Using Research to Develop Health Policy
PMAF 9211
Spring, 2015

Karen Minyard, Ph. D.
404 413-0296
kminyard@gsu.edu

Beth Fuller, DrPH
404-413-0291
efuller@gsu.edu

Thursdays, 1:00-3:30
Office Hours: by appointment

This class is designed to help graduate students bridge the gap between research and policymaking. The class is open to students with an interest in health policy who study in various departments or schools.

The goal of the class is for students to understand the relationship between research and policy so that students may contribute more effectively to both in their careers. I expect students to come to class with an understanding of how to read research studies and how public policy is made. I recognize, however, that the relationship between the two is often overlooked. Through a series of case studies taken from health policy, the class will explore the relevance of good research to various steps in policymaking (e.g., agenda setting, drafting legislation, lobbying, regulation promulgation, implementation, and feedback.) We will examine the ways that research influences policy, when it may not, and why. I have invited people instrumental to health policy making in Georgia to participate in some of these discussions.

Prior knowledge of health and health care issues will be helpful, as we will be dealing with some of the complex health policy issues that are facing federal, state, and local policy makers today. We will be discussing contributors to health, including lifestyle, human biology, the environment, and the health care system. Our emphasis, however, will be on the latter.

The learning objectives for this class include:

- Students will gain an understanding of the Research/Policy/Program model and how it applies to health policy.
- Students will analyze the ways that various policy perspectives interact in the model and in the real world of policy formulation.
- Students will integrate the policy framework, and policy theory in an analysis of a health policy issue in a paper and presentation.
- Students will evaluate the Research/Policy/Program model’s applicability to real world policy formulation.

Textbooks: There are two required texts for this class. Both will be provided to you.


Readings: Readings will be assigned from the textbook and additional articles for each week’s class will be referenced in the syllabus.

Requirements: Attendance at weekly seminars is required, and participation in the discussions is expected. If you must miss a class because of prior commitments, please let me know as early as possible. Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services.

Grades will be based on class participation and two projects. Your final grade will be calculated as follows: attendance and class participation will count for 15% of your grade; the midterm project will count for 35% of your grade; and, the final project will count for the remaining 50% of your grade.

Midterm Project
You will write a policy brief (no more than three to five pages) on a current health-related topic of particular interest to state policy-makers. You are to use the Six Question Framework discussed in class to succinctly describe the problem, trends, potential leverage points, possible unintended consequences and potential recommendations.

Final Project
Your final project will be a project tailored to your interests and stage in your doctoral work. The goal is for you to finish the semester with a literature review that is appropriate for submission to a peer reviewed journal or academic presentation.

Academic Honesty
You may work together in preparing for class meetings, but all other work for this course must be your own. Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University’s Faculty Handbook and in On Campus: The Student Handbook. An excerpt of the University’s Policy on Academic Honesty is abstracted below.

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource
without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

B. Cheating on Examinations: Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

C. Unauthorized Collaboration: Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

D. Falsification: It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

E. Multiple Submissions: It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

By registering for this course, you acknowledge your awareness of the academic honesty code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the code. Violations of the code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about how this relates to the work requirements for this course.

Preliminary Schedule of Classes and Topics
The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary as Guest Lecture schedule is confirmed. Additional readings may be assigned.
Thursday, January 15
Introduction to the conceptual framework to be used in this class. Review of goals and expectations of the class.

Thursday, January 22
The policymaking process

Readings:


Thursday, January 29

*Guest Lecturer: TBA*
The policymaking process (continued)

Readings:
Kingdon, chapters 1-3

Van de Ven, chapter 1


Thursday, February 5

Topic: Communicating with policy makers through policy briefs

Readings:


Kingdon, Chapters 4-6

Selected health policy briefs.
Thursday, February 12

Topic: Literature Reviews

Readings:


Thursday, February 19th

Guest Lecturer: TBA
Topic: Translation and Dissemination

Readings:


Thursday, February 26

Guest Lecturer: Debbie Kibbie, Georgia Health Policy Center (invited)
Topic: Obesity prevention policy

Readings:
Van de Ven, Chapter 2


Examples of Obesity prevention policy briefs
Thursday, March 5
Mid-term projects due. Student-led discussion of policy briefs.

Thursday, March 12
Guest Lecturers: TBA
Readings:
Kingdon, chapters 7-8


Thursday, March 19
Spring Break, no class

Thursday, March 26
Guest lecturer: TBA
Readings:
Van de Ven, Chapters 8-9


Thursday, April 2
Guest Lecturer: TBA
Readings:


Thursday, April 9
Guest Lecturer and readings TBA

Thursday, April 16
Readings:
Kingdon, chapters 9-10


Thursday, April 23rd, (last day of class)
Student-led discussion of additional health policy issues.
Final papers due. *Attendance is required for this session.*

*Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.*