

**Course Title:** Population Health and Public Policy

**Course Number:** HBSP 0724

**Course Pre- and Co-requisite(s):** Doctoral student standing

**Course Location:** Room 2A

**Course Date & Time:** Tuesday, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Course Instructor:** Irina B. Grafova, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Department of Health System and Policy, Rutgers School of Public Health, Room 310, email: [grafovib@sph](mailto:grafovib@sph)

**Office Hours:** By Appointment Only

**Course Assistant:** None

**Course Website:** [canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu)

**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. Eyler, Jamie F. Chiqui, 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:** See below

**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, including the leading risk factors for premature death 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 and to understand the dimensions of policy. This course will also integrate discussions of current health policy initiatives. Over the course of the semester, students will develop analytical writing through the health policy analysis assignment.

**Selected Concentration Competencies Addressed:**

The competencies addressed in this course for the Ph.D. in Public Health, Health Systems and Policy Concentration include:

- Construct conceptual models describing the behavior of individuals and households regarding their health status and their access to and use of health care services and private and public health insurance;
- Critically evaluate both proposed and implemented health policy interventions and the empirical research seeking to assess the impact of policy interventions in the health care sector.

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 and well-being.
- B. Critically evaluate research studies related to the socioeconomic determinants of population health and well-being.
- C. Critically analyze health policy proposals, and health policies to improve population health.
- D. Develop doctoral level analytical writing skills

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

For this assignment, students will identify a contemporary news story on a topic related to health policy and lead and facilitate a short class discussion. Other students will participate in the discussion. This is an important assignment that would connect the knowledge acquired in the classroom with the current health policy developments and discussions.

Health Policy Analysis Project

Student's major project for the semester is to apply all that was learned to develop a health policy analysis of a health problem of student's choice. Students will conduct an in-depth analysis of a single health policy issue and present the results in a final, written policy memo (10-12 double-spaced pages in length plus references or other appendices) as well as in an oral presentation. You will have a set of 5 homework assignments designed to help you create your health policy analysis. Each health policy analysis homework assignment is worth 5% of your grade. The lowest graded homework is dropped from your grade. Based on our comments back to you, you will submit your revised complete health policy analysis paper. Remember, the homework is only a foundation for your health policy analysis paper. The paper should be deeper, broader, and more developed than the five-homework taken together. The final health

policy analysis paper is worth 25% of your grade. Students will also have 15-minute presentations of their papers during the last class. The presentation is worth 15% of the final grade. Literature must be cited using APA or comparable standardized format.

Writing well is extremely important in policy analysis. As graduate students, you should approach written assignments professionally –present them as you would to an employer. This includes handing all assignments in on time. 20% will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Writing must be clear and concise and should not be marred by typographical mistakes. This means complete sentences, well-developed arguments, accurate citations to the literature, and all the other characteristics of professional level composition

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?

Homework (designed to help you create your health policy analysis):

HW #1 (due 9/28): Health Policy Analysis -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.

HW #2 (due 10/12): Health Policy Analysis – Background

- nature and magnitude of the problem,
- affected populations,
- social and economic consequences,
- risk factors

HW #3 (due 10/26): Health Policy Analysis – Existing Health Policy Landscape

- identify/classify relevant public policies and very generally critique/evaluate the effectiveness (or lack thereof).

HW #4 (due 11/09): Health Policy Analysis – Proposed Policy, Part I

- Summary of how the proposed policy would address the problem: the intended outcomes.

HW #5 (due 11/23): Health Policy Analysis - Proposed Policy, Part II

- Description of potential unintended outcomes of the legislation

Final paper: grading criteria:

The written policy analysis will be graded based on content, style, structure, grammar and spelling. Students should proofread their documents prior to submission, as poor grammar/style can result in substantial reductions in the grade for this assignment as much as lack of content.

1) Abstract (5 pts.)

(a brief half to one page summary of the purpose of the paper, major findings from the literature review, and major implications for health policy)

2) Thoroughness and Precision in Developing the Subject (20 pts.)

(e.g. appropriateness of material discussed; the degree to which relevant literature has been appropriately discussed and summarized;)

3) Logic, clarity, organization of material, and clarity of expression (30 pts.)

(e.g., the degree to which the author breaks the paper into appropriate sections and subsections; the degree to which thoughts are stated clearly and concisely)

4) Discussion of implications for health policy (40 pts.)

(the degree to which the author discusses the importance of the topic to health policy)

5) Quality of references cited (5 pts)

(the number and quality of references; whether references have been appropriately cited within the paper)

## Policy Analysis Paper Presentation

Each student will be required to give an oral presentation of approximately 10-15 minutes in length that summarizes the results of his/her health policy analysis towards the end of the term. Presentations will be evaluated in terms of mastery of content, style, effectiveness of delivery, and facilitation of group discussion/Q&A.

## Guidelines for Presentations

- Be organized, time is limited
- 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?
- Don't abuse PowerPoint.
- Speak off of each slide.
- Help the audience by 'walking through' each table for figure with a pointer.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Stay on time.
- 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 your course grade. Final course grades will be assessed on the following basis:

Participating and leading the current health policy issue discussions	15%
Homework designed to help building up the final paper	20%
Final Paper	50%
Health Policy Analysis Presentation	15%
Total:	100%

# Note that there will be 5 home-works in total. The grade for the lowest scored homework will be dropped. The grades for the other 4 home-works will added together for the homedwork part of the final grade.

*Grading Policy:*

94 – 100	A
90 – <94	A-
87 – <90	B+
84 – <87	B
80 – <84	B-
77 – <80	C+
70 – <77	C
<70	F

\*Grades will NOT be rounded.

**Course Schedule:**

**I Introduction**

Week 1 (September 7): 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

Lozano, R., et al. 2012. Global and regional mortality from 235 causes of death for 20 age groups in 1990 and 2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. The Lancet 380, 2095-2128.

Currie J. and Almond D. “Killing Me Softly: The Fetal Origins Hypothesis,” the Journal of Economic Perspectives, Summer 2011, 25 #3, 153-72.

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

Week 2 (September 14): Education and Population Health.

Schoeni et al., chapter 2: Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence.

29, 37-41, 53-52

Schoeni et al., chapter 3: Health Effects of Human Development Policies.

Eyler et al., chapter 5: Policy Implications of Social Determinants of Health

Hammond, C. 2003. "How Education Makes Us Healthy." London Review of Education 1(1): 61-78.

Week 3 (September 21): Income and Health

Homework 1 is due

Schoeni et al., chapter 4: Income Support Policies and Health Among the Elderly

Week 4 (September 28): 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?

Week 5 (October 5): Macroeconomic conditions and population health

Homework 2 is due

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

Catalano, R., Goldman-Mellor, S., Saxton, K., Margerison-Zilko, C., Subbaraman, M., LeWinn, K., Anderson, E., 2011. The Health Effects of Economic Decline. Annual Review of Public Health 32, 431-450.

Ann Huff Stevens, Douglas L. Miller, Marianne Page, and Mateusz Filipowski Why Do More People Die During Economic Expansions? Briefs, April 2012, Number 12-8, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College

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

Week 6 (October 12): Smoking and Public Policy

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

Chaloupka F.J., Jha P., de Beyer J., Heller P. The economics of tobacco control. Briefing Notes in Economics 63, 2004/January 2005.

Gruber J. 2002. The economics of tobacco regulation. Health Affairs, 21(2): 146-162.

## Week 7 (October 19): Obesity, Part I

Homework 3 is due

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.

Cutler, David, Edward Glaeser, and Jesse Shapiro, "Why Have Americans Become More Obese?" Journal of Economic Perspectives, 2003, 17(3), Summer, 93-118.

## Week 8 (October 26): Obesity, Part II

Eyler et al., chapter 7, 8

Currie J. and Bhattacharya "Youths at Nutritional Risk: Malnourished or Misnourished?," NBER Working Paper, 2000.

Eisenmann, J., C. Gundersen, S. Garasky, and S. Stewart. "Is Food Insecurity Related to Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents? A Summary of Studies, 1995-2009." Obesity Reviews, v12(501), e73-e83. 2011.

Roy, Manan & Millimet, Daniel L. & Tchernis, Rusty, 2012. "Federal Nutrition Programs and Childhood Obesity: Inside the Black Box," Review of Economics of Household 10:1-38.

## Week 9 (November 2): Alcohol Abuse and Public Policy

Homework 4 is due

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.

Carpenter C. and Dobkin C. The Minimum Legal Drinking Age and Public Health" Journal of Economic Perspectives (2011) 25(2): 133-156.

## Week 10 (November 9): 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.

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

Week 11 (November 16): 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.

Week 12 (November 23): Dartmouth Atlas and Accountable Care Organizations

Homework 5 is due

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.

Week 13 (November 30): 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

V. Summing Up: What have we learned about the determinants of population health and the role of public policy?

Week 14: (December 7) Health policy analysis presentations

Week 15: (December 14) 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 School Catalog ([sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog.html](https://sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog.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.

**Commitment to Safe Learning Environment:** The Rutgers School of Public Health is committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the School as a whole. Free expression in an academic community is essential to the mission of providing the highest caliber of education possible. The School encourages civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement. Provocative ideas respectfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. The School encourages all students to disclose any situations where you may feel unsafe, discriminated against, or harassed. Harassment or discrimination of any kind will be not tolerated and violations may lead to disciplinary actions.

**Reporting Discrimination or Harassment:** If you experience any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. You may report such incidents to the [RBHS Title IX Office](#) or to the School of Public Health's [Office of Student Affairs](#). Rutgers University has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. If you experience any other form of discrimination or harassment, including racial, ethnic, religious, political, or academic, please report any such incidents to the School's [Office of Student Affairs](#). The School strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of discrimination or harassment to the School. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to [Policy 10.3.12](#)) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the School and potentially the University. For example, if you tell a faculty or staff member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty or staff member must share that information with the [RBHS Title IX Coordinator](#). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University [Policy 10.3.12](#). For more

information about your options at Rutgers, please visit [Rutgers Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance](#).

**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-support.html](http://sph.rutgers.edu/student-life/computer-support.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.

**Policy Concerning Use of Turnitin:** Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who do not agree should contact the course instructor immediately.

**Withdrawal/Refund Schedule:** Students who stop attending their course(s) without submitting a completed [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/academic-calendar.html](http://sph.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-calendar.html)