

HPM 247: Political Analysis and Strategy for U.S. Health Policy

SPRING 1, 2023 MW 9:45-11:15

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE OVERVIEW

HPM 247 offers insights into the political dimension of U.S. policymaking and political strategies to influence health policy outcomes. The course develops analytic and strategic skills for those who expect to engage in the health policy process to effect change. Major topics include analyzing how federal and state health policies are shaped by political institutions, interest groups, public opinion, lobbying, and regulatory processes. Key dynamics will be illustrated through recent, real-world case studies, including federal reforms of drug pricing and surprise billing practices and state-level action on Medicaid expansion and abortion access.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Class	Day	Date	Topic
1	Mon	01/23/23	Introduction to the Politics of U.S. Health Policy
2	Wed	01/25/23	Health Politics in the U.S. Congress
3	Mon	01/30/23	How Interest Group Effectively Lobby on Health Policy
4	Wed	02/01/23	How to Write Political Strategy Memos (Mini-Case: ACA)
5	Mon	02/06/23	Public Opinion and Political Participation
6	Wed	2/8/23	Grassroots Organizing to Influence Policy (<i>Guest lecturer: TBA</i>)
Case 1 due [date/time]			
7	Mon	2/13/23	In-class Case Exercise: Case TBD, federal level <i>No Laptops</i>
8	Wed	2/15/23	Federalism and Variation in State Political Environments
	Mon	2/20/23	<i>President's Day, no class</i>
Peer feedback on Case 1 due [date/time]			
9	Wed	2/22/23	Health Policy and the Administrative State
10	Mon	2/27/23	Lessons from the Trenches (<i>Guest lecturer: TBA</i>)
11	Wed	3/1/23	Influencing the Regulatory Process (Mini-Case: No Surprises Act)
Case 2 due [date/time]			
12	Mon	3/6/23	In-class Case Exercise: Case TBD, state level <i>No Laptops</i>
13	Wed	3/8/23	Policy Feedback Processes & Course Wrap-Up
Take-home final due [date/time]			

Session 1: Introduction to the Politics of U.S Health Policy

Mon. 01/23/23

Required:

- Fukuyama F. [What's Wrong with Public Policy Education](#). *The American Interest*, August 1, 2018.
- Astor M. [How the Politically Unthinkable Can Become Mainstream](#). *The New York Times*. Published February 26, 2019.
- Taylor J. [What Democrats Can Learn from the Republicans about Political Power](#). Niskanen Center. Published August 10, 2020.
- Kingdon J. How do Issues Get on Public Policy Agendas? In: *Sociology and the Public Agenda*. SAGE Publications, Inc.; 1993:40-50. (PDF on course site)
- Blendon RJ, Benson JM, Schneider EC. ["The Future of Health Policy in a Partisan United States: Insights from Public Opinion Polls."](#) *JAMA*. 2021;325(13):1253-1254.
- Glied S. [Policy Analysis in Government and Academia: Two Cultures](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2018;43(3):537-542.
- Michener J, LeBrón AMW. [Racism, Health, and Politics: Advancing Interdisciplinary Knowledge](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2022;47(2):111-130.

Optional deeper dives:

- Watch:* [What's Next for Health Policy After the Election?](#) KFF. Published November 15, 2022.
- [The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America's Public Health System: Trends, Risks, and Recommendations, 2020](#). Trust for America's Health; 2020:36.
- Carpenter D. [Is Health Politics Different?](#) *Annu Rev Polit Sci*. 2012;15(1):287-311.
- Downs A. [Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle](#). *The Public Interest*. 1972, 28:38-50.
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Discussion:

- If someone asked you for an analysis of the *politics* of an issue, how would this be different from your assessment of the *policy* itself?
- If you were the health commissioner of a state advising a new governor on health policy priorities, what kinds of political information might you want to inform your advice?
- What are Kingdon's "three streams," and why is their convergence important?
- What are some key political differences between *public health* and *health care* issues?

Session 2: Health Politics in the U.S. Congress

Wed. 01/25/23

Required:

Watch: [The Legislative Process \(Overview\)](#). Congress.gov. – *Optional refresher*

Lau T. [The Filibuster, Explained](#). Brennan Center for Justice. Published April 26, 2021 – *Optional refresher*

[Introduction to the Federal Budget Process](#). Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Published October 24, 2022.

Curry JM, Lee FE. [The Limits of Party: Congress and Lawmaking in a Polarized Era](#). University of Chicago Press; 2020. Chapters 1 & 7. (PDFs available on course site.)

[A Short Primer on the Congressional Budget Office](#). Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Published February 14, 2018.

Rocco P. [Congress is waiting on the CBO for its Build Back Better report – but how did fiscal scorekeepers come to be so powerful in politics?](#) *The Conversation*. November 16, 2021.

Sotomayor M, Alemany J, Paybarah A, Goodwin L, Scherer M. [Congressional Republicans panic as they watch their lead dwindle](#). *Washington Post*. Published November 12, 2022.

Optional deeper dives:

Rocco P. Keeping Score: [The Congressional Budget Office and the Politics of Institutional Durability](#). *Polity*. 2021;53(4):691-717.

Patashnik EM, Peck J. Chapter 3, [Can Congress Do Policy Analysis? The Politics of Problem Solving on Capitol Hill](#). In: *Does Policy Analysis Matter? Exploring Its Effectiveness in Theory and Practice*. University of California Press; 2017. (PDF available on course site and here.)

Volden, Craig, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2011. [Breaking Gridlock: The Determinants of Health Policy Change in Congress](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 36(2): 227–64.

Discussion:

- How are the House of Representatives and Senate structurally different? Why does this matter?
- How are legislative decisions in the U.S. Congress made?
 - Where does *power* reside within Congress? What about *expertise*?
 - How do the federal budgeting process and the CBO affect the legislative process?
- How would your congressional advocacy strategies differ if you were aiming to expand Medicare benefits vs. increase national pandemic preparedness?
- What consequences might arise from poorly drafted legislation?

Session 3: How Interest Groups Effectively Lobby on Health Policy

Mon. 01/30/23

Required:

Watch: [How Lobbying Became A \\$3.5 Billion Industry](#). CNBC, October 3, 2020. (links out to YouTube)

Skim: Hall RL, Deardorff AV. [Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy](#). *Am Polit Sci Rev*. 2006;100(1):69-84.

- *Alternatively*, watch Rick Hall deliver the 2020 Barbara Sinclair Lecture, “[Insidious Influence: Lobbyists and Their Allies on Capitol Hill](#).” (links out to YouTube)

Marchetti K. [Consider the Context: How State Policy Environments Shape Interest Group Advocacy](#). *State and Local Government Review*. 2015;47(3):155-169.

Schpero WL, Wiener T, Carter S, Chatterjee P. [Lobbying Expenditures in the US Health Care Sector, 2000-2020](#). *JAMA Health Forum*. 2022;3(10):e223801.

Counts NZ, Taylor LA, Willison CE, Galea S. [Healthcare lobbying on upstream social determinants of health in the US](#). *Preventive Medicine*. 2021;153:106751.

Smith B. [The Summer of Astroturf](#). *POLITICO*. Published August 21, 2009.

Rowland C, Stein J. [Anonymous ‘ghost ship’ is among groups flooding drug pricing debate](#). *Washington Post*. Published January 23, 2019.

Vogel KP, Edmondson C, Drucker J. [Coronavirus Stimulus Package Spurs a Lobbying Gold Rush](#). *The New York Times*. Published March 20, 2020.

Optional deeper dives:

Olson A, Barrick J, Tayler WB, Rajgopal S, Bai G. [Lobbying Expenditures of the Health Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). *J Gen Intern Med*. 2020;35(10):3133-3136.

McCrain J. [Revolving Door Lobbyists and the Value of Congressional Staff Connections](#). *The Journal of Politics*. 2018;80(4):1369-1383.

McKay AM. [Buying Amendments? Lobbyists’ Campaign Contributions and Microlegislation in the Creation of the Affordable Care Act](#). *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 2020;45(2):327-360.

Discussion:

- How does lobbying work in practice? What makes for effective lobbying?
 - How might these principles be applied by organizations that are not conventionally perceived as “special interests”?
- What factors affect how effective and politically important different interest groups are?
- Who tends to be represented well by interest groups? Who tends *not* to be represented and why?

Session 4: Writing Political Strategy Memos (Mini-Case: ACA)

Wed. 02/01/23

This class will cover the nuts and bolts of writing political strategy memos using passage of the Affordable Care Act as a vignette; a sample strategy memo for Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) will be presented. As you do the assigned readings, consider the strategies that different key stakeholders used—both successfully and less successfully—during the health reform debate.

Required:

Vaida B. “Health Care Reform Faces Its ‘Super Bowl Moment.’” *National Journal*. 2009, 41(24): 20-27.
(PDF available on course site)

Serafini MW and B Vaida. “Eight Key Hurdles for Health Care Overhaul.” *National Journal*. 2009, 41(47-48): 30-37. (PDF available on course site)

Frates C. [AHIP Gave More Than \\$100 Million to Chamber’s Efforts to Derail Health Care Reform.](#) *National Journal*. June 13, 2012.

Cohn J. Chapters 15–17. In: *The Ten Year War: Obamacare and the Unfinished Crusade for Universal Coverage*. First edition. St. Martin’s Press; 2021. (PDFs on course site)

Hacker JS. [The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened: Or Why Political Scientists Who Write about Public Policy Shouldn’t Assume They Know How to Shape It.](#) *Perspectives on Politics*. 2010;8(3):861-876.

Optional deeper dives:

[National Health Insurance - a Brief History of reform efforts in the U.S.](#) KFF. 2009.

Deane C et al. Public Opinion on Health Care Reform through the Prism of Obama's 2009-2010 Reform Effort. In: RJ Blendon et al., eds. *American Public Opinion and Health Care*. Washington: CQ Press (2010). (PDF available on course site.)

Oberlander J. [Picking the Right Poison: Options for Funding Health Care Reform.](#) *NEJM*. 2009, 360(20): 2045-2048.

Discussion / In-class exercise:

- What political conditions were present that enabled the Affordable Care Act to be passed?
- Who had power during negotiations over the specific contours of the Affordable Care Act? What were their sources of leverage?
 - What policy compromises were made because of these dynamics?
- How did the politics surrounding the passage of the Affordable Care Act impact its implementation and subsequent health reform efforts?

Session 5: Public Opinion and Political Participation

Mon. 02/06/23

Required:

[The Trouble with Polling](#). *The Week*. Published on November 7, 2021.

Heltzel G, Laurin K. [Polarization in America: two possible futures](#). *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 2020; 34:179-184.

Blendon RJ, Benson JM. [Trust in Medicine, the Health System & Public Health](#). *Daedalus*. 2022;151(4):67-82.

Listen: Mettler S, Green A. [“In Government We Distrust.”](#) No Jargon. September 13, 2018. (Links out to podcast website.)

Lakoff G. Framing 101: How to Take Back Public Discourse. In: *Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate – The Essential Guide for Progressives*. Chelsea Green Pub. Co; 2004. (PDF on course site)

Cohen RM. [How abortion rights advocates won every ballot measure this year](#). *Vox*. Published November 11, 2022.

Optional deeper dives:

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. [The Public's Perspective on the United States Public Health System](#). Published online, May 2021.

SteelFisher GK, Blendon RJ, Caprello H. [An Uncertain Public — Encouraging Acceptance of Covid-19 Vaccines](#). *N Engl J Med*. 2021; 384:1483-1487.

Iyengar S, Lelkes Y, Levendusky M, Malhotra N, Westwood SJ. [The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States](#). *Annu Rev Polit Sci*. 2019;22(1):129-146.

Discussion:

- How does public opinion influence the political process, and why has public opinion been important in recent years?
 - In which situations does public opinion play a more important role?
 - What challenges complicate our ability to clearly understand public opinion?
- What types of public trust are significant for health policy in the U.S?
 - How have these evolved in recent years? How might this affect the political process?
- How has polarization changed the political landscape in the United States in recent decades?
- If you are the political advisor to the leader of the American Public Health Association:
 - How would you frame the “social determinants of health” to the national media?
 - What if you were advising her for a meeting with Gov. Abbot of Texas?

Session 6: Grassroots Organizing to Influence Policy

Guest lecturer: TBA

Wed. 02/08/23

Required:

Skocpol T. [The Tea Party and the Resistance: No, They're Not the Same](#). *Democracy Journal*. Published March 1, 2021.

Lawrence W. [Understanding Sunrise, Part 1: Strategy](#). *Convergence*. Published online March 14, 2022.

Shapiro I, Namjoshi S, Morris OS. [How Medical Systems Can Help People Vote](#). *Scientific American*. Published November 6, 2022.

Watch: [How medical providers are checking on patients' civic health](#). *PBS NewsHour*. Published online October 30, 2022.

Browse: [Vote-ER's Resource Center](#)

Optional deeper dives:

Han H, McKenna E, Oyakawa M. Chapter 4, The Strategic Logic of Prisms. In: [Prisms of the People: Power and Organizing in Twenty-First-Century America](#). Chicago studies in American politics. The University of Chicago Press; 2021. (PDF available on course site)

Weldon L. Introduction. In: [When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups](#). University of Michigan Press; 2011. (PDF available on course site)

Zoorob M, Skocpol T. [The Overlooked Organizational Basis of Trump's 2016 Victory](#). In: *Upending American Politics*. Oxford University Press; 2020:79-100.

[The Commons Social Change Library](#). (This is a free library of resources on campaign strategy, community organizing, digital campaigning, communications and media, fundraising and more.)

Discussion:

- Pending finalization of guest lecturer

Memo for Case 1 due [DATE] @ [TIME]

Session 7: Case 1: *TBA*

Mon. 02/13/23

Placeholder page for Case 1 (federal-level), still in development.

Session 8: Federalism and Variation in State Political Environments

Wed. 02/15/23

Required:

Weissert CS, Uttermark MJ. [Glass Half Full: Decentralization in Health Policy](#). *State and Local Government Review*. 2017;49(3):199-214.

Grumbach J. Chapter 3: From Backwaters to Battlegrounds. In: [Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics](#). Princeton University Press; 2022. (PDF on course site)

- Read pp. 34-44 (up to “Measuring Policy Outcomes”) and 67-69 (“State Resurgence”)

Huberfeld N, Gordon SH, Jones DK. [Federalism Complicates the Response to the COVID-19 Health and Economic Crisis: What Can Be Done?](#) *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2020;45(6):951-965.

Jones DK. [Political Participation in the Least Healthy Place in America: Examining the Political Determinants of Health in the Mississippi Delta](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2019;44(3):505-531.

Messerly M, Ollstein AM, Montellaro Z. [Republicans look to restrict ballot measures following a string of progressive wins](#). *POLITICO*. Published September 10, 2022.

Optional deeper dives:

Jewell CJ, Bero LA. [“Developing Good Taste in Evidence”: Facilitators of and Hindrances to Evidence-Informed Health Policymaking in State Government](#). *Milbank Quarterly*. 2008;86(2):177-208.

Grumbach JM, Michener J. [American Federalism, Political Inequality, and Democratic Erosion](#). *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 2022;699(1):143-155.

Rocco P, Keller AC, Kelly AS. [State Politics And The Uneven Fate Of Medicaid Expansion](#). *Health Affairs*. 2020;39(3):494-501.

Discussion

- Broadly speaking, what are the advantages and drawbacks of a federalist system?
 - What challenges do state governments encounter that the federal government does not?
- What key state-level factors influence whether a state can pursue a given policy issue that might be of interest to the legislature or the public?
- How do state legislatures differ, both across the nation and from Congress?
 - What implications does this have for whether, when, and how policy gets passed?

Peer feedback for Case 1 due [DATE] @ [TIME]

No class on Mon., Feb. 20 (President’s Day)

Session 9: Health Policy and the Administrative State

Wed. 02/22/23

Required:

[A Guide to the Rulemaking Process](#). Office of the Federal Register; 2011.

Excerpt (pp. 5-19): [Regulatory Guidance Processes: Selected Departments Could Strengthen Internal Control and Dissemination Practices](#). Government Accountability Office; 2015.

Yackee SW. [The Politics of Rulemaking in the United States](#). *Annu Rev Polit Sci*. 2019;22(1):37-55.

- Feel free to skip the “Future Research Directions” section

Jarlenski M, Rocco P, Tipimemi R, Kennedy AJ, Gunturi N, Donohue J. [Shaping Health Policy for Low-Income Populations: An Assessment of Public Comments in a New Medicaid Waiver Process](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2017;42(6):1039-1064.

Goodnough A. [Judge Blocks Medicaid Work Requirements in Arkansas and Kentucky](#). *The New York Times*. Published March 27, 2019. Accessed November 15, 2022.

Schneider A. [A Parting Gift for the Incoming Administration: “Good Guidance Practices.”](#) Center For Children and Families. Published January 6, 2021.

Saylor R. [If Trump wins again, he wants to be able to fire civil servants](#). *Washington Post*. Published August 26, 2022.

Optional deeper dives:

Strauss PL. [How the Administrative State Got to This Challenging Place](#). *Daedalus*. 2021;150(3):17-32.

Kerwin CM, Furlong SR. [Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy](#). Fifth edition. CQ Press, an imprint of Sage Publications, Inc; 2019.

Podulka J, Blum J. [Issue Brief: Regulatory Changes to Medicare in Response to COVID-19](#). Commonwealth Fund, The SCAN Foundation; 2020.

Mortensen JD, Bagley N. [There’s No Historical Justification for One of the Most Dangerous Ideas in American Law](#). *The Atlantic*. Published May 26, 2020.

Discussion:

- How does the regulatory process fit into the policy process? When does it happen?
 - What are the key differences between regulations and subregulatory guidance?
 - What opportunities exist to influence the regulatory process?
- What determines how much discretion agencies have in drafting, revising, or rescinding rules?
- How has the importance of rulemaking evolved over time, and why?

Session 10: Lessons from the Trenches (with special guest, *TBA*)

Mon. 02/27/23

Guest lecturer and readings TBA

Session 11: Influencing the Regulatory Process (Mini-Case: No Surprises Act) Wed. 03/01/23

Required:

Perez DR. [The Biden Administration’s First Unified Agenda](#). Regulatory Studies Center, George Washington University; 2021.

[Requirements Related to Surprise Billing; Part II Interim Final Rule with Comment Period](#). Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Published September 30, 2021.

Kliff S. [New Rule on Surprise Billing Aims to Take Patients Out of the ‘Food Fight.’](#) *The New York Times*. Published September 30, 2021.

Optional deeper dives:

Hoadley J, Lucia K. [The No Surprises Act: A Bipartisan Achievement to Protect Consumers from Unexpected Medical Bills](#). *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 2022;47(1):93-109.

Carpenter D. [Challenges in Measuring Regulatory Capture](#). *The Regulatory Review*. Published June 22, 2016.

Yackee SW. [Sweet-Talking the Fourth Branch: The Influence of Interest Group Comments on Federal Agency Rulemaking](#). *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 2006;16(1):103-124.

Dwidar MA. [Coalitional Lobbying and Intersectional Representation in American Rulemaking](#). *Am Polit Sci Rev*. 2022;116(1):301-321.

Discussion / In-class exercise:

Please read the comment letters (available on the course website) for the stakeholders assigned below. Be prepared to discuss: (1) how policy priorities and objections varied across stakeholders and (2) how their letters attempted to persuade CMS to either revise sections of the rule or finalize them as drafted.

Last names:	Providers	Insurers	Patient Advocates	Researchers
A–F	National Assn. of Community Health Centers	AHIP	Families USA Action-led coalition	Adler (Brookings), Fiedler (Brookings), & Ippolito (AEI)
G–M	American College of Emergency Physicians	Blue Cross Blue Shield Association	Families USA Action-led coalition	Richman (Duke) & Schulman (Stanford)
N–R	National Nurses United	AHIP	Chronic disease patient organization coalition	Richman (Duke) & Schulman (Stanford)
S–Z	American Hospital Association	Blue Cross Blue Shield Association	Chronic disease patient organization coalition	Adler (Brookings), Fiedler (Brookings), & Ippolito (AEI)

Memo for Case 2 due [DATE] @ [TIME]

Session 12: Case 2: *TBA*

Mon. 03/06/23

Placeholder page for Case 2 (state-level), still in development.

Session 13: Policy Feedback Processes & Course Wrap-Up

Wed. 03/08/23

Readings and discussion topics are likely to be updated. Please refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date session details.

Required:

Hertel-Fernandez A. [How Policymakers Can Craft Measures That Endure and Build Political Power](#). Roosevelt Institute; 2020.

Optional deeper dives:

Michener J. [Medicaid and the Policy Feedback Foundations for Universal Healthcare](#). *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 2019;685(1):116-134.

Singer PM, Willison CE, Moore N, Greer SL. [Anatomy of a Failure: COVID-19 in the United States](#). In: Greer SL, King EJ, Massard da Fonseca E, Peralta-Santos A, eds. *Coronavirus Politics: The Comparative Politics and Policy of COVID-19*.

Discussion:

- As an interested stakeholder, what factors inform *when, where, and how* you attempt to influence the political process?
- What overarching lessons in political strategy can be learned from the cases and mini-cases?
 - How do the roles of interest groups, public opinion, agendas, and elections differ among the cases?
 - How does the nature of the issues themselves differ among cases?
- What is meant by “new policy creates new politics”?
 - What are examples of policies that have had self-reinforcing feedbacks? Self-undermining feedbacks?
 - How might one try to *anticipate* this dynamic in policy design?
- How did the U.S. political system influence (and how does it continue to influence) the response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - What policy feedbacks might we anticipate as a result of this response?

Take-home final due [DATE] @ [TIME]