

- Course Title:** *Population Health and Public Policy*
- Course Number:** *HBSP0624*
- Course Location:** *Room 2A, SPH building in Piscataway*
- Course Date & Time:** *Tuesday, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.*
- Course Instructor:** *Irina B. Grafova, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Behavior, society and Policy, email: [grafovib@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:grafovib@sph.rutgers.edu)*
- Office Hours:** *By appointment*
- Course Assistant:** *None*
- Required Course Text:** *Robert F. Schoeni, James S. House, George A. Kaplan and Harold Pollack (eds.) Making Americans Healthier: Social and Economic Policy as Health Policy: Rethinking America's Approach to Improving Health. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008 (available in electronic format from Rutgers Library).*
- Amy A. Eyster, Jamie F. Chriqui, Sarah Moreland-Russell, Ross C. Brownson (eds.) Prevention, Policy, and Public Health, Oxford University Press, 2016 (available in electronic format from Rutgers Library).*

**Additional/Supplemental Readings/Resources:** Supplemental readings and resources are an essential part of the course and are included to provide “real world” and policyrelevant discussions of issues covered and developed in class and in the text readings

### **Course Description:**

*Apart from individual-specific medical care interventions, the social, economic, and residential circumstances of individuals, their political environments, and their health behaviors can have profound impacts on population health and wellbeing. Such factors manifest themselves in their contributions to longstanding health problems including, but not limited to, obesity and excessive body weight; smoking; excessive alcohol consumption; substance abuse; premature childbirths and poor birth outcomes; mental and physical health problems; and early mortality. These health problems can also contribute to the educational attainment, employment status, and economic success of individuals, as well as to the stability of families. The purpose of this course is to survey selected population health problems and to explore the underlying circumstances, monetary and non-monetary incentives, and behaviors of individuals that contribute to such problems. In doing so, an important goal will be to identify underlying causal mechanisms that lead to health problems. Finally, a particular emphasis of the course will be to explore public policy initiatives to address the health problems under consideration and to evaluate their success and unintended consequences.*

**Selected Concentration Competencies Addressed:** *Each Department identifies*

*competencies for each degree offered. The competencies addressed in this course for the MPH for the Department of Health Systems and Policy include:*

1. *Use economic theories, concepts and methodologies in the analysis and evaluation of current health care issues and problems*
2. *Apply quantitative and qualitative research methods in the analysis of health service and policy issues*
3. *Assess and delineate public health policies and practices recognizing legal and ethical implications for individuals and populations.*

Please visit the Concentration webpages on the School of Public Health's website at [sph.rutgers.edu](http://sph.rutgers.edu) for additional competencies addressed by this course for other degrees and concentrations.

**Course Objectives:** By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- a) Describe how social, economic, and health system factors can affect population health
- b) and well-being.
- c) Critically evaluate research studies related to the socioeconomic determinants of
- d) population health and well-being.
- e) Evaluate alternative public policy interventions to improve population health.

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

### **Annotated Bibliography Assignment**

Annotated bibliographies provide brief overviews or summaries of articles related to a topic you chosen for the health policy analysis presentation.

### **Health Policy Analysis Presentation**

Students are expected to participate in an oral health policy analysis presentation. Each student will select a specific public health issue and a recent or current health policy addressing this issue. Students will conduct an in-depth analysis of a single health policy and present the results in an oral presentation. Each person will be required to give an oral presentation of approximately 10 minutes in length that summarizes the results of their health policy analysis towards the end of the term. Presentations will be evaluated in terms of mastery of content, style, effectiveness of delivery, and discussion/Q&A

Health policy analysis steps:

- 1) Topic and problem statement

This is the first step in writing your health policy analysis brief. It is about getting the 'big picture'. Identify an issue, not just a topic. Topics identify a subject of study –but issues identify an access, cost, or quality problem that can have many potential solutions.

- 2) Health Policy Analysis - Background
  - a. nature and magnitude of the problem,
  - b. affected populations,
  - c. social and economic consequences,

- d. risk factors
- 3) Existing Health Policy Landscape  
identify/classify relevant public policies and very generally critique/evaluate the effectiveness (or lack thereof).
- 4) Proposed Policy, Part I: Summary of how the proposed policy would address the problem: the intended outcomes;
- 5) Proposed Policy, Part II: Description of potential unintended outcomes of the legislation

## Sample topics from the past:

- Nutrition Facts Label and Their Effect on Obesity.
- Should the U.S. Mandate a Paid Maternity Leave Policy?
- Gun Regulation and Brady Act Expansion
- Mandated Patient to Nurse Ratios
- Legalizing Marijuana: Should the United States legalize marijuana to the Federal level?
- Title IX and the future health implications for sexual violence victims on college campuses
- Is MyPlate effective in combatting obesity and promoting healthy eating?
- FDA proposed E-cigarette regulation: Is it too much or too little regulation?
- Analyzing the Health Impacts of “Raise the Age” Law on Juvenile Offenders in New York
- Tobacco 21: Where Are We On Smoking and What Will Tobacco 21 Do To Help?

## Guidelines for Presentations

1. Be organized, time is limited
2. Include a slide with an outline of the talk.  
Present in a logical manner. State a question/ problem. How did you go about answering it?  
What did you find? What do the findings mean?
3. Don't abuse PowerPoint.
4. Speak off of each slide.  
Help the audience by 'walking through' each table for figure with a pointer.
5. Have one point per slide  
Make slides simple, clear, and easy to understand. If the audience is trying to figure out what the slide is showing, then they are not paying attention to what you are saying. Do not show a table with comprehensive data; just show the important stuff. Make font 24 size minimum for the main text of the slide. Use larger font for headings.
6. Include a summary/conclusion slide.  
Use your final slide to repeat the major take-home message from your talk.  
Audiences are likely to remember the last thing point of the presentation.
7. Practice! Practice! Practice!  
Go through the talk at least 2-3 times before actually giving it. Practice out loud, and edit the talk until you can do it in time.
8. Stay on time.
9. Ensure computer compatibility.

Do not wait until the last minute to run your presentation through the computer that you will use so that you can edit if necessary.

- *The following activities and assignments contribute to course grade. Final course grades will be assessed on the following basis:*

1. *Class participation 10%*
2. *Health policy analysis presentation topic 5%*
3. *Annotated Bibliography Assignment 10%*
4. *Health policy analysis presentation 30%*
5. *3 quizzes, 15% each*

*Total: 100%.*

- *Other as appropriate, such as grading scale.*

<i>Grading Policy: 94 – 100</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>90 – &lt;94</i>	<i>A-</i>
<i>87 – &lt;90</i>	<i>B+</i>
<i>84 – &lt;87</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>80 – &lt;84</i>	<i>B-</i>
<i>77 – &lt;80</i>	<i>C+</i>
<i>70 – &lt;77</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>&lt;70 F</i>	<i>*Grades will NOT be rounded.</i>

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Course Objectives(s)</b>	<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Assessment(s)</b>
1	a,b,e	1-5, 13, 14	Health policy analysis project Assignments 1-4 Quizzes 1-3
2	b	2,3,7,8,9,11,12, 14	Assignments 1-13 Quizzes 1-3 Assignment 1,2,5, 6, 7, 9
3	c,d,e	2-5	Health policy analysis project Annotated Bibliography Assignment Quizzes 1-3

10% of the grade is subtracted for each day of late assignment submissions.

## **Course Schedule:**

### **I.Introduction**

#### **Week 1 (September 6): Introduction**

- Schoeni et al., chapter 1: The Health Effects of Social and Economic Policy: The Promise and Challenge for Research and Policy.

- Eyler et al., chapter 1: The Power of Policy to Improve Health

## **II. Social Policy as Health Policy**

### **Week 2 (September 13): *Education and Population Health.***

- Schoeni et al., chapter 2: Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence.
  1. 29, 37-41, 53-52
- Schoeni et al., chapter 3: Health Effects of Human Development Policies.
- Watch New York Times documentary "The Detroit Graduates"

**Participation Grade Assignment 1:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

### **Week 3 (September 20): *Income and Health***

- Schoeni et al., chapter 4: Income Support Policies and Health Among the Elderly
- Watch PBS documentary "In Sickness and In Wealth"

**Participation Grade Assignment 2:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

### **Week 4 (September 27): *Civil Rights and Health***

- Schoeni et al., chapter 6: Lifting Gates, Lengthening Lives: Did Civil Rights Policies Improve the Health of African-American Women In the 1960's and 1970's?
- Watch David Williams talk on "How Racism Makes Us Sick"

**Participation Grade Assignment 3:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

### **Week 5 (October 4): *Macroeconomic conditions and population health***

- Schoeni et al., chapter 7: Macroeconomic Conditions, Health, and Government Policy.

**Section I-II practice questions; not for grade**

## **III. Health Behaviors & Population Health**

### **Week 6 (October 11): *Smoking and Public Policy***

- Eyler et al., chapter 6: Public Policy and Tobacco

**Participation Grade Assignment 4:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

## **Section I-II quiz**

**Week 7 (October 18):** *Obesity, Part I*

- Eyler et al., chapter 7, 8
- Finkelstein EA, Ruhm CJ, Kosa KM. Economic causes and consequences of obesity. *Annu Rev Public Health*. 2005; 26:239-57.
- Watch documentary “The Weight of the Nation: Part 1 – Consequences”

**Participation Grade Assignment 5:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

## **Health policy analysis presentation topic assignment**

**Week 8 (October 25):** *Obesity, Part II*

- Currie J. and Bhattacharya J. "Youths at Nutritional Risk: Malnourished or Misnourished?," NBER Working Paper, 2000.
- Watch Mick Cornett talk on How an obese town lost a million pounds
- Watch Dr. Bleich, a Professor of Public Health Policy at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health, talk about obesity prevention policy

**Participation Grade Assignment 6:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

**Week 9 (November 1):** *Alcohol Abuse and Public Policy*

- Eyler et al., chapter 9
- Cook PJ, Moore MJ. 2002. “The Economics of Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol-Control Policies.” *Health Affairs*, 21(2): 120-133.
- Watch HBO Documentary: Risky Drinking (2015)

**Participation Grade Assignment 7:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

## **Annotated bibliography assignment**

**Week 10 (November 8):** *Illicit Drug Use, Prescription Drug Abuse and Public Policy*

- Eyler et al., chapter 14

- Kolodny, A., Courtwright, D.T., Hwang, C.S., Kreiner, P., Eadie, J. L., Clark, T.W., and Alexander G. C. 2015. "The Prescription Opioid and Heroin Crisis: A Public Health Approach to an Epidemic of Addiction" *Annual Review of Public Health* 36:559–74.
- Watch Travis Rieder talk "The agony of opioid withdrawal — and what doctors should tell patients about it"
- Watch Jan Rader talk "In the opioid crisis, here's what it takes to save a life"

**Participation Grade Assignment 8:** Submit question(s) on video and/or reading

**Section III practice questions, not for grade**

## **IV. Health and Health Care Policy**

**Week 11 (November 15):** *Health Insurance and Health*

- Helen Levy and David Meltzer. 2008. "The Impact of Health Insurance on Health." *Annual Review of Public Health* 29: 399-409.
- Katherine Baicker and Amy Finkelstein, "The Effects of Medicaid Coverage — Learning from the Oregon Experiment." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2011 Aug 25; 365: 683-685.
- Watch New York Times documentary "Take Care, Mr. Elson"

**Participation Grade Assignment 9:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

**Section II quiz**

**Week 12 (November 29):** *Dartmouth Atlas and Accountable Care Organizations*

- Harold S. Luft. 2012. "From Small Area Variations to Accountable Care Organizations: How Health Services Research Can Inform Policy" *Annual Review of Public Health* 33:377–92.
- Atul Gawande "The Cost Conundrum", June 1, 2009, *The New Yorker*.
- Watch Kaiser Health News. "Accountable Care Organizations, Explained". 2015
- Listen to Knowledge@Wharton. "Can Bundled Payments Help Control Costs? 2018.

**Participation Grade Assignment 10:** Submit question(s) on video and/or readings

**Week 13 (December 6):** *Health Care Quality: Regulation versus Report Cards*

- Mukamel, D.B., Haeder, S.F., and Weimer D.L. 2014. "Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Health Care Quality: The Impacts of Regulation and Report Cards" *Annual Review of Public Health*. 35:477–97

**Participation Grade Assignment 11:** Submit question(s) on readings

**Section IV practice questions, not for grade**

**Week 14: (December 13) Covid-19 Health Policies**

**Section IV quiz**

**Week 15: (December 20) Health policy analysis presentations**

**Learning Management System:** Canvas will be used extensively throughout the semester for course syllabus, assignments, announcements, communication and/or other course-related activities. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with Canvas and check it regularly. If you have difficulties accessing Canvas, please inform the instructor and Canvas Support ([help@canvas.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@canvas.rutgers.edu)). Canvas is accessible at [canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu).

**School of Public Health Honor Code:** The School of Public Health Honor Code is found in the student bulletin ([sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog/index.html](https://sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog/index.html)). Each student bears a fundamental responsibility for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her graduate work. For example, all students are expected to observe the generally accepted principles of scholarly work, to submit their own rather than another's work, to refrain from falsifying data, and to refrain from receiving and/or giving aid on examinations or other assigned work requiring independent effort. In submitting written material, the writer takes full responsibility for the work as a whole and implies that, except as properly noted by use of quotation marks, footnotes, etc., both the ideas and the works used are his or her own. In addition to maintaining personal academic integrity, each student is expected to contribute to the academic integrity of the school community by not facilitating inappropriate use of her/his own work by others and by reporting acts of academic dishonesty by others to an appropriate school authority. It should be clearly understood that plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to sanctions up to and including separation from the Rutgers School of Public Health.

**Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student must Apply for Services by first completing a Registration Form with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services (ODS) at [ods.rutgers.edu](https://ods.rutgers.edu). The student will also be required to participate in an ODS intake interview and provide documentation. If reasonable accommodations are granted, ODS will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations which should be shared with your instructors as early in your courses as possible.

**Graduate Student Computer Policy:** Students are required to possess a personal laptop, no older than approximately two years, that must meet minimum requirements which may be found online at: [sph.rutgers.edu/student\\_life/computer\\_requirements.html](https://sph.rutgers.edu/student_life/computer_requirements.html)

**Policy Concerning Use of Recording Devices and Other Electronic Communications Systems:** When personally owned communication/recording devices are used by students to record lectures and/or classroom lessons, such use must be authorized by the faculty member or instructor who must give either



oral or written permission prior to the start of the semester and identify restrictions, if any, on the use of mobile communications or recording devices.

**Withdrawal/Refund Schedule:** Students who stop attending their course(s) without processing an [Add/Drop Course](#) form will receive a failing grade. Furthermore, students dropping to zero credits for the semester are considered withdrawn and must submit a completed [Leave of Absence](#) form from the School of Public Health's Office of Student Affairs. The School of Public Health refunds tuition only. Administrative and technology fees are non-refundable. You may find the Withdrawal/Refund Schedule on the School of Public Health website at: [sph.rutgers.edu/academics/registration/school\\_calendars.html](http://sph.rutgers.edu/academics/registration/school_calendars.html)