

SPPH 542 – CANADIAN HEALTH CARE POLICY

LOGISTICS

Because of COVID-19, classes will be held on Zoom (links to be provided on Canvas).

Live classes will be held on Mondays from 9:30am to approximately 11am.

INSTRUCTOR

Steve Morgan, PhD

Bio: I am an economist who has been at UBC for 25 years – first as a PhD student (economics), then as a postdoc (split between UBC and McMaster), and then as professor (SPPH). I study health system financing and pharmaceutical policies. I strive to be a credible scholar, a trustworthy government advisor, and an effective advocate for change – national pharmacare, in particular. In 2019, I joined the ranks of Emmet Hall Laureates for career-long contributions to health system equity, justice, and sustainability in Canada. That was a career highlight, but I consider myself at mid-career, hoping to see long-overdue reforms come to fruition and to see many more students and trainees realize their career ambitions over years to come.

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Office Hours: Available by email or by phone (as arranged by email)

DESCRIPTION

This course is about the Canadian health care system and the political and economic forces that have shaped it. It is for anyone, regardless of academic or professional background, interested in the intersection of health care and public policy in Canada.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students in this class will learn that “Canadian Medicare” is not what many people think it is. For starters, it is not a public health care system. It is a public health insurance system with a long and bumpy history. We will talk about that history a lot in this class.

Students will also learn that “Canadian Medicare” is not very comprehensive, that it is not very equitable, and that it is not particularly well organized. Overall, Canada’s health care system has some strengths – particularly compared to the American system – but it could be, indeed should be, a lot better.

So, this course is worth taking if you want to understand how Canada's health care system came to be the way it is and what can be done to improve it.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- List the key stages in the evolution of what is often called "Canadian Medicare."
- Describe the main features of the Canadian health care system, including its main strengths and weaknesses.
- Express informed opinions on current health policy debates in Canada.
- Demonstrate detailed understanding of the logic (and perhaps politics) of a specific health care policy problem in Canada.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this will be an online course for 2020. In most weeks, the course will involve the following activities:

- Pre-class quiz about the week's readings and/or assigned videos;
- One live (online) class, where everyone attends like a traditional lecture; and
- Post-class discussion question about the main policy puzzle of the week.

You will require access to a reliable internet connection for this course. Furthermore, to facilitate small group work during online class, please arrange to have access to a computer, rather than a cellphone or tablet, during online lectures. Please contact me if you cannot make those arrangements.

LEARNING MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course.

Required and optional readings for each module of this course come from books, websites and reports available online and in PDF format on the Canvas system.

Some short lectures will be pre-recorded and posted for review prior to online/Zoom class sessions.

PowerPoint slides will be available on the Canvas system.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Topics of this course will be organized as follows:

1. Schedule of topics
2. Intro to the course and to logical and political analysis
3. Welfare and the Right to Health
4. History of Canadian "Medicare" – Part 1
5. History of Canadian "Medicare" – Part 2

6. Intro to briefing notes & tips on term papers
7. “Public health” policy and governance in Canada
8. Health care financing
9. Institutions and Primary care reform
10. Interests and Pharmacare
11. Efficiency, Wait Times and “Competition” in Canadian health care

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Assessments of student learning include the following components and weights. Rubrics for numeric grades assigned will be distributed via Canvas. Letter grades will be assigned according to UBC’s policy on academic progress.

| Component | Share of final grade |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Pre-Class Quizzes (combined) | 10% |
| Post-Class Questions (combined) | 5% |
| Exams (combined) | 30% |
| Briefing Note – first draft | 5% |
| Feedback on Peers’ Briefing Notes (combined) | 5% |
| Briefing Note – submission | 15% |
| Term Paper | 30% |

Pre-Class Quizzes

Students will complete a short online quiz about key points from readings for each module. Quizzes involve multiple-choice questions only and should take about 10 minutes to complete.

Post-Class Discussion Questions

A discussion question will be posted to Canvas following most online classes. Responses are required within 48 hours but should only take a few minutes to prepare. Students will be encouraged to review each others’ answers and to post constructive comments as they wish.

Exams

Instead of a single, high-stakes final, students will write two small, equally-weighted midterm exams online. These exams will be time-limited and include a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Briefing Note

Students will write a two-page briefing note to describe the policy problem about which they wish to write their term papers. This practices concise policy writing skills and provides an opportunity for early feedback about chosen topic and line of inquiry.

Briefing Note Feedback

Students will review and provide brief comments on the briefing notes prepared by selected peers (assigned by Canvas). Feedback should be constructive and insightful.

Term Paper

Exhibiting understanding of how the history, structure, financing, and governance of the Canadian health care system shapes current health policies and politics is an important metric of performance for this course. Students will therefore write a short essay on the logic (and, possibly, politics) of a policy problem in one of the following topic areas: (1) the Canada Health Act; (2) acute hospital care in Canada (including wait times); (3) primary care in Canada; or (4) pharmacare in Canada.

Re-grading: Students may request that an assignment be regraded. The entire assignment will be reviewed by the teaching assistant and the instructor. Grades can go up or down on the basis of that review.

Late Submissions: Five (5) percentage points will be deducted from the grade earned on a late assignment for each day (or portion thereof) that the assignment is late. Canvas flags an assignment as late if it is even a minute late or if a student edits or replaces the assignment after the deadline. Plan not to do either of those things.

Extensions: Please plan your workload to ensure you meet deadlines. Extensions are only available in the event of a significant, unforeseeable, and unavoidable problem: i.e., a real emergency.

Students are expected to participate in online classes, quizzes, discussions, and exams. The total time commitment for this course will be the same as a traditional, in-person course. Online classes will therefore be shorter than traditional, in-person lectures to make room for online activities done on students' own time.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

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Online classes will be recorded and posted to Canvas for students to review.