

HM700: Health Systems and Policy Analysis

Course Outline (Fall 2020)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the Canadian health care system and the field of health policy analysis. This will be done through an overview of the funding and delivery of services within the Canadian health care system and a comparison of the Canadian system with that of other high-income countries. In examining the field of health policy analysis, students will be exposed to various theoretical perspectives, frameworks, and tools that can facilitate the policy analysis process. Current policy topics in health care will be used to demonstrate the practical relevance of policy analysis for health care managers.

INSTRUCTORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the introductory course for the Master of Health Management program. It will provide students with an understanding of how the Canadian health care system is organized as well as how services are financed and delivered. This will be done through an assessment of the *Canada Health Act* and various pieces of related provincial health care legislation. Discussions will include an exploration of the for-profit and not-for-profit mix of services within Canada. In addition, students will be exposed to the principles of evidence-based decision-making and various health policy analysis tools. Current issues and trends in health policy (both within Canada and internationally) will serve as cases to which students apply those tools.

LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe how health care is organized, funded, and delivered within Canada;
- demonstrate an understanding of current issues and trends in health policy;
- identify the stages of the health policy development process; and
- describe and apply health policy analysis tools in examining complex health policy issues.

MODES OF STUDY

This course is delivered primarily in an online format using Avenue to Learn (“A2L” or “Avenue”) as the principal delivery system. This course also includes some class time during the fall residency period at McMaster. Topics are explored through a review of documents, course assignments, case studies, and online discussions. Students are expected to independently read course content posted on the A2L course website, analyze information, and share their new knowledge and understanding with their classmates so that they learn from each other as well as from the instructors. Students will use course content posted on A2L as resources for learning. Instead of face-to-face small group discussions, students will interact online with other students and the course instructors.

Typically, discussions will occur asynchronously (not in real time) as this enables easier participation for students from different time zones and allows all students to organize their learning activities around work, family, and personal demands. Live chat rooms and video links may be used when needed by students.

EVALUATION

Learning in this course comes from readings, lectures, class, and online discussion, as well as participation, preparation of assignments, reflection, and analysis. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except where group work is expected. In these cases, group members will share the same grade unless all group members agree to an adjustment.

Components and Weights

Online Discussion Forums	Participation Students are expected to share ideas and experiences related to the topics presented during class and online discussions. Specific expectations for online discussion forums are noted below. See the A2L course site for details on the timing of postings. Only the best 8 of the 9 discussion questions will count (5% for each of 8 questions).	40%
Assignment #1	Presentation and facilitation of class discussion	25%
Assignment #2	Policy Analysis paper (5% outline, 30% final written paper)	35%

Percentage, Letter:

90-100	A+	77-79	B+	0-69	F
85-89	A	73-76	B		
80-84	A-	70-72	B-		

COURSE CONTENT

Module 1: Introduction to the Canadian health care system

- The Constitution and federal/provincial division of powers.
- Understanding the Canada Health Act.
- The role of regulation in health services (organizations, professionals, technology, etc.).
- Measuring quality and outcomes in health care.

Module 2: Comparative health systems

- Inequality in health and the determinants of population-based health.
- The role of the World Health Organization.
- A comparative assessment of the funding and delivery of services across provinces.
- A comparative assessment of the funding and delivery of services across select high-income countries.

Module 3: Introduction to health policy analysis and methods

- The policy cycle.
- Sampling/frameworks/operationalizing research.
- Interpreting evidence/quality and grading of evidence/competing evidence.
- Agenda setting and problem definition.
- Policy formulation (rational models, incremental models, combined models).
- Policy implementation and evaluation (cost-effectiveness evaluation, goals).

Module 4: Conducting health policy analysis

- The role of ideas (values, evidence, knowledge, beliefs).
- The role of interests (structural interests - dominant, challenging, repressed).
- Concentrated versus diffuse costs/benefits (resource and incentive effects).
- The role of institutions (path dependence, autonomy and capacity of governments).
- Policy universe (policy subsystem, policy communities, interest networks).
- Policy change (incremental, policy feedback, windows of opportunity).

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A more detailed week-by-week description (course schedule) of topics, activities, and required readings will be posted online (under the content section of the A2L course site) prior to the first week of the course. In addition, more details around each assignment and online discussions will be posted on Avenue. Students should become familiar with the A2L site, obtain any required/suggested textbooks, and complete the first week's required readings as early as possible.

Please note that additional readings may be added throughout the course so you will need to check the Avenue site at least weekly.

Participation & Online Discussion Forums

Students are expected to share ideas and experiences related to the topics presented during class time and online discussions. The course instructors and teaching assistants will limit their

participation so as not to overly influence the direction of the discussion. To further facilitate discussion, students will be divided into groups (group assignments will be posted on the A2L site). There is also a general discussion area on the A2L site where students may interact with each other (the instructors and teaching assistants will not be monitoring this area routinely so if you have an important question please phone or email directly).

Assignment #1

Students (in pre-assigned groups) will prepare a presentation and facilitate a class discussion during the residency. The purpose of this assignment is to expose students to health systems and encourage students to become actively involved in health policy analysis by exposing students to a broad range of policy topics. Details are posted in the content section of Avenue.

Assignment #2

The final course assignment consists of students working in groups of two (students can find their own partner) to conduct a mini policy analysis of an interesting policy issue (subject to final approval from the instructors; please contact/email both). Details are posted in the content section of Avenue.

USE OF AVENUE TO LEARN SYSTEM

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructors.

Students should avoid using the Avenue email system and instead use your McMaster email accounts for communicating with instructors or TAs.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructors, normally within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructors. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

REFERENCING

All assignments submitted should use APA referencing format, 6th edition. Links to summarized APA style guides can be found on the main HM700 A2L site. Referencing within online posts may be less formal (students need to provide sufficient information so that the material referenced may be easily found; if using links, please also provide a title for each document).

PENALTY FOR LATE SUBMISSION

Deadlines for assignments are set. All work must be submitted to the corresponding A2L Assignments folder on the due date and time as stated in the Course Schedule. **Do not submit work by email.** Late assignments will be penalized 10% for every 24 hours, or part thereof, they are submitted past their due date and time. If you anticipate being unable to complete an assignment on the due date, please contact the instructors **prior to the due date**. Requests for extensions will not be considered within 48 hours of the deadline except under exceptional circumstances.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the University Senate Academic Integrity Policy. This policy describes the responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for students and faculty should a case of academic dishonesty arise. Academic dishonesty is defined as to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results, or could result, in unearned academic credit or advantage. Please refer to the policy for a list of examples. The policy also provides faculty with procedures to follow in cases of academic dishonesty as well as general guidelines for penalties. All work that students submit must be their own work (original) and include proper citations when work is copied or paraphrased.

A web-based service (Turnitin) to reveal plagiarism will be used. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Assignment folders on A2L. Students who do not wish to have their work assessed through Turnitin must advise their instructor in writing in advance of the due date/time. These students must still submit their work on A2L along with all rough drafts as an appendix. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not wish to have their work assessed through Turnitin. However, all submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., online search, etc.).

For further information related to the academic integrity policy or the use of Turnitin, please refer to the Office of Academic Integrity at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

If a student has conducted a project or assignment for another course on a similar topic to one proposed for this course, they are required to obtain permission from the instructor/s in advance of proceeding with the topic. This is to ensure that projects or assignments are sufficiently different from one another. If in doubt, please contact the instructor/s.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Professors, students, and staff are permitted to make copies of copyright materials under *fair dealing*. Fair dealing with a work does not require the permission of the copyright owner or the payment of royalties as long as the purpose for the material is private study, and that the total amount copied equals **NO MORE THAN 10 per cent** of a work or an entire chapter, which is less than 20 per cent of a work. In other words, it is illegal to: i) copy an entire book, or ii) repeatedly copy smaller sections of a publication that cumulatively cover over 10 per cent of the total work's content. Please refer to the following copyright guide for further information:

<https://copyright.mcmaster.ca>

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructors and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites frequently during the term.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation to the various learning activities of the program is an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies, and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.