PH 449 Public Health Policy – 1.0 credit
Spring Quarter 2011
Day and time  Tuesdays, 6pm-9pm
Location: McGaw, 2-22
Instructor:  Joy Getzenberg, MA, Assistant Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health
E-mail:  joygetzenberg@sbcglobal.net
Phone:  773-406-9542
Office hours:  By appointment

I. Course Description

This course addresses how public policy development and analysis have an impact on the public’s health. The course is designed to provide professionals with the skills for collecting, analyzing and communicating information on public health policy issues using approaches that would be useful in the policymaking arena. Students will learn what policy is; who the policymakers are in public health; who the actors are that are affected by public health policy; and the major influences in determining what policy gets implemented, including the science underlying policy proposals.

Students will gain experience in researching and analyzing public health policy at the local, state and federal levels. Students will also learn to distinguish between the issues that are addressed specifically by public health policy and those that fall under the general category of “health policy”.

Students will become familiar with the major policy issues facing public health today and how they contrast to the public health issues that were current in previous historical time periods. They will also learn how varying policy decisions can lead to different actions by government and public health stakeholders and other sectors of the economy.

Students will examine the desirability of having a national public health policy, in comparison to other countries, and determine whether we have one here in the U.S.
II. Learning Objectives

By the end of class, student should be able to:

1. Identify major players in the crafting and implementing of public health policy and explain how the policy process works
2. Communicate difficult ideas clearly and in a way appropriate for the policymaking arena:
   - through written products
   - through oral presentation
3. Identify, understand and explain the current, pressing issues in public health policy using multiple perspectives
4. Critically read reports of public health issues in the public forum and evaluate how well they are being presented
5. Apply tools of analysis to current and historical public health issues
6. Evaluate the role of politics and political decision-making in public health policymaking
7. Lead a discussion on a topical public health policy issue and bring out key points through student interaction and providing provocative questions

Blackboard™
The syllabus and selected readings will be posted on the course’s Blackboard site, available at https://courses.northwestern.edu/webapps/login if you are registered for the course.

Teaching Methods

III. Texts and reading

There is no required textbook; all readings will be posted on the Blackboard.

IV. Class assignments

Class assignments will include required readings, four written assignments, one oral presentation, and one leading a discussion.
Readings: Articles and book excerpts will be posted on the Blackboard.
Written: Students will be required to prepare 4 policy briefs (2-3 pp.) throughout the quarter. More specific guidance on the brief’s form, potential topics, etc., will be made available during the class.
Oral: Students will be required to present one policy brief to the class.
Discussion-leading: Once during the semester, each student will be required to identify and read a relevant article in a public circulation newspaper, such as the
NYTImes or the Chicago Tribune, and lead a discussion on it in class. This assignment will be scheduled after the class meets.

V. Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on class participation, quality of written assignments, quality of oral presentation, and quality of discussion led around a current public health policy issue being reported on in the general news media.

Grades will be determined by: Students will be graded using A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, and F for failing work
Class participation 30%
Policy briefs 40%, 10% for each of the four policy briefs.
Oral presentation 20%
Leading discussion 10%

Class participation will be assessed based on the level and quality of a student’s comments using the following criteria:
- Student poses thoughtful questions relative to the topic being discussed
- Student integrates readings and previous discussions and lectures into comments
- Student respects points of view different than those of the student speaking
- Student demonstrates knowledge of current public health policy issues as found in the popular media as is relevant to discussion

Written assignments: Students will be provided with a framework to use in preparation of the policy briefs. Finished product will be evaluated based on:
- Conformance with the framework.
- Clarity of the thesis
- How well the argument is organized
- Writing style
- Appropriate use of evidence/research

Oral presentations will be evaluated based on:
- Level of preparation
- knowledge of content
- Organization of the presentation
- Whether the issue is presented fairly

Discussion-leading will be evaluated according to:
- ability to keep conversation going and lively
- provocative questions prepared

Course evaluation
The MPH Program administers web-based course evaluations to students for each course near the end of the quarter. Your completion of both the unit (course) and faculty evaluation components is required; failure to complete either of the evaluations will result in an incomplete grade until the evaluations are submitted. You will be sent the web link and instructions via email later in the
quarter. You will have about two weeks to complete the evaluations before grades are submitted.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity at Northwestern University is based on a respect for individual achievement that lies at the heart of academic culture. Every faculty member and student, both graduate and undergraduate, belongs to a community of scholars where academic integrity is a fundamental commitment. The Program in Public Health abides by the standards of academic conduct, procedures, and sanctions as set forth by The Graduate School at Northwestern University. Students are responsible for knowledge of the information provided by The Graduate School on their Web page at [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/ethics/](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/ethics/).

Additionally, faculty reserve the right to use the “Safe Assignment: Plagiarism Detection Tool” that is part of the Course Management System. Info about this tool is found at [http://course-management.northwestern.edu/tipsheets.html](http://course-management.northwestern.edu/tipsheets.html).

**Class Schedule**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Other Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>3/29</td>
<td>1. Introduction&lt;br&gt;2. Review of syllabus&lt;br&gt;3. Overview of policy and how science, social values and politics influence PH policy</td>
<td>Institute of Medicine, Future of Public Health, Summary and Recommendations, Chapters 1 and 2&lt;br&gt;“Political Will: A Bridge Between Public Health Knowledge and Action” AJPH 11/2007</td>
<td>Bring to class an article from a general circulation newspaper, e.g., <em>Chicago Tribune, NY Times</em> that addresses a public health issue</td>
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<td>4/12</td>
<td>Respective roles of federal, state and local government in establishing and implementing public health policy</td>
<td>IOM, Future of Public Health, Chapter 4 &lt;br&gt;Lobbying Illinois: How You can Make a Difference in Public Policy. Mooney, Christopher and Van Dyke-Brown, Institute for Legislative Studies, UIS, 2003 &lt;br&gt;“From a Bill to a Law”, THOMAS.gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Policy regarding communicable disease prevention and control</td>
<td>Chicago Department of Public Health, “AIDS Strategic Plan”, 1990; excerpts</td>
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<td>Sturm, “The Economics of Physical Activity”, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2004;27(3S):126-135</td>
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<td>5/24</td>
<td>Policies related to “assurance” function of public health: Medicaid, Medicare and Health Reform</td>
<td>“Assessing Health Reform’s Impact On Four Key Groups Of Americans”, Joseph P. Newhouse, Health Affairs, July 2010</td>
<td>Policy brief due on chronic disease policy issue prepared for a US Senator Policy brief oral presentations Group 1</td>
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<td>Reports and briefs from Kaiser Family Foundation website kff.org, CDPH</td>
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<td>FDA, CDPH and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids briefs on e-cigarettes (web-based)</td>
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