

Course Title: HLTH 401: Health Policy and Health Governance (Units 1.5)

Instructor: Michael Montess

E-mail: mmontess@uvic.ca

Office hours: Because this course is offered online, please send an email to the instructor to schedule a meeting (Zoom call). Emails will be responded to within two (2) business days.

Course Description

This course covers what policy is, the role of government, how government is structured, the division of powers, gives an overview of health policy in Canada, provides frameworks for understanding how policy is developed, what instruments/tools governments have at their disposal to bring about policy change, delves into key topical issues (welfare legislation, aging, disability, Indigenous People's Health, COVID-19), and provides a foundation to examine whether or not evidence-based policy is achievable and likely.

Units

1.5

Course Overview

This course (1) covers what policy is, the role of government, how government is structured, and the division of powers, (2) gives an overview of health policy in Canada, (3) provides frameworks for understanding how policy is developed and what instruments/tools governments have at their disposal to bring about policy change, (4) delves into key topical issues (welfare legislation, aging, disability, Indigenous People's Health, and COVID-19), and (5) provides a foundation to examine whether or not evidence-based policy is achievable and likely. Students will learn through lectures, videos, assigned readings, written assignments, and weekly online discussions with their fellow students.

Course Format

This online course will involve:

- weekly lectures
- assigned readings and videos
- class discussions
- assignments

All required readings, videos, and links are available through the course's Brightspace website or the University of Victoria Libraries. There is no required textbook for the course. Additional readings (optional) are provided to highlight, present or expand on key concepts, practical tools, and resources.

* The weekly course outline is subject to change. Modifications will be announced online.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- have a clearer sense of the role, form, and functions of government;
- understand what policy is and the complexity that goes into policy development;
- have a deeper appreciation of the policies that affect older adults, people with disabilities, and Canada's Indigenous People;
- have sharpened their reflective and analytic skills through online discussion with peers, required readings, and written assignments;
- have developed advanced knowledge in the Canadian Public Health Competency domains of:
 - assessment and analysis
 - policy and program planning
 - implementation and evaluation
 - partnerships, collaboration, and advocacy
 - communication

Assignment Summary

This course has four (4) assignments.

Required wording in relation to minimal pass requirements: Students must complete assignments one, two, and three to pass this course. A minimum grade of 50% in the fourth assignment must be received in order to pass the class. A letter grade of “N” will be entered for the course if any required component has not been received by the completion of the course and for which a student has not received an extension from the instructor. An “N” grade is calculated as a “0” in the Grade Point Average and is a failing grade.

Assignment 1: Five Core Elements of Public Policy Paper

Due date: October 3, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 25% of the final grade

Assignment 2: Briefing Note

Due date: October 31, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 25% of the final grade

Assignment 3: Critical Essay

Due date: November 28, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 30% of the final grade

Assignment 4: Participation and Critical Reflection

Week 1: Video due September 12, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 2: Post due September 19, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 3: Post due September 26, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 4: Post due October 3, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 5: Post due October 10, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 6: Post due October 17, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 7: Post due October 24, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 8: Post due October 31, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 9: Post due November 7, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 11: Post due November 21, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 12: Post due November 28, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Week 13: Post due December 3, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 20% of the final grade

Required information about Online Discussions: The purpose of the weekly discussion forums is to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the material presented each week, to relate it to current affairs or their own experiences, and to share their ideas and views with other students.

Two (2) points awarded for completion of the personal introduction video (week 1) and two (2) points for final comments (week 13).

Four (4) points awarded each week for regular lecture weeks (weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, & 12) as follows:

One (1) point for posting each week.

One (1) point for demonstrating comprehension of the material covered.

One (1) point for adding insights (for example, reflections on current affairs (news), discussing relationship to personal experiences, or providing links/references to other resources)

One (1) point for an insightful comment on at least one other student's post.

Six (6) discretionary points awarded at the end of the term for overall excellence in posting (student showed consistency in posting, provided links or references to other resources, commented on multiple posts, etc.)

Because the objective of weekly participation is to critically reflect and engage with and learn from your peers, **posts may not be completed after the weekly due dates outlined above.** As such, students are required to earn a minimum grade of 50% on this assignment in order to pass the class.

Required information about Extensions: Extensions for personal and family illness and emergencies can be granted, but must be discussed with the course instructor as early as possible and **not** once the due date for the assignment has already passed. This also applies to students with accommodation through the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL): <http://www.uvic.ca/cal>

Required information about Late penalties: Late assignments (only applies to assignments one, two, and three) will be penalized by five (5) percentage points per day and will only be accepted up to one week after the due date unless the student has received explicit approval in writing for a longer extension from the instructor. The late penalty does not apply to participation and critical reflection (assignment 4), as these will not be accepted after the due date.

Assignment 1: Five Core Elements of Public Policy Paper

Due date: October 3, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 25% of the final grade

Submit: Each assignment is to be submitted to the instructor through the Assignments dropbox on Brightspace. Please save your assignment as a Word attachment (.doc or .docx). Be sure to put your name and student number on your assignment. When saving the assignment file, please use the following format to name your file: your name and assignment number, i.e. MONTESS_Assignment_1.

Required Assignment Rubric re: Essential Learning Requirements (ELRs): The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate your in-depth understanding of a Canadian health policy area that interests you (whether it be a municipal, provincial/territorial, or federal issue). Using the “five core elements” of public policy discussed by Dr. Michael J. Prince (as covered in Week 3, also available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPzsyh31mN8>), analyze your policy area and selected policy action. Your paper should follow this format or a similar style (not including the section on writing):

- Executive Summary (20 marks):
 - Clear articulation of the general policy area and 2-3 well-discussed points about the problem
 - A sentence or two about why this policy area is of interest to the student
 - An appropriate choice of policy area
- People & Power (25 marks):
 - Who has the authority to make policy in this area
 - What governing bodies, regulatory bodies, advocacy groups, or in-the-field organizations play a role
- Products (20 marks):
 - What existing legislation, regulations, or programs affect this policy area

- Purpose(s) & Procedures (20 marks):
 - Select at least one policy action (either completed or proposed) and discuss the stated and unstated goals (if applicable) of the policy and procedures in place
- Writing (15 marks):
 - Use the literature (well-researched and sources should be diverse in nature and come from the course materials as well as other peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, and media)
 - Write clearly and concisely (**5-8 double-spaced pages**, not including title page or reference list)
 - Consistent referencing using APA format
 - Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling

An “N” grade may be awarded if a student fails to comprehensively discuss and analyze a policy area.

Extensions: See above.

Late penalties: See above.

Assignment 2: Briefing Note

Due date: October 31, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 25% of the final grade

Submit: Each assignment is to be submitted to the instructor through the Assignments dropbox on Brightspace. Please save your assignment as a Word attachment (.doc or .docx). Be sure to put your name and student number on your assignment. When saving the assignment file, please use the following format to name your file: your name and assignment number, i.e. MONTESS_Assignment_2.

Required Assignment Rubric re: Essential Learning Requirements (ELRs): Place yourself in the shoes of a public servant. You are tasked with preparing a briefing note on an issue related to COVID-19 for a minister or other high-level official. You have the choice to select either an issue directly linked to COVID-19 (e.g. policy directly on pandemics) or a related issue (e.g. social determinants of health). Be sure to review the lecture from Week 7 for a refresher. The key for this assignment is to **be specific**. What is the specific policy area you are recommending action or inaction on? Who is the note directed to and is what you are recommending under their purview? Keep in mind the briefing note is designed to provide a snapshot of information so that a minister or another high-level official can make an executive decision, it is **not meant to be exhaustive**. Refer to material from Week 5 for further guidance. Your paper should follow this format or a similar style (not including the section on writing):

- Issue Statement (15 marks):
 - Problem clearly defined
 - Intended audience is clear
 - Clear purpose of briefing note

- Background (20 marks):
 - Concisely covers the necessary, relevant history and context for the intended audience
 - Addresses:
 - Who is affected
 - Which institutions are involved (legislations, regulations, programs, decision-makers, etc.)
 - Whose interests are at play and what their views are

- Key Considerations (10 marks):
 - Highlights necessary and pertinent information

- Options (30 marks):
 - Presents 2-4 options (keeping in mind that the “status quo” can and should be one option) with pros and cons presented for each
 - Each option is thorough, balanced, clear, and concise
 - Students bring their own insight here

- Recommendation (10 marks):
 - A clear recommendation is made
 - Rationale presents a coherent argument
 - Students bring their own insight here

- Writing (15 marks):
 - Conforms to required structure and length (**1 to 2 single-spaced pages**)
 - Uses plain language writing that is designed for readability (well-organized and easy to read, remembering key points)
 - Considers intended audience
 - Should employ bullets (not required for every section)
 - No title page is needed, but the intended audience should be clear
 - Correct referencing using any citation style (as long as it is consistent)
 - Choices of sources are appropriate, both in terms of quality and quantity
 - Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling

An “N” grade may be awarded if a student fails to put forward policy options.

Extensions: See above.

Late penalties: See above.

Assignment 3: Critical Essay

Due date: November 28, no later than 11:55 PM (Pacific Time)

Value: 30% of the final grade

Submit: Each assignment is to be submitted to the instructor through the Assignments dropbox on Brightspace. Please save your assignment as a Word attachment (.doc or .docx). Be sure to put your name and student number on your assignment. When saving the assignment file, please use the following format to name your file: your name and assignment number, i.e. MONTESS_Assignment_3.

Required Assignment Rubric re: Essential Learning Requirements (ELRs): Select one health policy topic covered in Week 8 (aging), Week 9 (disability), or Week 11 (Indigenous Peoples' Health) and answer the following question in an essay, “Is evidence-based policy (EBP) achievable and likely?” Think about what you have learned about health policy and governance to date and be sure to draw on numerous course materials from throughout the term (in addition to other sources). You have a lot of flexibility to be creative in how you develop your essay and what you decide to draw on to build your argument. Please refer to the lecture from Week 12 for information on evidence-based policy as well as strategies for structuring your critical essay. Papers will be graded on the following:

- Strong Introduction with Clear Thesis and Supporting Premise Statements (20 marks):
 - In terms of your thesis statement, you want to ensure it is precise. You want to explicitly state whether or not EBP is achievable and likely for your specific topic and be sure to discuss the scope (for example, geography, timeline, etc.). You also have the choice to further refine the topic within the area you selected.
 - This central thesis is what the three premise points must align with. Be careful not to develop premise points around the “effectiveness” of EBP because this is not what the thesis and essay are about. You are arguing whether or not EBP is achievable and likely for your specific topic.
 - In your introduction, you should also define EBP (minimum one sentence), as this sets the stage for your paper.
- Analysis (40 marks):
 - There is no right or wrong answer on whether EBP is achievable or likely for your specific topic. You will be evaluated on the analysis you put forward.
 - In terms of developing your premise points, figure out what you want to draw on and the examples under each premise before you start writing. This will help ensure that each of these points fully supports your thesis and improves the quality of your writing. You might find that there are points that might contradict your argument, but if these points are obvious, then it is crucial to discuss them and explain why they are overcome or not actually the case for this specific topic. You also want to end each premise on a strong note. Remember the premise points are the analysis that supports your thesis.
 - A pro-tip is to peruse your lecture notes as this might spark some ideas (for example, is the structure of government conducive to EBP?).

- Strong Conclusion (20 marks):
 - The conclusion should summarize and paraphrase the key points outlined in your essay. There should be no new information covered in this section. This is your opportunity to close your essay with strong points to drive home your main messages.
- Writing (20 marks):
 - Conforms to required length (**eight to ten double-spaced pages**, not including title page or reference list)
 - Uses plain language writing that is designed for readability (well-organized and easy to read, remembering key points)
 - Draws either explicitly or implicitly on course materials (i.e. videos and readings) as well as various other sources
 - Consistent referencing using APA format
 - Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling

An “N” grade may be awarded if a student fails to thoroughly analyze a key issue in health and social policy (aging, disability, or Indigenous Peoples' Health).

Extensions: See above.

Late penalties: See above.

Course Schedule

Week 1: September 8 – 12

Introduction & Orientation

Learning Objectives

- Introduction to the instructor
- Overview of course and syllabus

Week 2: September 13 – 19

Introduction to Government & Health Policy in Canada

Learning Objectives

- Brief history of the role of government
- Structure and levels of government
- Division of powers
- Canada Health Act

Week 3: September 20 – 26

5 Ps of Policy

(Guest Lecturers Michelle Amri & George Abbott)

Learning Objectives

- Learn what policy is
- Learn what the 5 Ps of policy are from Dr. Prince
- Hear from Dr. Abbott about his experience as a previous Minister in various portfolios

Week 4: September 27 - October 3

The 3 Is Framework & Policy Instruments & Tools

Learning Objectives

- Learn the 3-Is framework (the interplay of interests, ideas, and institutions)
- Learn about policy instruments and tools

Week 5: October 4 – 10

Briefing Notes
(Guest Lecturer Michelle Amri)

Learning Objectives

- Learn what a briefing note is and how to write one

Week 6: October 11 – 17

Welfare Legislation
(Guest Lecturer Lillian Baynes)

Learning Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the roots of health and social programs and the legislation that governs them

Week 7: October 18 – 24

Key Issues in Health & Social Policy – COVID-19

- Apply learnings to date in exploring issues associated with COVID-19

Week 8: October 25 - 31

Key Issues in Health & Social Policy – Aging
(Guest Lecturers Lillian Baynes, Parminder Raina & Geri Hinton)

Learning Objectives

- Apply learnings to date in exploring issues associated with aging

Week 9: November 2 - 8

Key Issues in Health & Social Policy – Disability
(Guest Lecturer Fady Shanouda)

Learning Objectives

- Apply learnings to date in exploring issues associated with disability

Week 10: November 8 - 14 (Reading Break November 10, 11 & 12)

Week 11: November 15 – 21

**Key Issues in Health & Social Policy – Indigenous People’s Health
(Guest Lecturer Miranda Lesperance)**

Learning Objectives

- Apply learnings to date in exploring issues associated with Indigenous people’s health

Week 12: November 22 – 28

Evidence-Based Policy & Strategy for Writing a Strong Final Essay

Learning Objectives

- Learn what evidence-based policy is
- Provide a foundation for interrogation if evidence-based policy is achievable and likely
- Learn the strategy for writing a strong final essay

Week 13: November 29 - December 3

Course Wrap-Up & Reflection

Learning Objectives

- Reflect on the course and wrap up what was learned overall
- Provide tips for those looking for a career in policy, research, academia, etc.