable outside the university excused absences. If you miss an exam due to an emergency or illness, you must notify me (and confirm with me that I have received your notification attempt) as soon as possible to arrange a make-up exam. A make-up exam may be of a different format than the original exam.

Progress Summary

In this short written summary, you will have the opportunity to answer questions regarding your progress on the civic engagement research project. Further details and instructions will be provided in class (about 500-750 words, worth 10% of overall grade). Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade for each class day they are late. **Printed copy of your paper is due at the start of class on the due date for the progress summary (listed below in the Schedule of Classes).**

Civic Engagement Research Project

Students are required to write a research paper (minimum 12 pages - maximum 15 pages) that analyzes current local community resources for rehabilitation services and for diabetes education services in El Paso, Texas. In the paper, students must respond to the following questions: Which community organizations (if any) provide free or low-cost rehabilitation services (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, and/or rehabilitation counseling) for individuals in El Paso? Name up to three community organizations that provide rehabilitation services in El Paso, and describe the rehabilitation services that each organization provides. Which community organizations (if any) provide free or low-cost diabetes education

services (e.g., information on diabetes prevention and/or diabetes management) for individuals in El Paso? Name up to three community organizations that provide diabetes education services in El Paso, and describe the diabetes education services that each organization provides. How would you characterize the level of support for poor patients with rehabilitation needs in the El Paso community? How would you characterize the level of support for poor patients with diabetes in the El Paso community? Do you agree with the relative emphasis that the local community places on these two types of services, and why? What are the implications of your findings for health care policy at the local, state, and/or national level? You should refer to relevant scholarly work as well as the official websites of local community organizations that focus on health care services in El Paso (minimum of 12 scholarly and official website sources). Students will discuss the results of their research project with other class members during a class session. **Students must submit their paper by the start of class on the due date for the Civic Engagement Research Paper (listed below in the Schedule of Classes).** Further details and instructions will be provided in class.

Other Course Policies and Expectations

- Debate and discussion are important in the critical evaluation of politics. It is expected that students will treat the instructor and other students with respect, including refraining from disparaging remarks, personal insults, derogatory comments, and other unprofessional behavior, in person or electronically. Any problem related to disruptive or threatening behavior may result in immediate and follow-up responses by the instructor and/or relevant UTEP offices, including (but not limited to) the student being asked to leave the class and the student being dropped from the course.
- At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline. A grade of “F” received due to disciplinary action imposed by the University overrides a grade of “W” received through a student-initiated or faculty drop. Students will be notified of their drop through their UTEP e-mail account. Students may also be administratively withdrawn from a course during the semester for other reasons, with the concurrence of the instructor and department chair, or dean. Approved requests will be forwarded to the Registration and Records Office for processing. Students are responsible for checking their class schedules in Goldmine and for checking their official UTEP preferred e-mail accounts to determine if they have been dropped from a class.
- Outside work and other non-class related activities are not permitted in our classroom.
- Cell phone/smart phone/PDA usage is not permitted during exams or at other times when it might pose a class disruption. Laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices used for note-taking are permissible, but students using such must not engage in any activities that disrupt other students.

Email Protocol

When emailing me, please put the course and section number in the subject line. In the body of your email, clearly state your question. At the end of your email, be sure to put your first and

last name. Please do not email me about information you can obtain from the syllabus. I generally do not answer substantive material from lectures or readings via email, as it is not an effective means of communicating. If there is class material you are confused about, please come see me during my office hours.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

As stated in the UTEP undergraduate catalog, “Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, and is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of Student Life and on the homepage of the Office of Student Life at www.utep.edu/dos, can result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.”

Students with Different Abilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS’ staff are the only individuals who can validate, and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities. The student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams or other needs.

Other Resources for Students

- UTEP Writing Center
 - Library Building, Room 227
 - (915) 747-5112
 - <http://uwc.utep.edu/>
- UTEP Career Center
 - 103 W Union Building
 - 915-747-5640
 - <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/careers/>
- UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services
 - Union West, Room 202
 - 915-747-5302
 - After Hours Crisis Line: 915-747-5302
 - <http://sa.utep.edu/counsel/>

- University Police Department
 - 915-747-5611
 - <https://www.utep.edu/police/>
- UTEP Student Health Center
 - 915-747-5624
 - <https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/>
- Center Against Sexual and Family Violence
 - 580 Giles Road
 - 915-593-7300
 - 24/7 Crisis Hope Line: 1-800-727-0511
- UTEP Student Food Bank (Student Engagement and Leadership Center)
 - Union West, Room 106
 - 915-747-5670
- UTEP Student Support Services for Challenges with Finances (FHAR)
 - Academic Advising Center
 - 915-747-5290
- If you would like to access other resources, please contact me and I will do my best to help you search for additional resources.

Schedule of Classes

Wed	1/23	Introduction to the Course
Mon	1/28	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Boston and Gilbertsville <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Introduction and Ch. 1
Wed	1/30	Introducing the Policy Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 1
Mon	2/4	Overview of the Civic Engagement Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assigned reading • Description and Discussion of the Guidelines for the Progress Summary and Research Paper
Wed	2/6	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Deltona <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Ch. 2
Mon	2/11	Elements of the Policy Making System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 2
Wed	2/13	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Austin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Ch. 3
Mon	2/18	Professional Development Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assigned reading

Wed	2/20	Overview of Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 6
Mon	2/25	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Lawrence County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Ch. 5
Wed	2/27	Overview of Policies and Policy Types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 7 • Progress Summary Due (submit printed copy to the instructor at the start of class)
Mon	3/4	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Los Angeles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Ch. 7 • Review Session
Wed	3/6	Problems with the U.S. Health Care System before the Affordable Care Act: Washington (Overall) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn, Conclusion chapter
Mon	3/11	Midterm Exam
Wed	3/13	Overview of Health Policy and the Affordable Care Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assigned reading
Mon	3/18	No Class: Spring Break
Wed	3/20	No Class: Spring Break
Mon	3/25	Background Politics related to the Affordable Care Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2
Wed	3/27	Background Politics related to the Affordable Care Act (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 3 and Ch. 4
Mon	4/1	Overview of Decision-making and Policy Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 8
Wed	4/3	Federal Politics and Lobbying for the Affordable Care Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6
Mon	4/8	Federal Politics and Lobbying for the Affordable Care Act (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 7 and Ch. 8
Wed	4/10	Overview of Policy Design and Policy Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 9
Mon	4/15	Legislative Politics and Negotiations for the Affordable Care Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 9 and Ch. 10
Wed	4/17	Legislative Politics and Negotiations for the Affordable Care Act (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 11 and Ch. 12
Mon	4/22	Overview of Policy Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assigned reading
Wed	4/24	Implementation Politics of the Affordable Care Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 13 and Ch. 14

Mon	4/29	Implementation Politics of the Affordable Care Act (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brill, Ch. 15 and Ch. 16
Wed	5/1	Civic Engagement Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Engagement Research Paper Due (submit printed copy to the instructor at the start of class) • Reflection Session
Mon	5/6	Science and Theory in the Study of Public Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland, Ch. 11 (only pgs. 370-384) • Review Session
Wed	5/8	New Health Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assigned reading • Final Lecture
Mon	5/13	Final Exam: 1:00pm-3:45pm