

Department of Health Policy and Administration
UNC-CH School of Public Health
HPAA 561

Advanced Health Policy Analysis:
Health Policy in Election Politics
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Spring 2008

Time Flexible, Place Flexible (THURSDAY, January 14, 5:30 – 7 pm will be our first formal meeting and we will also meet on Monday evenings. Place, TBN in School of Public Health

I. GOALS FOR THE COURSE

The course is for advanced masters and doctoral students interested in health policy. The focus of the course is the health politics of the 2008 elections including the Presidential and North Carolina Gubernatorial elections. Students will study the politics of health and health reform in the context of election politics which must be contrasted with the politics of policy making, Congressional politics or the long-range politics of institutions. We will focus on the elections but we will also try to notice what is not being included in the election debates and proxy debates.

A. Behavioral Objectives

The course will also develop the following competencies for students.

The ability to:

Identify key structural, institutional, and ethical or philosophical features of American democracy that come to the fore in an election year;

Develop a capacity for critical thinking about how our differing and competing democratic ethics and philosophies affect health politics and, by extension, health policy development. You will be expected to critiquing various alternative policy visions;

Develop a facility for systematic questioning and critique of the functioning of the American democracy that helps shed light on where and how it might be strengthened to advance policy making for the public's health.

B. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the course is to explore the thesis that democracy matters greatly when it comes to advancing the public's health and that elections are a special mirror that reflects the spirit and practice of democracy in America. The aim is to introduce those who aspire to leadership roles in public health policy and health care reform to the structural features of the American democracy that constrain or facilitate effective public health policy.

We will examine policy analysis for public health and health care reform through the lens of the election but interpret it in a larger political and democratic context. We are today awash in competing visions of democratic politics and therefore competing ideas about health policy. We believe that future leaders in public health will be well served to

understand how democratic politics and public values (equality, security, community, social justice, etc.) shape policy analysis and vice versa.

As a consequence, when examining the conduct of the election we will explore more carefully the values, assumptions, and glue that hold together current and competing worldviews of democracy, liberty, community, and public morality as they emerge in the discussions and debates in the election. As future leaders in the health field and as policy leaders you will need to be deeply familiar with these alternative and “warring” visions of democracy and policy analysis, recognizing points of similarity and continuity as well as sources of deep political conflict as these form the major political divides or political fault lines that serve as the ‘front lines’ for political debates and powerfully shape the future for public health policy. We will explore how we might more successfully bridge those divides to advance health status in the U.S.

If we are successful in the course, students should leave with an appreciation of the role of policy analysis as part of the larger world of healthy democratic politics and institutional performance with special reference to elections. Finally, we believe that strengthening these links between democratic philosophy and ethics and public health as pragmatist policy analysis and ethics will help develop a deeper appreciation of the challenges of public health leadership as policy leadership.

We will consider health care reform in a broad sense, asking the questions: are we in danger of losing the goal of health security for all? Have we forgotten what health care reform is about? What are the key features of the American democracy that have historically impeded health care reform since the Great Society era? How have crises such as Katrina, global warming, and avian flu moved us toward fundamental reform in health care and public health provision?

II. COURSE MEETING TIMES/PLACES

The course will meet as a full group for only the first three weeks and at the end of the semester with special sessions called as needed. You will be expected to meet in small working groups or in tutorial with Dr. Ricketts or others to discuss and gather information. The course has a web site on UNC Blackboard but is listed only as HPAA 561. You can access the web site to keep up with last minute changes. Professor Ricketts will also try to communicate via e-mail any such changes.

Contacting the Instructor: For rapid response, the e-mail system is the best way to reach me; my address is: tom_ricketts@unc.edu. You may call during regular office hours and speak to Professor Ricketts’s secretary at 966-5541 and he/she will most likely know where Professor Ricketts is and can make appointments – or you can take a chance and walk in. My office is at 725 M.L. King, Jr. Blvd, suite 300.

III. COURSE TEXTS:

Haynes Johnson and David Broder. *The System. The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Little Brown, 1996. You are likely to find used copies of this at used bookstores or via Amazon. I am asking that you read this to get the flavor of how people

work in the political system as well as to provide you with some specific information about how health reform is treated.

Two other books that dissect the failure of the Clinton Plan that I recommend but do not require, are:

Hacker, Jacob S. *The Road to Nowhere. The Genesis of President Clinton's Plan for Health Security*. Princeton, 1997.

Skocpol, T. Boomerang. *Health Care Reform and the Turn Against Government*. W.W. Norton, 1997.

OPTIONAL Richard Johnston, Michael G. Hagen and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. This is available via Amazon in paper back for \$19.99 new and there are used available from \$7.39 on the Amazon web site.

You will be well served to have available a copy of John Kingdon. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy*. 2nd ed. Harper Collins 1995. We will use it to help structure the analysis of candidate's positions. It provides a framework for understanding how policy develops in a broader sense, with elections as just one of many streams of policy making.

The reference text for presidential elections is the US is Polsby, Wildavsky and Hopkins: *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics* (12th Editions) Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. However, the book is \$70.00 new (you can get used copies for as little as \$22.00) but this is just a suggested book for reference sake, not required

Participants in the class should understand the basics of the American political system including the structure of the federal government and of at least one state government; the process whereby laws and statutes are passed; the basics of constitutional law as it relates to public health; and a general understanding of the political culture and traditions of the United States. Participants needing review of these basics may wish to consult a general college-level political science text. A recommended comprehensive text is James Q. Wilson's and John J. DiIulio's *American Government: The Essentials* (9th ed., Houghton Mifflin, 2004) or Lowi & Ginsburg, *American Government*. New York: Norton, 1996. Participants should also have completed a basic course in policy analysis (HPAA 260 or equivalent).

You will be expected to do basic, and original analysis using web documents and contacts with individuals associated with the campaigns.

IV. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MAJOR THEMES

A. Background reading

Read *The System* for historical background

Reference general guides to the elections such as:

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/issues/healthcare/index.html>

Place yourselves on mailing lists for general newsletters covering health politics and policy such as:

<http://www.commonwealthfund.org/>

<http://www.kaisernetwork.org/>

B. Take a “Political Typology Test”

You’ll take a test in the classroom as well as on-line. The classroom test will allow you to compare your political outlook with students in HPAA from the past, the on-line version will allow you to compare yourself to a national sample. The on-line test is at: typology.people-press.org/typology/

Please take that test and then print your results to a .pdf file and bring it in. Do not put any identifiers on the results page.

C. Candidate Selection/Assignment

Select a candidate for President and for NC Governor for whom you will become an “expert”. There will be more than one person assigned to major candidates. You may prefer to focus on a gubernatorial candidate or a presidential candidate. You will be expected to know all there is to know about that person’s positions (and non-positions) on health issues, their relationship with major stakeholders in health, their staff who works on health issues, and the reactions of the media and the public on their health positions.

D. Compare and contrast positions

You will be asked to compare and contrast the positions of several candidates on a specific issue. This will be done with what are called “side-by-side” analysis. I will also be asking you to bring in alternative, non candidate positions, like Ron Wyden’s proposal.

Look at the “side-by-side” sites as they relate to health

www.healthjournalism.org/secondarypage-details.php?id=97

www.health08.org/sidebyside.cfm

www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/federal/presidentialrace/positions.html

www.huffingtonpost.com/susan-blumenthal/us-presidential-candidate_55460.html

electronic-medical-record.blogspot.com/2007/10/presidential-candidates-and-health-care.html

There will also be a lot of political junkie web sites that can help

For the primary elections, look at this one to figure out what is happening.

<http://rhodescook.com/>

E. Write a speech.

The assignment will be the same as that which is now used by Kaiser.edu, which was adapted from earlier versions of this course. Here is their call for papers. You are required to write this speech, but submitting it to Kaiser.edu is optional.

Dear Professors and Faculty,

As you plan your course work for next semester, we are pleased to let you know that kaiserEDU.org will launch its second annual essay contest on January 23, 2008. Students will be asked to submit an original, 800-word essay. If this topic is relevant to course work you are preparing for next semester, you may wish to include the contest as part of your class assignments, as other professors did last year.

Essay Topic: You have just started a job as an analyst working on the president elect's health care transition team and have been asked to draft a memo fleshing out the health priorities for the new administration on a major health policy issue. Select a current candidate and an issue area (controlling health care costs, eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities, expanding health promotion and disease prevention efforts, improving women's health, or improving the quality of health care) and identify the major policies or strategies that the next administration could develop to advance this issue.

Undergraduate and graduate students will be judged separately and the winners will receive \$1,000. Complete details, rules and regulations for the essay contest are available online at <http://www.kaiserEDU.org/essaycontest2008.asp>. All essays must be submitted by March 17, 2008.

KaiserEDU.org has several tutorials and issue modules that would be useful resources for students researching the essay question. Additionally, the Kaiser Family Foundation's website <http://www.health08.org>, provides the latest information on health care issues and the election.

For more information about KaiserEDU.org, the Kaiser Family Foundation's free website which provides a wide range of educational materials and resources on major areas of health care policy, particularly for students and faculty, please visit the website <http://www.kaiserEDU.org>. If you do not regularly receive emails about kaiserEDU.org updates and would like to sign up for our free emails (sent approximately twice per month), please login to your profile and add a subscription for kaiserEDU.org. Login at <http://www.kaiserEDU.org/email>.

Thank you,
The kaiserEDU.org editorial team
kaiserEDU@kff.org

D.

Contact the Health Advisers for the campaigns for your candidate(s) and conduct an interview. We will attempt to recruit the gubernatorial candidates for a debate on health policy. Students will be expected to help with that process.

Health Advisers:

John Edwards
Hilary Clinton
past consultants)
Barack Obama

~~Christopher Dodd~~_____

Peter Harbage, New America Foundation
Chris Jennings (Len Nichols, Jeanne Lambrew as
Greg Bloche, David Cutler

Dennis Kucinich

~~Bill Richardson~~

~~Joe Biden~~

Rudy Giuliani

Mitt Romney

John McCain

Doug Holz-Eakin

Ron Paul

Fred Thompson

Mike Huckabee

NC Governor

Bill Graham

Bob Orr

Fred Smith

Mike Munger (LIB)

Richard Moore

Bev Perdue

(Marion Sullivan?)

Ryan Teague Beckwith, is a Raleigh *News and Observer* reporter covering the health positions of the gubernatorial candidates.

Potential analytical assignments:

Analysis of support base in the health sector: Identify the major donors in the health sector and create a "conflict-agreement" picture of their interests and the candidate's positions.

Analysis of "Frames" used in candidate's positions and opposition to specific policies.

Scenario building for impact of policies.