

SPPH 542 – Canadian Health Care Policy

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:

- Describe the main features of the Canadian health care system, including its main strengths and weaknesses.
- List the key stages in the evolution of what is often called “Canadian Medicare.”
- Explain how institutions, interests, and ideas shape health care policies in Canada.
- Use credible evidence and disciplined application of policy theories to express informed opinions on current health care debates in Canada.
- Demonstrate detailed understanding of the logic and politics of a specific health care policy problem in Canada.

Course Structure

This course is a blended learning (BL) format course. In practice, this means that 50% of the learning activities will be asynchronous work students do on their own (e.g., complete readings, watch pre-recorded lectures, take weekly Canvas quizzes, and participate in optional Canvas discussions).

The other 50% of learning activities will be synchronous lectures for reviewing materials and engaging in problem-based learning by way of collaboratively drafting and posting group answers to the class-specific discussion boards on Canvas.

Half of the synchronous lectures will take place online, using Zoom. This is because this course will use small group activities in synchronous sessions to engage students in problem-based learning. Small groups are not just easier to manage online, they are more productive in a class of 50+ students.

Thus, this course will involve the following relative amounts of learning activities:

- 50% asynchronous activities (pre-recorded lectures, quizzes, and discussion boards)
- 25% traditional, synchronous in-person lectures and Q&A
- 25% synchronous sessions online primarily for small group work and Q&A

The final exam will be an in-person exam during the standard UBC final exam period.

Learning Activity Details

Most weeks, the course will involve the following learning activities:

- Read assigned papers / book chapters / reports **before class**
- Watch pre-recorded lecture **before class**
- Complete quiz on the week's readings and lecture **before class**
- Attend the synchronous lecture for material review and/or problem-based learning conducted in small groups
- Optional: participate in Canvas discussions related to course content.

Students will require access to a computer (not simply a cellphone or tablet), a reliable internet connection, and an appropriate study space to participate in the synchronous sessions of this course.

Instructor

Steven G. Morgan, PhD. I am an economist who studies health care financing and pharmaceutical policies. I strive to be a credible scholar, trustworthy government advisor, and effective advocate for change – national pharmacare, in particular. In 2019, I was awarded the Emmett Hall Lectureship for career-long contributions to health system equity, justice, and sustainability. That was a career highlight but the job is far from done.

Email: steve.morgan@ubc.ca Office Hours: Available by phone (as arranged by email).

Learning Materials

There is no required textbook for this course.

Required and optional readings for each module of this course come from open access articles, books, websites, and reports. Each week's readings will be made available in PDF format on the Canvas system.

Pre-recorded lectures will be posted for review prior to online/Zoom class sessions.

PowerPoint slides will be available on the Canvas system.

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of student learning will be done using the following, weighted components of a final grade in the course:

- **Pre-Class Quizzes (combined total), 15%**
- **In-class discussion posts (combined total), 15%**
- **Draft Briefing Note (completed task), 5%**
- **Feedback on Peers' Briefing Notes (completed task), 5%**
- **Midterm Exam (online), 15%**
- **Final Briefing Note (graded by instructor), 15%**
- **Final Exam (in person), 20%**

Assignment details and, where relevant, grading rubrics will be distributed via Canvas.

Letter grades will be assigned according to [UBC's campus-wide grading guideline](#).