

Coping with ObamaCare

**Political Science Y394 (Public Policy Analysis)
Spring 2015, Section 30636
Meets Monday, Wednesday, 2:30-3:45 PM, A106 Jordan Hall**

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This course focuses on the **2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** (popularly known as **ObamaCare**) as a major piece of national legislation, regulation, and ongoing controversy. U.S. policies concerning personal and public health, health insurance, and medical care are quite complex, and students should emerge from this course with a much better understanding of the overall structure of this policy area. At the very least, they should develop a solid foundation for understanding whatever changes lie in store for this highly partisan and controversial area of public policy. Also, Students should learn important lessons relevant to all areas of public policy, and thus contribute to their ability to more fully participate as responsible citizens throughout the remainder of their lives. A comparable level of complexity is found in all major policy areas, and the policy stages which will be used to organize presentation of this material can be applied, in very similar ways, to just about any area of public policy.

Topics will be covered in a primarily chronological order, with some exceptions. All phases of the “policy cycle” will be examined, from the definition of the problem meant to be resolved, efforts to influence the public framing of this complex issue, formulation of policy alternatives, the machinations of Congressional procedure, legitimation of the resulting law (especially the Supreme Court’s decision on the constitutionality of its provisions), scandals associated with implementation of healthcare.gov and other aspects of the new insurance exchanges, continuing controversies over whether faith-based corporations deserve to be exempted from provisions requiring them to provide insurance coverage for contraceptive care, and the evaluation of the law’s ultimate effects, including the often surprising responses of private corporations and public groups to requirements imposed in this legislation and its implementing regulations.

We will begin with an overview of the historical development of the inter-related systems of health, health care, health insurance, and health policy in the United States. Then we will consider an earlier unsuccessful effort to dramatically reform U.S. health policy under (the first?) President Clinton, and how that effort and changes in Massachusetts and other states set the stage for the policy debates during the first few years of the Obama Administration. A convoluted process of partisan intrigue resulted in passage in 2010 of this major reform bill (known variously as ACA, PPACA, and ObamaCare), which was immediately challenged in court. After a Supreme Court decision that further complicated things in 2012, implementation of this law was marred by delays, software snafus, and further legal challenges. Despite the Republican victories in the 2014 off-year elections, implementation is still underway, and many observers have concluded that it is too late to completely dismantle this new system, although some important changes are likely to be made. The provisions of this law will be re-examined and revised in future years, but its general structure is likely to shape this policy area for decades to come. Since we will all be living under the shadow of ObamaCare for the rest of our lives, it seems worthwhile to understand its origins, provisions, and likely consequences.

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

*Subject to revision during the semester: changes will be announced in class and on OnCourse
Many of the readings listed below will be designated as optional – details provided later.*

<i>Week & Dates</i>	Monday	Wednesday
1 Jan 12, 14	Intro to course: Policy stages, and surprises ahead To be distributed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • McGinnis, My Top 20 Surprises 	Key Care Providers & Policy Actors Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starr, Introduction, chapters 1-2 Memo group 1
2 Jan 19, 21	***** MLK Day *****	Historical origins of private and public actors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weissert & Weissert, Intro, ch. 1-2 Memo group 2
3 Jan 26, 28	Rationales for government intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weissert & Weissert, ch. 3-4 • California Health Policy Forum, Understanding US Public Health System • Goodman, Law and Public Health at CDC Memo group 3	Medicare, Medicaid, and the Safety Net <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedman, Compromise and Afterthought • Moore and Smith, Legislating Medicaid • Weil, There's Something About Medicaid • Hoffman, Emergency Rooms • Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), <i>Medicare at a Glance and Facts on Spending and Financing</i> • KFF, <i>Medicaid Moving Forward</i> Memo group 1
4 Feb 2, 4	Explaining the HillaryCare Debacle Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starr, chaps. 3-4 Memo group 2	Perfect Storms in National Health Policy ESRD and Medicare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rettig, Special Treatment • Levinsky, Lessons Learned Hill-Burton and HPRDA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vladick, Design of Failure • Altman, Politics of Health Care Regulation Memo group 3
5 Feb 9, 11	State Roles in National Health Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weissert & Weissert, ch. 5 No memos	Exam 1
6 Feb 16, 18	Pre-ACA political situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starr, chapters 5-6 No memos	ACA policy formulation and framing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davidson, chapters 1-2 • Kaiser Family Foundation, ACA Summary Memo group 2

7 Feb 23, 25	A messy process of policy adoption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starr, ch. 7 Weissert & Weissert, ch. 6-7 <p>Memo group 3</p>	Policy adoption (continued) <p>No additional readings</p> <p>No additional memos</p>
8 March 2, 4	Initial round of Supreme Court challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davidson, chapter 3 Kaiser Family Foundation, A Guide to the Supreme Court’s Review of the 2010 Health Care Reform Law <p>Memo group 1</p>	Policy evaluation: Hotspotting, PCMH, ACO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gawande, Hot Spotters Gold, ACOs: Will They Deliver? Schwenk, PCMH: One Size Does Not Fit All <p>No memos</p>
9 Mar 9, 11	Implications for Community Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gawande, Cost Conundrum Rosenbaum. PPACA: Implications for Public Health Policy and Practice <p>No memos</p>	Exam 2
Spring Break	*****	*****
10 Mar 23, 25	Short-Term Implementation Delays and Support for Long-Term Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKethan, Uniting the Tribes <p>No Memos</p>	Complications with Medicaid expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brecher and Rose, Medicaid’s Next Metamorphosis KFF, <i>Healthy Indiana Plan and the ACA and Proposed HIP 2.0</i> <p>Memo group 3</p>
11 March 30, April 1	Complications with Insurance Exchanges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan Alter, “Failure to Launch: How Obama Fumbled HealthCare.gov,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, March/April 2014, 39-50. Urban Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “The Launch of the Affordable Care Act in Selected States: Building ACA-Compliant Eligibility and Enrollment Systems,” March 2014. <p>Memo group 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLASS SESSION CANCELLED (because of instructor commitment)
12 April 6, 8	Bringing Religion Back In <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sobel and Salganicoff, A Guide to the Supreme Court’s Review of the Contraceptive Coverage Requirement Annas et al., Money, Sex, and Religion Gostin, ACA’s Contraceptive Mandate <p>Memo group 2</p>	Likely revisions to ObamaCare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davidson, chapter 4 <i>The Patient Choice, Affordability, Responsibility, and Empowerment (CARE) Act</i>, two-page summary <p>Wild-card memos</p>

13 April 13, 15	Looking towards the future, reviewing the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starr, chapter 9 • Weissert & Weissert, Conclusion • McDonough, Health System Reform in US Wild-card memos	How is an Operating Room Like a Commons? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McGinnis, power point slides No memos
14 April 20, 22	Exam 3	Exploring alternative perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldhill, Introduction, ch. 1-3 • Ellwood, Models for Organizing Health Services • McGinnis, Key Policy Lessons Wild-card memos
15 April 27, 29	Alternatives continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldhill, chapters 4-11, Afterward, and Appendices 1-3 Wild-card memos	Reprising surprises <p>No additional readings</p> <p>No memos</p>
FINALS May 4-8	Exam scheduled for 10:15-12:15 Mon (4 th) will NOT meet in classroom Take-home essay due Tuesday (5th) 10 AM	

Assigned Textbooks (available for purchase, and should be available on reserve in Wells Library):

- Paul Starr. 2013. *Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle over Health Care Reform*, revised edition, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300-18915-5 [\[Bloomington\]](http://site.ebrary.com/lib/iub/Doc?id=10506565) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/iub/Doc?id=10506565> (Available on campus and off-campus with authorized logon)
- William Weissert and Carol Weissert. 2012. *Governing Health: The Politics of Health Policy*, 4th edition, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 978-1-4214-0621-3
- Stephen Davidson. 2012. *A New Era in U.S. Health Care: Critical Next Steps Under the Affordable Care Act*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. ISBN 978-0-8047-8700-0
- David Goldhill. 2013. *Catastrophic Care: Why Everything We Think We Know about Health Care Is Wrong*, New York: Vintage. ISBN 978-0-345-80273-6

Supplemental Texts:

- Harry A. Sultz and Kristina M. Young, *Health Care USA: Understanding Its Organization and Delivery*, 8th edition, Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett. (Reserve Room, Wells Library)
- *Landmark: the inside story of America's new health-care law and what it means for us all*, staff of the *Washington Post*, New York, Public Affairs 2010. [\[Bloomington\]](http://site.ebrary.com/lib/iub/Doc?id=10469170) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/iub/Doc?id=10469170> (Available on campus and off-campus with authorized logon)

Other Readings: complete list posted on OnCourse. Many readings will be treated as optional or supplementary, but students are encouraged to go beyond the core readings in the textbook. These readings will be especially useful in generating good questions for student memos (see below). Details regarding the status of these (and other readings later added) will be provided throughout the semester.

Grading Criteria

Grades will be based class participation (including in-class exercises), memos on the assigned readings, and midterm and final exams. Class discussions will focus on careful analysis of assigned readings, so students are strongly encouraged to attend every class session.

- **Class participation (10%)**: Regular attendance plus active participation in class discussions and quality answers to in-class assignments.
- **Reading Memos (15% total)** – Each student will submit 4 brief memos on assigned dates; students may also submit an additional memo on dates listed as wild cards, to replace their lowest grade on the required memos. Each memo should be brief, no more than a page (single-spaced), and should identify a question worth discussing in class. The memo should summarize some aspect of the assigned reading that inspired this question, state the question clearly, justify why this is an interesting or important question, and very briefly suggest how one might begin to answer that question. (The idea is to trigger discussion, and it is sometimes necessary for the questioner to suggest the first possible answer to their question, if only to help explain the nature of that question. But the best questions are those that generate interesting discussions.) Students are to submit each question to the class via OnCourse by 10 AM on the day of that class session, and should bring a copy of their memo to class, so they can refer to it during class. Students should expect to have to explain and discuss each of their memos during class. For organizational purposes, the class will be divided into 3 groups of 5-6 members, but each student should submit his or her own memos. Students may, of course, discuss their memos with each other before, during, or after class.
- **Three in-class exams (15% each, 45% total)**. These exams will consist of a variety of question types and will be held in-class, with no notes allowed. Study guides will be distributed at least one week in advance.
- **Take-home final essay (30%)** – Details will be provided near the end of the semester, but this is the basic idea: students will be asked to identify two outcomes, patterns of behavior, or findings related to U.S. health policy and discussed in this course that surprised you or disturbed you, explain why you found these to be surprising or disturbing, use course material to explain why (and when) these outcomes tend to occur, and discuss what (if anything) might be done to resolve this problem. Students should make sure to consider whether or not Goldhill's alternative perspective (in his *Catastrophic Care* text) could have a significant impact on this outcome, and explain why or why not. But they may also draw on all material considered during this semester.

Course Procedures and Expectations

There are no prerequisites for this course, but students with no previous experience with American politics, U.S. history, social policy, or public health may need to do some background readings. Please see the instructor if you need any suggestions or have any difficulties understanding this material.

The best way to do well in this course is to come to class regularly and complete the assigned readings before ***each*** class session. Students are encouraged to monitor announcements and messages to be posted on OnCourse.

Details on the instructor's grading procedures, expectations for student behavior, and other matters is available at http://pages.iu.edu/~mcginnis/course_rules_procedures.pdf. Two items deserve emphasis:

1. **All comments in class must remain respectful of other people's opinions.** This rule is especially important for this course, since this material is intrinsically controversial, and reasonable people will continue to come to contrasting conclusions. Students should learn how to cut through partisan rhetoric and demagoguery to understand the fundamental issues of health care policy. As citizens they will need this level of understanding, because this policy problem is certain to become even more complicated in the future.
2. **Students have permission to use laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. during class to take notes BUT NOT FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSES.** Students using these devices to surf the web or answer e-mail or in any way that distracts other students or the instructor will be asked to turn off their devices and pay attention, or else leave the classroom. Repeat offenders may lose the privilege of using electronic devices during class time.