DOANE UNIVERSITY

NRS 315/HSI 315
Health Care Policy in the United States

Autumn Term 2016 (August 15-October 15)
Laura Ebke, PhD
Nebraska State Senator, District 32
Doane University
Autumn Term 2016 (August 15-October 15)

Syllabus: NRS 315/HIS 315: Health Care Policy in the United States (3 Credits)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION/CONTACT:
Laura Ebke, PhD—Adjunct Instructor
Nebraska State Senator (District 32)
Cell phone: 402-540-6510
Email: laura@lauraebke.com OR lauraebke@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/laura.ebke (feel free to send me a Friend Request—if everyone in the class has a Facebook account and checks it fairly regularly, we may create a Closed Group for discussions and updates; if everyone doesn’t have a Facebook account, we’ll figure something else out!)

Class Dates and Hours

- There will be NO class on the first week (August 17), as the instructor will be returning from a conference.
- Scheduled classes will be held on the following Wednesdays: August 24, 31; September 7, 14, 21*, 28; October 5, 12. (*subject to change or modification/online discussions/etc. due to a possible out of state conference for instructor)
- Evenings, 6:00-10:30
- Office Hours—immediately before and after class. Please feel free to email, text call, message me with questions, etc.

Course Description

This course attempts to examine the development of health policy in the United States, and looks at factors that affect future health policy initiatives. The course will examine critical health care policy issues, but also examine philosophical questions of how health policy should be developed. We’ll look at things like rising costs of health care, quality of services, financing of the system, and adoption of new technologies from critical analysis perspectives. Students will learn some of the basic elements underlying financing, organization and delivery of health care services including Medicare, Medicaid, access to health care and the relationship between the public and private sectors on health policy. We’ll also explore the history of health care as a public policy issue. Upon completion of the course, students will have a better understanding
of how policy affects the development of health care legislation, and the process of political compromise and real world limitations upon the implementation of legislation.

Course Objectives

This course is intended to help you gain an understanding of many of the factors that influence federal and state policy decisions about health care, how they interact with each other, what contributes to their effectiveness, and what causes them to be ineffective. We’ll pay special attention to the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its impact on health care cost growth, public programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, health insurance, quality and the states with particular emphasis on Nebraska, and we’ll explore the political philosophies underlying the different perspectives on the role of government in health care.

Specific learning objectives include:

- Develop a historical understanding of how health care has been delivered in the United States over time, identifying critical moments of change, and the role that public policy/government has played in that evolution.
- Be able to analyze and distinguish between effective and ineffective health care policies.
- Understand the influence of public policy on the delivery and financing of health care.
- Understand the social, political and economic forces that shape health policies.
- Enhance ability to analyze issues, including an examination of the rules and regulations that apply, formulate appropriate and practical policy changes that will improve the situation, and articulate your recommendations coherently verbally and in writing.

Format

Classes will be primarily discussion-based. The instructor will introduce subjects, and initiate discussion through questions, and endeavor to keep the conversation mostly on topic. There may be some opportunities for group discussions via social media of some sort throughout the week. Students are expected to actively participate in the discussion, including weekly submission of at least two discussion questions based on the reading and current events. Discussion questions should be emailed to the instructor at least 24 hours prior to each class, beginning with the August 31 class.

Protocol and Expectations

No experience in health care public policy is required. This class is meant to be interesting and engaging; it is meant to give you things to think about, and tools for analyzing health care policy in the future.

We will start on time, and finish on time. Because of the weekly seminar nature of this class, and the limited class meetings, attendance is required. IF you are unable to attend due to
illness or circumstances beyond your control, please let the instructor know—either via email or text message—prior to the class meeting.

We live in the 21st century. Cell phones and computers are a part of life. I request this: put your cell phones on silent or vibrate during class. If a call comes in which you must take, just get up and step outside the classroom. As tempting as it might be, I would ask that you avoid using phones or computers for social media during our discussions. Check and reply to your text messages, Facebook posts, Twitter accounts, etc. before class, during our breaks (we’ll try to break briefly at least once every 1-1½ hours), or after class.

Students will gain the most from the class through active preparation and participation in discussions and interaction. Every student is expected to participate and should be prepared to discuss required readings for each class. Each week will include a list of required readings, along with supplemental readings. Supplemental readings are designed to add to the depth of your knowledge on particular topics.

Your class participation score will be based on your demonstration of your own learning and your contribution to the learning of others. If the overall quality of class discussion is high, everyone will benefit and the participation score for you and the other students will reflect that. Examples of active participation include, but are not limited to:

- Comments that reflect an understanding of the reading material.
- Effective connection of ideas.
- Being able to analyze topics from multiple viewpoints—including those you might not agree with.
- Asking questions when you do not understand or do not agree with something that you read or heard in preparation for and during class.
- Encouraging others to participate.
- Actively listening to others and trying to build on their ideas.
- Sharing relevant experiences that pertain to the subject matter.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in this course are expected to complete coursework responsibilities using the highest of ethical standards. For this class, that means (among other things):

- Properly citing the work of others in any written work
- Verbal acknowledgement of the work of others in oral discussions, i.e., not trying to pass off someone else’s ideas as your own.

There are no exams in this class, so there should be no reason to “cheat”—do your own work, and cite others’ work appropriately in your writing assignments, and there should be no
problems. If it should come to my attention that a student has deliberately engaged in academic dishonesty, disciplinary action up to, and including, a failing grade is possible.

Grading

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings, attend and participate in class discussions, and write two 3-5 page “reaction” paper, and one 8-10 page “final paper”. More information about each of those papers will be handed out and explained at the first class meeting.

Grades for the course will be determined by the following means:

1. Attendance: 10%
2. Reading analysis and class participation (including at least 2 questions submitted prior to each class beginning August 31): 20%
3. Reaction Paper* #1: 20%
4. Reaction Paper* #2: 20%
5. Final Paper*: 30%
6. Final letter grades will be calculated by averaging the weighted scores for the five (5) criteria above:
   A = 93 - 100%
   B = 85 - <93%
   C = 77 - <85%
   D = 70 - <77%
   F = <70%

*Reaction papers may reflect on reading assignments, or be afterthought/reflections on topics that have been discussed in class. Students should plan on turning Reaction Paper #1 in between August 31 and September 14 (dealing with topics covered prior to September 14); Reaction Paper #2 should be turned in between September 14 and October 12. The Final Paper may be turned in on the last day of class (October 12), or may be emailed to the instructor by noon on Saturday, October 15. If you choose to email the paper, it is your responsibility to see to it that it has been received (the instructor will generally send an acknowledgement).

Required Reading Materials

- There is no text book for this class
- Links to readings available online are listed in the syllabus.
- Readings not available online, and additional materials which will might be assigned, will be handed out the class before.
CLASS SCHEDULE and READINGS (First 2 Weeks)

Wednesday, 8/24/16

1) Introduction, Overview of Class and expectation, a brief history of Healthcare Policy.
   2) Read (in advance):
         https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/7871.pdf
         http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447696/
      d. Toland, Bill. “How did America end up with this health care system?” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. April 27, 2014
      f. U.S. Constitution, Article I, Sections 8 & 9. Can be found online here:
         http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/articles/article-i

3) Discuss—Philosophy of government involvement in healthcare in the U.S., and evolution of health care policy over time.

Wednesday, 8/31/16 (Partial List)

1) The Cost of Healthcare
   2) Read (in advance):
      a. http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf424899

Read “b”, “c”, and “d” in order.

Reading Assignments for 8/31, 9/7, 9/14, 9/21, 9/28, 10/5 and 10/12 will be provided during the first class meeting on August 24.