Health Policy and Politics in Comparative Perspective

Schedule: Fridays, 11:35 am to 2:25 pm
Location: Please confirm on Carleton Central
Instructor: Dr. V. Bhatia
A625 Loeb Building
Tel: 613-520-2600, ext. 1360
vandna_bhatia@carleton.ca
Office hours: Fridays, 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Course Description
Across the OECD, developed countries typically spend about 9.5% of their GDP on health. The health sector employs millions of people, and is a key source of research and innovation as well as investment. Health programs are also one of the most politically and publicly popular programs of mature welfare states, and are among the largest single expenditure items in government budgets. In recent years, governments have struggled to address common issues in managing and reforming their health systems: population aging and changing demographics, expensive new technologies, the increasing prevalence of chronic disease, and rising costs of health related goods and services in the midst of recession. They are faced with critical choices about how much of the nation’s wealth can and/or should be devoted to health care, how those resources ought to be allocated, and to whom. It is not surprising therefore that health care policy has an important place on the agenda of most governments.

This course explores the politics and policies of health care systems in mature welfare states – the political, social and economic dynamics that shape health policymaking in contemporary society. Rather than focusing on applied health policy issues, this course will use comparative techniques to understand and explain the rather distinctive politics and processes that inform policymaking in the health arena. Drawing on theories of public policy, comparative politics as well as the burgeoning health policy literature, we will examine the evolution of health care programs and their place in the contemporary welfare state. We will survey a range of approaches for understanding, classifying and explaining variations in health systems across nations, and conclude the course with an examination recent reform efforts in selected countries.

By the end of the course, students should have a solid, critical understanding of the major theoretical approaches to health policy and comparative health politics, and be able apply these to understand and explain specific policy issues across nations.

Course Requirements & Evaluation
The course mark will be based on four components:

- Class Attendance and Participation 20%
- Presentation 10%
- Response Papers (2) 30%
- Research Paper 40%
**Attendance and Participation** A key function of the seminar format is to facilitate student learning through discussion, both with the instructor and student peers. Therefore, it is essential that all students do the readings in advance of the seminar and come prepared to participate actively in the class discussion. Attendance is mandatory – students must attend at least 10 of 12 seminars to obtain an ‘A’ for this component. Students will be evaluated on the both the quality and quantity of contributions to discussions of the week’s readings. A lack of participation will be taken as a lack of preparation. Effective participation includes: asking relevant questions and offering constructive comments; building and reflecting on ideas and themes across readings, both in a given week and throughout the course; engaging and collaborating with peers in discussions; and civility and collegiality in conduct.

**Presentation** Each student will be responsible for presenting an analysis of the required readings for one week, and leading the seminar discussion. The presentation should offer: a brief summary of the key themes and issues raised in the readings; an assessment or critique of the readings and/or arguments made; some initial questions and/or issues for discussion.

**Response Papers** Students are expected to submit two response papers (4-6 pages, 12-point font, double spaced) based on the required readings from one week. Topics must be selected from Weeks 5 to 10 in the course syllabus. Similar to the presentations, each paper should offer a brief summary of the key themes and issues raised in the readings, an assessment or critique of the main arguments, and some key questions or issues that arise from the readings. Response papers are due by 9:00 AM on the date the topic will be discussed in class.

**Research Paper** Each student will write a 25-page double-spaced research paper (12-point font) examining a substantive health policy issue of his or her choice, drawn from the course material. A 2-page paper proposal is due before class on **Friday February 15th** and should include a description of the topic, an explanation of why it is important; a specific research question and/or hypothesis that the research paper will address; a list of 6-8 preliminary sources and scholarly references (including but not limited to the course readings). The final paper is due on **Friday April 12th**, no later than 4:00 pm. More details about the paper will be provided in class. In order to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from each other’s research and analysis, each student will also be required to present a brief oral summary of their research paper in the last few weeks of class.

All written course work is to be submitted on-line via the course cuLearn site. Late penalties for written work are assessed on a daily basis, amounting to one letter-grade per day, unless otherwise specified. **Students must complete all components of the course to receive a passing course grade.**

**Course Materials**
All required readings that are available electronically will be linked through Ares and are accessible from the university library. Required readings from books are on reserve. Supplementary readings listed in the syllabus are not mandatory; they are provided as additional resources if you wish to consult them. There are no required textbooks for this course, however the following texts may be useful background reading:


The following also websites offer comprehensive information about health policy and health systems in many countries:

- The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies [http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-are/partners/observatory](http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-are/partners/observatory)
Course Schedule

Part I: The Structure and Organization of Health Care Systems

Week 1 – Friday January 11 – Introduction

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings

- Marmor et al., Chapter 1 (Comparative Policy Analysis and Health Care: An Introduction)
- Blank & Burau, Chapter 1 (Comparative Health Policy: An Introduction), Chapter 2 (The Context of Health Care)

Week 2 – Friday January 18 – Healthcare and the Welfare State: Classifying Health Systems

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


Week 3 – Friday January 25 – Paying for Health Care

Required Readings

Supplementary Readings


Week 4 – February 1 – Common Problems: Costs, Perceptions and Quality

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


Part II: Making Health Policy – Institutions, Ideas, Interests

Week 5 – February 8 – Historical Developments

Required Readings

Supplementary Readings


Week 6 – February 15 – Federalism, Intergovernmental Relations and Institutional Veto Players

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


**February 22 – Reading Week Break, No Class**

**Week 7 – March 1 – History, Path Dependency and Health Policy Change**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


**Week 8 – March 8 – Dominance in Decline? The Political Influence of the Medical Profession**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


**Week 9 – March 15 – The Politics of Ideas, Frames and Discourse in Health Policy**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


Part III: Retrenchment and Reform of Health Systems

Week 10 – March 22 – Retrenchment and Reform in Mature Health Systems


Supplementary Readings


March 29 – Statutory Holiday, No Class

Week 11 – April 5 – Managing Competition: Reforming the American and British Systems

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings

• Oberlander, J., & White, J. (2009). Public attitudes toward health care spending aren’t the problem; prices are. Health Affairs, 28(5), 1285-1293.

Week 12 – April 10 – Reforming Bismarckian Health Systems: Policy Networks and Governance in France and Germany

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings

Accommodations, Student Conduct and Academic Regulations

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by academic and conduct regulations of Carleton University. Undergraduate students should consult the Academic Regulations listed in the Undergraduate Calendar, in particular those dealing with Instructional Offenses and Offenses of Conduct (sections 14, 15).

Academic Accommodations
The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism
The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student,
when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of “F” for the course.

**Oral Examination**
At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work**
Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Grading**
Assignments and exams will be graded with a percentage grade. To convert this to a letter grade or to the university 12-point system, please refer to the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grades:** Final grades are derived from the completion of course assignments. Failure to write the final exam will result in the grade ABS. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course. **Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Connect Email Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.