

HS3400A

Health Policy

University of Western Ontario
School of Health Studies

Course Weight: 0.50

COURSE INFO	
Day & Time	Location

TEACHING TEAM	
PROFESSOR	Maxwell J. Smith, PhD
EMAIL	maxwell.smith@uwo.ca
OFFICE	
OFFICE HOURS	No drop-ins; appointments only. Sign up via OWL.
TEACHING ASSISTANTS	TBC

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is an invitation to examine the processes, outcomes, and implementation of health policy, with a specific focus on the Canadian context. In addition to exploring health policy issues currently affecting Canadians, key topics to be addressed include the processes through which health policies are developed, the various actors involved in the health policy process, the different arenas wherein health policy is created, and the various policy instruments used to meet health policy objectives.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- a. Define key terms and explain core concepts related to health policy;
- b. Identify key actors and recognize power dynamics involved in the health policy process;
- c. Describe the policy process;
- d. Critically reflect upon contemporary health policy issues affecting Canadians.

PREREQUISITES

Minimum of 60% [mandatory] in each of Health Sciences 1001A/B and Health Sciences 1002A/B.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Required text

Buse, K, Mays N, & Walt G. *Making Health Policy*, 2nd edition (UK: McGraw-Hill Open University Press, 2012)

This text will be made available in the Western Bookstore and one copy will be on reserve in the Taylor Library. Previous editions of the required text are not recommended. Other required readings, links, or resources will be posted on OWL on a weekly basis. These resources may include relevant peer-reviewed articles, health policy reports, media reports, websites, and videos. These resources will complement the weekly topic and textbook readings. Students are responsible for all assigned readings.

LECTURES

This course will consist primarily of lectures and case studies of health policy issues currently affecting Canadians. Attendance and participation in lectures are expected. The following is a tentative timetable of lecture topics and readings, which are subject to modification. Students are expected to come to class prepared (i.e., having read all assigned materials). This course does not have tutorials.

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Week	Date	Topic	Required Readings
1		Introduction: Why health policy?	• No Readings
2a		What is health policy?	• Overview of the Book • Chapter 1: The Health Policy Framework
2b		How does Canada's health system work?	• Deber (2014)
3a		Case study: Health care wait times	• Chapter 4: Agenda Setting
3b		Identifying policy problems and getting them on the agenda	• Chapter 4: Agenda Setting
4a		Case study: Cannabis	• Vedung (2007)
4b		Choosing policy instruments	• Vedung (2007)
5a		Case study: Health disparities	• Chapter 10: Doing Policy Analysis
5b		Policy analysis	• Chapter 10: Doing Policy Analysis
6a		Case study: Medical assistance in dying	• Chapter 6: Interest Groups and the Policy Process
6b		Policy actors	• Chapter 6: Interest Groups and the Policy Process
7a		Case study: Pharmacare	• TBA
7b		Theories of policy change	• Weible & Cairney (2020)
8a		Midterm preparation	
8b		Midterm	

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	—	Reading week – No classes	
9a		Case study: Sex education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yan (2004) • Adelaide Recommendations on Healthy Public Policy (1988)
9b		Public health policy & healthy public policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yan (2004) • Adelaide Recommendations on Healthy Public Policy (1988)
10a		Case study: Mandatory vaccination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Health Organization (2022)
10b		Ethical and legal dimensions of health policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenny (2005)
11a		Case study: COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 - Globalizing the Policy Process
11b		Global health policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 - Globalizing the Policy Process
12a		Case study: Safe injection sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9: Research, Evaluation and Policy
12b		Evidence-based health policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9: Research, Evaluation and Policy
13a		Case study: Topic to be decided by class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA
13b		Final exam preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No readings

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

	Date	Percent of final grade
Midterm exam	(in-class)	30%
Team-based policy brief		30%
Final exam	To be determined, exam period:	40%

Midterm exam

The midterm will occur in class on and students will have the entire class to complete the exam. All materials covered up to and including the class will be testable. The midterm exam may consist of multiple choice questions, true and false questions, matching questions, and/or short answer questions.

There will be no make-up for a missed midterm exam. If you miss the midterm exam due to personal or medical reasons, you must contact the academic counsellors to seek accommodation. Missing the midterm without approved accommodation will result in a grade of zero.

Team-based policy brief

Students in groups of around 4-6 (depending on course enrollment) will write a policy brief on a relevant health policy topic or issue. Further instructions will be provided in class. This assignment will be due by 11:55pm on via OWL. A grading rubric will be made available to students prior to the due date of the assignment.

Final exam

The final exam will be scheduled during the examination period (). The date, time, and location will be confirmed and announced in class and posted on OWL. The format of the exam may include multiple choice questions, true or false questions, matching questions, and/or short answer questions. The final exam will cover **all** lecture materials and assigned readings, including those before the midterm.

Grading

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable.
F	below 50	Fail

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It is anticipated that the course averages in years 1 through 4 grades will vary and this is the normative breakdown of average grades/year:

Year 1	68-72
Year 2	70-74 (core) and 72-76 (elective)
Year 3	72-76 (core) and 74-78 (elective)
Year 4	74-80

Final grades of .45 and higher will be automatically rounded up to the nearest integer. Grades will not otherwise be rounded or increased.

KEY DATES

First class	Sept. 7
Reading week (no classes)	Oct. 30-Nov. 5
Midterm	Oct. 26
Last day to drop course without academic penalty	Nov. 13
Team-based policy brief due	Nov. 24
Final class	Dec. 7
Final exam period	Dec. 10-22

POLICIES

Email communication

All non-personal questions should be posted on OWL forums. Forums will be used regularly as a ‘first line’ for asking questions about course content and logistics. Students can expect questions to be answered by the instructor or teaching assistants within 48 hours, with the exception of weekends. Students are also encouraged to respond to questions to facilitate learning and share their own insights on course content. The instructor may delete posts that are deemed to be inappropriate.

Any other issues/queries (personal/non-content related) should be sent via email. You must use your UWO email in all correspondence. If you send a message to the instructor or TA that is better suited for the forum discussion, you will be asked to post your question there so that all students can benefit from the Q&A and also allow for more peer-to-peer discussion.

In all of the above communication tools and any time you are interacting on our shared OWL website, it is expected that you will use proper grammar and punctuation. You are also expected to respect your peers, teaching assistants, and instructor in any discussion/forum or communication.

COVID-19 contingency plan for in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Late assignments

Assignments must not be missed unless there is a medical condition, family emergency, or other unforeseen circumstances. A note from your physician indicating the nature of your condition must be submitted to the School of Health Studies Main Office, and only upon receipt of such a letter will instructors consider a new due date for an assignment.

In order to be fair to your peers and the teaching team, assignments submitted after the deadline which did not receive academic a written, pre-arranged approval for extension by the instructor or via academic counselling will be penalized 5 percentage points per day (including Saturday and Sunday, and beginning the moment the deadline passes) and will only be accepted up to seven days after the due date/time. If you think you will be unable to hand in an assignment on time, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Attendance and classroom behaviour (online and/or in-person)

In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets specific expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes. Regular attendance is expected and essential for all courses, but particularly those that include participation grades in their evaluation schemes. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor's guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures.

Use of recording devices and course content

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During lectures: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

Respectful engagement and interaction

Disruptive, rude, or otherwise inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated in class or online.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with your student code of conduct:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Use of plagiarism checking software

All required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Student Code of Conduct

Code of Student Conduct defines the standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provides examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this conduct, provides examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and sets out the disciplinary procedures that the University follows. Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic/calendar/).

Academic consideration

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- i. For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- ii. For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to academic advising office in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

Students seeking academic consideration

- Are advised to carefully consider the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a

friend) are not normally an appropriate basis;

- **Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
- **Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc., are to be submitted to academic advising office within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.**

Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

Health and Wellness

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it's important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). It's also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don't want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

Common Concerns Guidelines

The table below summarizes a list of common student concerns and how they are to be resolved. If you have a concern that is not listed here, then please email your instructor.

<i>Concern</i>	<i>How to address concern</i>
<i>Course administrative matters</i>	<i>Read through the course outline or email instructor if question cannot be answered from information in the course outline</i>
<i>Course content questions</i>	<i>Refer to the OWL Resources (notes, calendar, etc). Email the instructor.</i>
<i>Grade disputes and requests for appeals</i>	<i>A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination must first contact their instructor to discuss such matters.</i> <i>Visit the following website for guide on submitting an appeal:</i> https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html