

**Health Care Policy in Perspective:
Principles of Economics, Politics and Ethics
NUR 841
COURSE SYLLABUS FOR WEBCOURSE
2 Credits
Spring 2009**

Catalog Course Description: Target Student Audience: Required for all students in the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Degree and the 'fast-track' of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs in the College of Nursing. Description: Economic, political and regulatory environment of the U.S. health care system; quality, costs, equity in access of services; comparison of U.S. systems with those of other advanced industrial countries.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of NUR 841, the student should be able to:

1. Contrast and compare major features of the U.S. health care system to those of other advanced industrial countries.
2. Analyze the variety of public and private mechanisms for financing health care services.
3. Analyze the roles of nurses in the U.S. health care system vis-a-vis other health professionals and in international comparison.
4. Analyze how ethical principles, social policies and economic interests influence access, delivery and organization of health care.
5. Discuss principles of effectiveness, efficiency and cost to evaluate health care services.
6. Discuss principles of evaluation of health care policies based on population outcomes.

Prerequisites: NUR 801 or permission from instructor.

Professional Standards & Guidelines: The curriculum is guided by the following documents:

1. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2008). *The essentials of master's education for advanced practice*. Washington, DC: Author.
2. American Nursing Association. (2001). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. Silver Spring, MA: nursesbooks.org.
3. Southern Regional Education Board. (2002). *Nurse educator competencies*. Atlanta: Author.
4. National League for Nursing. (2004). *The scope of practice for nurse educators*. New York: Author.

Course Faculty:

Summer semester 2009 NUR 841 will be team taught by three instructors:

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Faculty responsibilities:

- Dr. Poindexter will be responsible for the overall course. If you have general questions about the course, she should be contacted.
- Each week, a different faculty member will be responsible for presentation of the content. The names of responsible faculty can be found following the week and dates under 2009 course calendar below.
- Students will be divided into three groups for discussion questions. Each group will be overseen by the same faculty member throughout the semester.

For additional information about the course faculty, see the website, clicking the following tabs: 'Lessons' => 'Getting Started' => 'Meet the Professor' under the name of the faculty.

Required Books:

Bodenheimer, T. S. & Grumbach, K. (2009). *Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach*. (5th ed.). New York: Lange Medical Books/McGraw-Hill.

(NOTE: ALL OTHER READINGS WILL BE ACCESSIBLE THROUGH LINKS IMBEDDED IN THE WEB COURSE MATERIAL.)

Methods of Evaluation:

1. IN-CLASS MID-TERM (30%)

The mid-term exam is an individual exam that requires the student to answer questions in the format of SHORT essays (approximately one page of response per question).

(THE MID-TERM WILL BE AVAILABLE ON Wednesday July 1st, FROM 6:00-7:30 PM. EASTERN STANDARD TIME –EST. THIS WILL BE AN ONLINE EXAM THAT WILL BE TIMED FOR 90 MINUTES. ALL STUDENTS SHOULD ARRANGE TO BE AVAILABLE TO TAKE THE EXAM ONLINE AT THAT TIME.)

2. PARTICIPATION IN WEEKLY WEB DISCUSSIONS (40% Total: 25% participation, 10% team discussion editor, and 5% co-editor).

A student will volunteer to serve in the role of a discussion editor each week. The role of the editor is to assume primary responsibility for synthesizing the group's discussion responses to each of the week's questions or topics at hand, and post within the discussion board under the heading of "discussion synthesis

week #.” An additional member of the group will serve in the role of a co-editor and will be responsible for assisting the primary editor with the synthesis posting. A rubric identifying the criteria required to be awarded points while serving in both roles is available under the lessons tab within the syllabus and course documents folder.

3. GROUP PROJECTS (30%) (All students in a group will receive the same project grade)

Discussion and Critical Evaluation of the Obama-Biden Health Care Plans.

Students will form groups of 3-4 from within their assigned Discussion Forums and each group will write a single group paper (to be posted on the website), which discusses a series of questions about the Obama-Biden Health Care Plan. Each group will identify one of three topics to address related to the health care plan: 1) access, 2) quality, or 3) cost. Students will use the concepts and analytical understanding gained in class to address these topics. Students will form their groups for the projects by July 9, 2009. Additional information about groups and project topics will be provided.

Grading Scale and Policy:

Grades will be posted electronically within two (2) weeks of the assignment due date. The following grading scale is used in this course:

Low	High	%	Grade140
140	150	93-100	4.0
129	139	86-92	3.5
120	128	80-85	3.0
112	119	75-79	2.5
105	111	70-74	2.0
97	104	65-69	1.5
90	96	60-64	1.0
	89	< 60	0.0

Final Course Grades are a weighted average of the mid-term exam (45 points - 30%), the discussion contributions (60 points - 40%) and the group paper (45 points - 30%). Point Determination Will Be As Follows:

Activity	Points	Number	Total Pts	Percentage
Participation/Engagement	5	10	50	25%
Editor	5	1	5	10%
Co-editor	5	1	5	5%
Midterm Exam	45	1	45	30%
Group Paper	45	1	45	30%
TOTAL			150	100

You will be able to view your grade summary at any time.

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Additional Course Description: This two-credit web course is designed to provide an understanding of the economic, organizational and political environment in which advanced practice nurses spend a major part of their professional lives. Basic principles of economics are applied to illuminate how markets and governments interact in the financing and delivery of health care services. Two broad themes are addressed throughout the course: (1) how economic incentives and disincentives shape the decisions of consumers/patients, insurance companies and providers, and (2) how government rules and regulations directly or indirectly (through altering economic incentives) shape the decisions of consumers/patients, insurance companies and providers. The insights gained from an understanding of the basic economic and organizational principles underpinning the U.S. health care system will be applied to a discussion of such problems as access to care, quality of care, cost containment and rationing of care.

Absence from class:

Participation is expected each week. If a student is going to be absent from class for a week (or more) and is unable to complete an assignment on time, he/she must inform the instructor in advance to be formally excused and still receive credit for the assignment. Illness and personal emergencies are considered excused absences. Vacations will not be considered excused absences and late assignments will not be excused for this reason. For all reasons, students must inform the instructor in writing explaining the reason for absence at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. Emails received later than this will not be accepted and the student's assignment will not be accepted. Students who miss more than three consecutive weeks of class, i.e., who do not participate actively in class activities, and who have not communicated with faculty to be excused from class, will receive a failing grade of 0.0 in the course.

If a student has an emergency situation, the expectation is the course faculty will be contacted prior to the assignment due date to make alternative arrangements.

Course Calendar:

Each week's course content is placed in a separate folder under the Lessons tab, labeled by the week number and dates. For example, the first week's content is in a folder entitled, "Week #1" and the dates for Week #1 are May 18 – 27th, 2009. The dates for Week #2 are May 28th – June 3, 2009 and so on.

When to Look for Course Materials:

In this course, each Thursday is considered the beginning day of a new week. An exception to this rule is the first week, when access to the class material is given on Monday, May 15th. Thus the first "week" lasts from Monday, May 15th to Wednesday, May 27th. Starting on Thursday, May 23rd (first day of Week #2), the materials for Weeks #1 and #2 will be accessible to you. For each subsequent week of the course, you will also be able to view the material of the current week and that of the previous weeks. An additional exception may be made based on holidays and exams. Please note the course calendar for any additional dates.

Completing and Submitting Course Assignments:

(1) You will be assigned to Discussion Groups of 10-12 students the first week of class. Each Discussion Forum will be led by a different faculty member, and the same faculty member will be responsible for a single group over the course of the semester. You will only be able to view the comments made by the participants of your Discussion Forum.

Weekly discussion contributions must be posted in your assigned Discussion Forum each week. They are due by no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday of each week (Wednesdays are always considered the "last day" of the week throughout the course). For example, for week one, the Discussion Forum opens Monday and assignments are due at the end of the day (5:00 pm) on Wednesday. The assignments listed for Week #2 open on Thursday and are due at the end of the day (5:00 pm) on Wednesday. It is expected that all students participate on a weekly basis. Zero credit will be given for late postings.

Reading Assignments and Topics for Web Discussions are posted each week. Your contributions to these discussions form a major part of the successful completion of this course. See below for further comments on the weekly discussions.

(2) The mid-term exam is a written, online, short essay and will be offered on March 5th from 6:00-7:30 pm EST. You must arrange to be available to take the exam at that time.

(3) The group projects/group papers must be submitted as a Word file to the drop box for the Group Assignments the week that they are due.

Papers will only be accepted as Word files in the drop box. Papers will not be accepted by FAX or by the postal or campus mail systems.

Comments on Discussion Expectations:

Each week, *Discussion Questions* will be posted in the weekly Lessons Folder. These questions generally refer to the material (textbooks and online sources) you are assigned to read for that week. While the questions probe your factual knowledge of some of the assigned material, they are primarily geared towards helping you discuss and highlight the critical issues involved in health care policy. Discussions of health care policy involve not only questions of fact, but also questions of value, e.g., attitudes towards the role of government in a market economy, attitudes concerning individual responsibility, views of justice, and so forth, etc. We may not necessarily all agree about such values, and there is absolutely no requirement that you agree with the views of the instructors or your fellow students! Instead, the primary purpose of the discussions is to show that you understand and can describe (a) the factual basis for a particular policy position and (b) the underlying value (ethical principle) that leads a person to advocate a particular policy. Should it come to major disagreements on health policy in the class discussions, we all need to remember that we should treat each other with civility and respect! In particular, if you disagree with some point of view, always give

reasons for your disagreement. That way, fruitful discussions are stimulated.

Throughout each week's discussion, the faculty will follow your conversations, and will contribute to the discussion from time to time, to assist in your learning. However, the *discussions are meant to be primarily discussions among the class members*. From time to time, faculty may post additional questions that arise out of the week's discussions. Most important for the success of the discussions in a policy course is that no one feel constrained or shy to comment or ask questions.

If you have course-related questions that refer to material from previous weeks or any other course-related issue, post your question in the "Ask the Faculty" link (as appropriate) under the "Lessons" tab.

Occasionally, one or the other faculty member may not be available for several days during the course of the semester, due to other professional commitments (e.g., conferences). If one of us is gone for a few days or longer and offline during that time, we will post an announcement in the course web site in advance of our absence to let you know when that will happen.

We have opted for three discussion groups, each being primarily supervised by one of the three instructors. However, faculty may cross occasionally into other discussion.

DISCUSSION GROUP ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED IN THE FIRST WEEK UNDER THE WEEK #1 LESSON.

It's important to keep in mind that the Discussion Forums are supposed to simulate a "back and forth" conversation between a group of people, in which everyone has a turn to talk, and the talk should be balanced in terms of how much each person contributes. Think about how you would interact with others at a social event, or in an in-person classroom setting. With in-person interactions, people take turns exchanging relatively brief statements about a topic of interest. Thoughtful dialog should be balanced regarding individual contributions, and we all should carefully read each other's contribution before responding. This type of dialog enhances the understanding of the course content and also conveys respect for the contributions of classmates. This does not mean that you should avoid arguing passionately for or against a particular point of view. However, all arguments should be based on reasons or cite supporting evidence.

With these thoughts about group discussions in mind, here are some more specific suggestions that may be helpful during weekly online discussions:

- (1) There is no need that your first comments for a week address ALL posted discussion questions. Start with one and let others tackle different questions first.**
- (2) Initial contributions should be short "to get the ball rolling." That means a contribution of anywhere between 3-10 sentences would be fine.**
- (3) Come back later in the week and address other questions as well as the contributions of your fellow students.**
- (4) Past experience shows that some students are always among the first to make their contributions and others have a tendency to follow. In this class, all students are required to be first discussants at some point during the course (this will be monitored!).**
- (5) Given that the start of the new week is always pegged on Thursdays, it is expected that initial contributions would start no later than the following Monday.**

(6) The weekly discussions are meant to be both a learning tool and a way for faculty to check your progress in grasping the course material. While opinions and values are certainly part of policy discussions, your contributions should primarily reflect your grasp of the material and the policy issues. Show us how the concepts and facts introduced in the course material and readings help you think more clearly about the policy issues at hand!

(7) As a final rule, remember that these discussion groups occur in a public forum. That means, that you can present your and any point of view as vigorously as you like (a little spice in life is a good thing!), as long as you avoid personal attacks on others. Other than that, there are no restrictions on your contributions, although good grammar and good style are expected.

(8) Each week a member of the discussion team will be responsible for synthesizing and posting the main concepts discussed by the group members in response to each of the questions. A co-editor will be responsible for assisting the primary editor with synthesizing the information discussed during the week and posting the primary elements within the weekly discussion forum. The synthesis will be posted in group's discussion board under the topic heading of "discussion synthesis week #." The synthesis posting is due the following Monday and is to be posted by 10:00 pm.

Your comments should include the following 8 critical elements to obtain the maximum score. Please familiarize yourself with the criteria.

- 1. Analysis:** discussing relevant themes, concepts, main ideas, components, or relationships among ideas; identifies hidden assumptions or fallacies in reasoning
- 2. Application:** provides examples of how principles or concepts can be applied to actual situations; discusses the implications of theory for practice; demonstrates applied level of understanding.
- 3. Elaboration:** builds on ideas of others or ideas found in the readings/overviews by adding details, examples, a different viewpoint, or other relevant information; provides original insights or responses, integrates multiple views. (Just saying "ditto" or "I agree" is not considered elaboration).
- 4. Evaluation & Feedback:** assesses the accuracy, reasonableness, or quality of ideas; provides constructive feedback to classmates
- 5. Presentation:** writing style at academic level; appropriate language usage; correct grammar; spelling accurate; appropriate terminology utilized; concise & precise; creative & interesting to read; 1st name signed at the end of the post.
- 6. Promptness & Initiative:** demonstrates engagement during the week by starting (initiating) & creating discussion threads; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to the topic; contributes readily to the conversation but does not dominate it; supports &/or leads others in discussion. This includes posting early in the week, i.e., no later than by Wednesday at 5 pm, and often.
- 7. References:** the majority of posts should be supported by appropriate evidence with citations or links to the reference included within the post. The American Psychological Association (APA) writing style should be used for citing references & the presentation style of the work.
- 8. Reflection About Meaning:** describes thoughtfully what something means or the new insights it provides; raises questions as seeds for clarification or further discussion; thoughtful

approach to content; correlates to personal & professional experiences. Please review the point allocation criteria for participation/engagement questions:

Point Allocation Criteria

Point Allocation	Criteria
5	Minimum of 3 quality comments for the week All critical elements present <i>Comments must be made by Wednesday 5 pm</i>
4	Minimum of 2 quality comments for the week. All critical elements present
3	Minimum of 1 quality comment for the week. All critical elements present.
0	No comments, unprofessional or unacceptable comments (lacking professional or collegial attitude; disrespectful; inappropriate terminology or slang) No engagement with others or falls on the last day of the activity Spelling & grammar errors.

Note: substantive messages do not have to be long; not all long posts are substantive; all short posts are not necessarily non-substantive.

Additional Thoughts and Suggestions:

If you find yourself experiencing academic difficulty in this course, contact your Discussion Forum faculty as soon as you recognize this—please do not put off talking to us until it is too late!

E-mail is the best way to reach us, but we are also glad to make appointments to discuss course issues with you by telephone. Phone appointments set up by e-mail (which is the preferred option!) can also facilitate faculty phoning you from the College in order to save you long distance telephone charges, if you live at long distance from the main MSU campus. **If you leave telephone messages for us on our office phones, please allow for delays until a response.** Depending upon our schedules for a given week, we may or may not receive phone messages in a timely fashion. In general, we are committed to responding to e-mail messages within 48 hours of when we receive them (Monday-Friday). If we are going to be off-line longer than 48 hours due to out-of-town travel, we will notify you in advance and provide you with alternative contact information.

Finally, we welcome you to NUR841 and hope that the course will turn out to be rewarding to you.

Course Calendar for NUR 841 (2009):

Week 1: 5/18 – 5/27 Poindexter

- Review of course
- Introduction to Health Policy
- General Perspectives on the U.S. Health Care System and the Nursing Profession.

[Readings: B&G, chapter 1; + web-selections]

Week 2: 5/28 – 6/3 Poindexter

- The Contribution of Economics to Understanding the Role of Markets and Government in the
- Provision and Regulation of Health Services
- Professional Labor
- Costs of Health Care Services
- Basic Principles of Market Exchange:

- Determinants of Market Demand
- Determinants of Market Supply
- Price Determination and Market Equilibrium

[Readings: B&G, review chapter 1; + web-selections]

Week 3: 6/4 – 6/10 Wehrwein

- Financing of Health Care 1.
- The Effect of Third-Party Insurance on Consumer/Patient Behaviors:
- General Principles of Insurance (public or private)
- Consumer/Patient 'Moral Hazard' without Budget Constraint; 'Adverse Selection'
- Financing Mechanisms: Out-of-Pocket Payments, Premiums, Co-payments, Deductibles,
- Flexible Spending Accounts, Health Savings Accounts
- Financing of Health Care 2.
- The Effect of Reimbursement Models on Provider Incentives:
- Fee-for-Service Payments
- Prospective Payment Systems: Medicare DRGs, Relative Value Scales
- Types of Capitation Payments: Managed Care, Global Budgeting

[Readings: B&G, chapters 2, 4, 5, 15, & 16; + web-selections]

Week 4: 6/11 – 6/17 Klemczak

- Access to Health Care Services.
- Health Insurance Coverage:
- Medicare, Medicaid, Other Public Insurance
- Employer-based and Individual Private Insurance
- Un- and Under-Insurance
- Non-Insurance Barriers to Accessing Health Care Services
- Medicaid: Health Insurance for the Poor
- The structure of the program; current program benefits;
- Current financing; recent changes at state level;
- Reimbursement under Medicaid

[Readings: B&G, chapter 2 & 3; + web-selections]

Week 5: 6/18 – 6/24 Wehrwein

- The U.S. Health Care Delivery System:
- Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Care;
- General and Specialty Hospitals
- Physician (individual and group) practices
- Nurse-managed Care Practices
- HMOs
- Nursing homes

[Readings: B&G, chapters 6, 7, 10, 11 & 12; + web selections]

Week 6: 7/1: Wednesday MID-TERM EXAM 6:00 – 7:30 pm on-line

Groups and Topic selection is Due: Thursday 7/9

Week 7: 7/6 - 7/15 Klemczak

- Costs of Health Care:
- Cost Control and Quality of Care: Conflicting or Compatible Goals?
- Cost control and Rationing of Health Care Services by Third Party Payers
- Technology: Source of Cost Savings or Cost Increase?

- Electronic Medical Records

[Readings: B&G, chapters 8, 9; + web-selections]

Week 8: 7/16 – 7/22 Wehrwein

- The Health Care Labor Force:
- Labor Markets and Education for Nurses
- Physicians & Other Health Professionals

[Readings: B&G, chapter 17; + web-selections: U.S. Statistical Abstract, 2003 Edition : Section 3]

Week 9: 7/23 – 7/29 Poindexter

- Health Care Systems of Other Countries:
- Canada, Germany, Great Britain & Japan:
- Varieties of National Health Insurance Models

[B&G: chapter 14; + web-selections]

Week 10: 7/30 – 8/5 Klemczak

- Regulation and Licensing of Health Professions:
- General Characteristics of Professions
- Physicians and Nurses
- Justifications for Professional Licensing
- Economic Impact of Professional Licensing
- Self-Policing of Professions
- Professional Politics Concerning Foreign-trained Nurses and Physicians
- Scope of Practice; State and Federal Regulation;
- Legislative Conflicts over NP Scope of Practice

[Readings: TBA]

Week 11: 8/6 – 8/12 Klemczak

- Policy and Professionalism Issues Related to Nursing:
- Major 'Divisions' or 'Interest Groups' WITHIN Nursing
- Participation in Shaping Policy:
- What Role can and does a Nurse play in Policy Change?
- Responsibilities of Nurses at Different Levels: Future Challenges and Practice Issues

[Readings: TBA]

Week 12: 8/13 – 8/20

Group Papers Due: Monday 8/13

Discussion of Group Projects on Obama-Biden Health Care Plan