Course Information

Class Meeting: Wednesdays 4:30 – 7:10 pm, FH 313
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 pm FH 652
Contact: bstabile@gmu.edu, 703 993-8566

Course Description and Objectives

The course examines all facets of health and medical policy analysis, including context, history, and frameworks for understanding. Government alternatives and institutions are considered, as are components of the policy process including problem definition, evaluation, assessment of political and economic feasibility and viability, and issues of implementation. Influence, values and outcomes in the policy process are also taken into consideration. Emphasis will be given to international perspectives, and the experience of the policy process in different country settings.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding/Skills and Abilities: Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- evaluate evidence and the contextual factors affecting medical policy and healthcare alternatives.
- decide a course of action based on compelling arguments and clear analytical reasoning.
- produce an independent and coherent work in health policy analysis.

Professional development and leadership: Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- lead health policy analysis processes in various country settings.
- drive policy debates and take responsibility for specific policy positions.
- practice creativity in influencing decision-making.
Course Requirements/Evaluation*

Midterm Essay on Context and Framing: 20%
Policy Analysis: 50%
Class Discussions/Contributions/Preparedness: 30%

*Detailed descriptions of the course requirements and assignments are included in the Appendix of this syllabus. Participation and presentation skills are given special emphasis in this course, and the written finished product, though brief, must be of the highest professional quality. Preparation of the readings for each class session is essential for successful course participation.

Required Readings available in the GMU Arlington Campus bookstore


GMU/SPGIA Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For international students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-
1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPGIA policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPGIA policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. [http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/)

Resources:

GMU Writing Center [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)/GMU Libraries

[http://library.gmu.edu](http://library.gmu.edu)/GMU Counseling and Psychological Services

[http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)/GMU Emergency Preparedness Guides

[http://ehs.gmu.edu/guides_EP.html](http://ehs.gmu.edu/guides_EP.html)

Students with Special Needs

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

New Voices in Public Policy

Please consider submitting your proudest work for publication in *New Voices in Public Policy*. *New Voices* is a student- and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP's finest student work with the rest of the world.

Weekly Readings and Assignments

Session 1 (September 3): Course Introduction and Overview


Session 2 (September 10): International Health Policy Issues

Session 3 (September 17): A Health Policy Analysis Toolkit

Session 4 (September 24): Social Determinants of Health
Submit a paragraph identifying the health policy issue on which your brief will focus. Send as a Word document email attachment (labeled with your last name only, course number and “proposal”) to bstabile@gmu.edu by the start of class.


Session 5 (October 1): The Guts: Policy Background, Statement, Values and Stakeholders

Session 6 (October 8): Intersectionality in Health Policy
Intersectionality Matters for Health Equity and Policy Analysis” and “Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis”

Session 7 (October 15): Rhetoric and Narratives


Session 8 (October 22): A Global Comparative Perspective

Midterm Essay on Context and Framing Due


Session 9 (October 29): Policy Criteria, Options and Recommendation


Session 10 (November 5): Structural Considerations in Health Care Delivery


**Session 11 (November 12): Public Policy for Medical and Science Professionals**

Humphreys, Keith and Peter Piot. 2012. “Scientific Evidence Alone is not Sufficient Basis for Health Policy,” BMJ 34, e1316 (Published 27 February).


**Session 12 (November 19): Political Liberalism and Patronage**

*It is strongly recommended that the final draft of your Policy Analysis be completed by this date so that you have time for final editing and review before submission.*

*Tonight as we consider the evening’s topics and lessons learned over the course of the semester we’ll share some snacks (everyone is encouraged to bring something to share) and take a deep breath before final papers are due and presentations begin next week.*


**Thursday, November 26: Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Session 13 (December 3): Policy Analysis Presentations and Discussion**

*Policy Analysis due at the start of session.*

**Session 14 (December 10): Policy Analysis Presentations and Discussion**

**Appendix: Detailed Descriptions of Course Assignments**
**A. Participation:** Students must be well acquainted with the readings for each session and be prepared to discuss them in detail. **All students are expected to actively participate in and contribute to the course dialogue.** To be prepared for each session’s discussion:

1. Write a brief statement encapsulating, in a sentence or two, the overarching theme of the evenings readings, and be prepared to share it.

2. Identify a quote of significance from the reading that really strikes you and that you think warrants further examination and discussion.

3. A few times during the semester, bring an article from the popular press to our attention on an issue that illustrates course themes, or might be usefully examined with course frameworks or methodologies.

4. Consider using Twitter to share articles and insights on topics of interest to our inquiry. I’m @bstabile1.

**B. Midterm Essay on Context and Framing**

Consider whether and to what extent intersectionality, social determinants of health or policy narratives influence the policy on which your brief will focus. In an essay of about five pages, you may briefly consider the role of each in your chosen policy’s realm, or choose to focus on one or two only that you consider to be most appropriate or influential. This essay will be due no later than the beginning of Session 8 on October 22\textsuperscript{nd}.

**C. Policy Analysis**

Students must thoughtfully consider not only the substance of a specific health policy, but also the political influences, institutional processes, and decision-making structures that are involved in initiating and implementing the health policy change. **The policy briefs submitted at the beginning of session 13** should describe some of these contextual factors (where relevant) in brief, but should focus on prescribing and promoting a preferred solution aimed at ameliorating some symptom or condition of concern in the health policy realm. The grammar, expression, readability and visual presentation of the policy briefs should be impeccable. The finished product should be about 15 pages in length and contain an Executive Summary, any relevant Appendices, and a properly formatted Bibliography.

**A policy matrix** outlining several policy alternatives and the criteria by which they will be judged should be submitted as part of the paper containing a description of the
problem at hand, and a brief but full discussion of each policy alternative and criterion shown in the matrix.

Students will present summary points to the class on their final policy briefs for about 20 minutes in sessions 13 and 14. Power points may be used if desired. Students should exercise their persuasive skills, while building on compelling arguments, and responding to feedback, other views, and suggestions for different courses of action.