

PPD 325: FUNDAMENTALS OF HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
SPRING 2023 (4 UNITS)
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS, 10:00-11:50 AM
VPD 110

Instructor: Genevieve P. Kanter, PhD

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-3:00 pm and Tuesdays 9-10 am, in-person or by Zoom (make appointments [here](#)). Appointments are in 15-minute blocks. You may book multiple blocks if you need additional time.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a gateway to the Minor in Health Policy and to the Health Policy and Management track of the B.S. in Public Policy. It focuses on the institutions, processes, and incentives that govern population and health care delivery. More generally, it is a course about the evaluation of health policies. The goal is to strengthen students' ability to recognize, describe, and use economic, statistical, and mathematical tools in evaluating health policies.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the structure of the major sectors in the health care industry, their business challenges, the policy issues they face, and how business and policy interact in that setting;
- Identify and describe leading contemporary health policy problems and their causes;
- Apply economic and statistical reasoning to evaluate alternative health policies.

PREREQUISITE(s): None.

CO-REQUISITE(s): None.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT: None

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION: Background in or a principles course in (micro-)economics is helpful.

COURSE NOTES

The course meets twice each week for sessions that include interactive lectures, discussions, case studies, student-led debates, and student presentations. Students are expected to complete all required readings and tasks prior to class, and should come to class ready to ask questions and engage in in-class discussions and activities. On occasion, students may be cold-called to answer questions or express their opinions.

Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard shortly prior to each class. Students are advised to print the slides and take hand-written notes during class on the printed slides.

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- The required textbook for this course is: Feldstein P. *Health Policy Issues: An Economic Perspective, 7th Edition*. Health Administration Press, 2019. (ISBN-10: 1640550100; ISBN-13: 978-1640550100). [Available as [Ebook through USC Libraries](#)]
- There are occasional readings assigned in: Bodenheimer T, Grumbach K. *Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach, 8th Edition*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2020. (ISBN-10: 1260454266; ISBN-13: 978-1260454260). [Available as [Ebook through USC Libraries](#)]
- Additional required readings will either be publicly available, available through USC Libraries, or posted on Blackboard.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

INTRODUCTORY MICROECONOMICS AND ADVANCED HEALTH ECONOMICS REFERENCES

- Principles of economics concepts
 - Mankiw, NG. *Principles of Economics*, [any edition]. Cengage, [any year]. Or Mankiw, NG. *Principles of Microeconomics*, [any edition]. Cengage, [any year].
 - Gruber J. 14.01 [Principles of Microeconomics lecture videos](#). MIT Open Courseware.
- Advanced health economics textbooks
 - Bhattacharya J, Hyde T, Tu P. *Health Economics*. Red Globe Press, 2013.
 - Feldstein P. *Health Care Economics*, [any edition]. Cengage, [any year]. [Available in print editions through USC Libraries]
- See also the **GENERAL RESOURCES** section near the end of this syllabus for additional health policy resources like health policy briefs.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The course grade will be based on performance in a policy debate, a final project presentation, a final project white paper, 18 summary/feedback forms, and class/bonus exercises. The distribution of assignment weights is as follows:

ASSIGNMENT	% OF GRADE
Policy Debates	20%
Policy White Paper	35%
Policy Project Presentation	25%
Summary/Feedback Forms	15%
Class/Bonus Exercises	5%
TOTAL	100%

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

1. POLICY DEBATES

Students will work in assigned teams (i.e., each side has 2 or more members) to debate a health policy topic. Each debate will be about 30 minutes. Each participant will give prepared remarks for 3 minutes. Prepared remarks will be followed by rebuttals and Q&A. The instructor will moderate the debate. Possible debate topics include: (1) childhood vaccinations should be mandatory; (2) the training and licensing requirements for physicians are too high; (3) the US should adopt Medicare-For-All; (4) managed care has done more harm than good to the health

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care system; (5) the standards of FDA approval for drugs are too stringent. Team assignments will be made at the end of Week 1, and debate topic selections will be administered via Blackboard (selection deadline Tues, 1/17, 5 pm; if your team has not made a selection by then, it will be assigned a topic and position). Student teams will be evaluated on how well they identify and develop the strengths of their position and how well they identify the weaknesses in the opposing position. Performance in the policy debate is worth 20% of the course grade.

2. POLICY WHITE PAPER

Students will conduct a policy analysis on a health policy issue of their choosing and submit a white paper documenting the analysis. The paper should include the following elements:

- Description of the problem and its consequences
- Reasons the problem arises (i.e., its causes)
- Pros and cons of potential policy solutions to address the problem
- Your preferred approach for solving the problem and rationale

Papers should be at least 3,000 words in length (approx. 6 pages, single-spaced; use 12-point font with 1 inch margins). They should include statistics, study findings, and other evidence to support claims made, and may include figures and tables. They should cite references appropriately and may use any standard citation format (e.g., MLA, AMA, Chicago). Students will be evaluated on the structure and organization of their analysis; the comprehensiveness, depth, and thoughtfulness of the analysis; and writing effectiveness. Students who wish to develop their writing skills are encouraged to consult the [USC Writing Center](#).

Papers should be uploaded to Blackboard by **Sunday, May 7, 11:59 pm**. Late papers will be accepted and graded, but penalties will be levied for lateness. Penalties for late papers are as follows: (a) within 24 hours: 25% penalty; (b) more than 24 hours late but less than 48 hours late: 50% penalty; (c) more than 48 hours late: no points. The white paper is worth 35% of the course grade.

Please familiarize yourself with the USC rules for academic integrity (available in the [Student Handbook](#) and discussed more at the end of this syllabus). Instances of plagiarism or the use of artificial intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT in submitted essays will be severely penalized and reported to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

3. POLICY PROJECT PRESENTATION

Students will present their policy analysis in an oral presentation at the end of the course. The presentation should be about 15 minutes long, including Q&A. Students will be evaluated on how well they describe their analysis, the organization and cogency of both their analysis and their presentation, and their ability to field questions. Presentation slides should be uploaded to Blackboard within 24 hours of the end of session in which they present. The presentation is worth 25% of the course grade.

4. SUMMARY/FEEDBACK FORMS

Students must complete and submit summary/feedback forms in Blackboard after each class session. The forms ask students to briefly summarize and provide feedback on the session, based on the lecture and readings. Feedback forms must be submitted within 48 hours of (the end of) the class session. There are a total of 22 feedback forms (one for each core class session), of which 18 will count towards the course grade. Forms received after 48 hours (2 days) but before 72 hours (3 days) will have points deducted by 50%. No credit will be given for forms submitted after 72 hours. Feedback forms with the lowest scores from the semester will automatically be dropped. Each completed form is worth approximately 0.83% of the course grade.

5. CLASS/BONUS EXERCISES

On occasion, students will be asked to participate in class exercises and polls or to complete surveys. A small number of points will be given for participation in these activities.

GRADING SCALE

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

GRADE	PERCENT
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

CLASSROOM NORMS

Students are asked to maintain a respectful, constructive classroom environment. To this end, please remember to listen actively and attentively; ask questions if you do not understand a point raised or are curious about a related issue; and engage respectfully with the ideas presented in class, with the speakers, and your classmates.

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance will not be taken. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that you attend class and be well-prepared to engage in class discussions and activities because attendance in class will be helpful in preparing you for the session summaries, debates, and final project. In addition, there may be in-class activities and assignments that count towards your course grade. If you have to miss class for any reason, you are responsible for reviewing the material covered and for turning assignments in when they are due. If what you need is not available on Blackboard, please request materials and information from a fellow student.

E-MAIL GUIDELINES

- Please e-mail me about any typos or errors you see on slides and any clarifications you need for assignments.
- You *do not* need to e-mail me on issues related to class attendance (e.g. if you are not able to attend) or to confirm appointment scheduling.
- If you have substantive questions about or difficulty with specific topics, these are better addressed person-to-person (after class or during office hours) rather than by e-mail.
- Try not to be offended if you do not receive a response; this is because of the volume of e-mails rather than intended neglect (please remind me of your question in class).

GENERAL RESOURCES

Some useful resources on health policy include:

- [USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy](#) aims to inform the national health care debate with rigorous, evidence-based analysis leading to practical recommendations using the collaborative strengths of USC and Brookings.
- The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) produces issue briefs and reports on current health policy topics.
- [Health Affairs](#) is the leading health policy journal and publishes a blog and peer reviewed research on health policy.
- The [General Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) publishes a large number of reports with detailed background information on federal policy issues.
- The [Medicare Payment Advisory Commission \(MedPAC\)](#) summarizes current financing problems and reform options for the Medicare program.
- The [Congressional Budget Office](#) evaluates many health care reform proposals using their in-house economic models.
- The [National Center for Health Statistics](#) publishes reports regularly related to the health, health care, health insurance, and health behavior of the U.S. population.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY AND HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIRED

Students will need access to and proficiency in the use of Blackboard.

USC TECHNOLOGY RENTAL PROGRAM

If you need technology resources—such as a laptop or an internet hotspot—to successfully participate in this course, you may be eligible for the university’s equipment rental program. For further information, please see: [USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#).

USC TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT LINKS

- [Zoom information for students](#)
- [Blackboard help for students](#)
- [Software available to USC Campus](#)

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

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All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity’s website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

In this course, unless otherwise instructed, all of your work in this course should represent your own completely independent work. Any student found to have committed acts of misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, mis-representing AI-generated text as your own work, misconduct of research, breach of confidentiality, or illegal or unlawful acts) will be subject to the sanctions and procedures as decided by Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

STUDENTS AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number