

Making Change: Public Health Policy Advocacy in Principle and Practice

PUBHLTH 410

Winter 2025

Professor

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Office Hours: M | T 11:00-12:00pm; by appt.

Office Location: SPH II M3509

Class

M | W 3:00-4:30

1112 SPH2

Course Overview

Effective advocacy is a critical part of the policy making process. This class will prepare students to understand how advocacy can be used to influence the public health policy making process. Policy making is an inherently political process in which policy makers interact with interest groups and members of the public. This class will provide students with background knowledge, and practical experience to prepare them to advocate for public health policies at the local, state and federal level. Through lectures, class discussions, group exercises, and group advocacy projects on “live” public health issues, students develop the skills to evaluate the policymaking process, create opportunities to inform and influence policymaking, and become more effective in translating and communicating in a policymaking environment. Interested students may enroll in PUBHLTH411, a 1-credit companion course to put advocacy into action by preparing for and participating in an “advocacy day.”

Course Goal

Provide students with the knowledge and skills to effectively advocate for public health goals and policies to the public and policy decision makers.

Program Domains in Course

Health Communication: Illustrate the basic concepts of effective and persuasive public health communication through multiple modalities, including technical and professional writing and the use of mass media and electronic technology.

Problem Solving: Apply problem-solving skills to develop critical, innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to improving the public’s health.

Determinants of Health: Describe the environmental, socioeconomic, behavioral, nutritional, biological, and other determinant factors that impact human health status with particular attention to inequities in and among populations.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Appraise the political landscape and stakeholders that are important for making policy change on a given public health topic.

2. Apply principles of policymaking, policy change theory, and policy advocacy to real life public health problems.
3. Effectively advocate for public health change at the local, state and federal level.
4. Develop strong written and verbal communication skills.
5. Define and frame public health problems in such a way that inspires policy change.
6. Analyze the legislative, administrative and judicial intervention points for policymaking and identify where to effectively target advocacy efforts.
7. Identify and evaluate advocacy strategies, such as coalition building, grassroots engagement, and paid and earned media outreach, in order to create specific advocacy campaigns.
8. Develop personal and communication skills to effectively translate and advocate for public health improvements to policymakers, the press and the public.

Course Materials

No textbooks are required. All readings will be made available on CANVAS or can be accessed on academic search platforms (e.g. Google Scholar).

Course Prerequisites:

PUBHLTH 200

Course Policies

Classroom Expectations and Course Format:

Class sessions will include a variety of activities including lectures, guest speakers, discussions, group activities, student presentations and debate. Most sessions will include at least some lecture to provide background information that supplements the assigned readings and frames the discussion.

Many class meetings will include group discussions either in small groups or with the entire class. Several class periods will be devoted to student presentations of group and individual projects.

During the semester, we will also have several external guests who are experts in advocacy and policy making in a variety of ways. These sessions will typically be a mixture of an interviewing from the professor and Q&A from students.

It is expected that students will actively participate in discussions and come to class having done the readings and prepared to contribute. It is also expected that students will address each other with respect and consideration for the thoughts and opinions of others.

This class is dependent on active student participation. Each student has a shared responsibility for the group's learning. Therefore, it is critical that you come to class prepared and ready to participate and contribute and actively engage during class discussions and activities by sharing insights, asking questions, offering feedback, and productively interacting with other students.

Classroom Etiquette:

SPH is committed to creating classroom environments that are supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion. As a discussion-based class, we will engage with each other on a variety of topics. It is totally fine and expected that members of the class will disagree from time to time. Healthcare, public health, and ones' health experiences are complex and there is often not a clear cut "right" answer to many health-related questions or policy problems! However, please focus on the ideas being discussed and speak to all members of the class respectfully.

Technology Policy:

To limit distractions and enhance discussion, laptops, tablets, cell phones or other technology are not allowed during class time.

Academic Integrity:

The faculty and staff of the School of Public Health believe that the conduct of a student registered or taking courses in the School should be consistent with that of a professional person. Courtesy, honesty, and respect should be shown by students toward faculty members, guest lecturers, administrative support staff, community partners, and fellow students. Similarly, students should expect faculty to treat them fairly, showing respect for their ideas and opinions and striving to help them achieve maximum benefits from their experience in the School. Student academic misconduct includes behavior involving plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, falsification of records or official documents, intentional misuse of equipment or materials, and aiding and abetting the perpetration of such acts. The preparation of reports, papers, and examinations, assigned on an individual basis, must represent each student's own effort. Reference sources should be indicated clearly. The use of assistance from other students or aids of any kind during a written examination, except when the use of books or notes has been approved by an instructor, is a violation of the standard of academic conduct. Visit <https://sph.umich.edu/admissions/policies-procedures/mph-mhsa.html> for more information.

For all written assignments students are expected to provide a citation for any and all factual evidence included in their assignments. Students may use any standard citation style of their choice, but must use it consistently within each assignment. Students should cite original sources (academic journal articles, grey literature, government statistics) to support their arguments. Wikipedia (or similar websites) is not an acceptable source. Students are expected to behave in accordance with the academic standards of the University of Michigan. Plagiarism is not acceptable and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly other consequences as dictated by University policy. Plagiarism is any instance of taking someone else's words or ideas as your own. If you are unsure as to whether you should cite something, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

In SPH, our mission to promote population health worldwide is inseparable from our aim to develop more effective and socially just systems for creating and disseminating knowledge. As part of this, we recognize the histories of social discrimination globally and seek to promote and extend opportunities for members of all groups that historically have been marginalized.

We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective.

We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status.

We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and where every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that by building a critical mass of diverse groups on campus and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.¹

It is my intention that students from all backgrounds and perspectives will benefit from this course, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be an asset. The course welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, family education levels, those from varied ability levels and statuses – and all other experiences and backgrounds differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

SPH resources can be found here: <https://sph.umich.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/resources.html> and the SPH's DEI 2.0 Strategic Plan can be found here: <https://sph.umich.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/planning.html>

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- UM Sexual Assault and Prevention Center (SAPAC) 24-hour confidential crisis line: (734) 936-3333; <http://sapac.umich.edu/>
- UM Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (734) 764-8312 <http://caps.umich.edu/>
- University of Michigan Police (DPSS): (734) 763-1131 (or 911 for emergency) <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>
- UM Office of Student Conflict Resolution: (724) 936-6308 <http://oscr.umich.edu>
- UM Newnan Academic Advising Center: (734) 764-0332 <https://lsa.umich.edu/advising>

¹ <https://sph.umich.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

Student Well-Being:

SPH faculty and staff believe it is important to support the physical and emotional well-being of our students. If you have a physical or mental health issue that is affecting your performance or participation in any course, and/or if you need help connecting with University services, please contact the instructor or the Office of Academic Affairs. The following link has variety of resources available to you at the university.

<https://wellbeing.umich.edu/tools-resources/#resourcesforstudents>

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764- 8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

Student Accommodations:

If you think you need or have an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, such as the assignments, in-class activities, or the way I teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, I can work with you, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, or the Adaptive Technologies Computing Site to help determine appropriate accommodations. We will treat any information about your disability with the utmost discretion. Students can also visit the Office of Academic Affairs for assistance in coordinating communications around accommodations. Students seeking academic accommodations should register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). SSD arranges reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Visit <https://ssd.umich.edu/> for more information.²

Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments due to their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Visit <https://provost.umich.edu/resources-policies/calendars/> for more information.

Course Requirements and Grading

Assignments:

Your grade will be based on a mix of individual and group assignments. Your final grade will be calculated based on the following:

² Adapted for use by CRLT, University of Michigan.

Assignment	Description	% of Grade	Due Date
Midterm Exam	In-class exam on material covered between start of class and 2/13	20	2/17
Group Advocacy Strategy Project #1	Part 1 – One Page Advocacy Strategy and One Page Policy Memo (two pages total) Part 2 – In-class Presentation	25 5	3/24 3/19
Group Advocacy Strategy Project #2	Part 1 – One Page Advocacy Strategy and One Page Policy Memo (two pages total) Part 2 – In-class Presentation	25 5	4/21 4/16
Op-Ed	Individuals will write a short op-ed about the topic of one of their advocacy strategies	10	4/28
Participation	Active participation in each class	10	semester

Grading Policy:

All assignments will be scored out of 100 points and then will be weighted for the final course grade according to their worth (described above). For example, the Op-Ed will be graded out of 100 points. So, if you get a 95/100, for the final grade your score on that assignment will be 95×0.10 (9.5/10). If you have a question or concern about a grade or any feedback, please make an appointment to meet with me. Assignments are due on the stated date. If you need an extension, please contact me before the assignment is due. Extensions requested after the due date will only be granted in very extenuating circumstances. Assignments turned in late without prior approval will be docked 5 points per each day late.

Grading Scale:

A+ 98-100% A 94-97% A- 90-93%
 B+ 88-89% B 84-87% B- 80-83%
 C+ 78-79% C 74-77% C- 70-73%
 D+ 68-69% D 64-67% D- 60-63% F \leq 59%

Course Units:

- 1) Unit 1 – Policymaking and Advocacy: The Basics
 - a. Process and Power Structures
 - b. Theoretical Frameworks and Policy Tools
 - c. Power Mapping, Stakeholders, and Advocacy Tool Choice
 - d. Advocacy in Practice (community, local, state, and federal)
 - e. Guest Speakers and Review
 - f. Midterm Exam (2/26/25)
- 2) Unit 2 – Case Study Problem #1 – Gun Violence
 - a. Overview of the Issue
 - b. Power Mapping and Stakeholder Analyses
 - c. Policy and Advocacy Tools
 - d. Guest Speakers
 - e. Student Presentations

- 3) Unit 3 – Case Study Problem #2 – Reproductive & Perinatal Health (esp. in the South)
- Overview of the Issue(s)
 - Power Mapping and Stakeholder Analyses
 - Policy and Advocacy Tools
 - Guest Speakers
 - Student Presentations

Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Readings
1/8	Introductions	Schattschneider. 1960 <i>Semi-Sovereign People</i> . Ch. 2. “The Scope and Bias of The Pressure System.”
Unit One		
1/13 & 1/15	Public Policy Process (local, state, and federal) Theoretical Frameworks and Policy Tools	Introduction to the Legislative Process Legislative Process (video) Federal Regulatory Process Baumgartner et al. 2009. <i>Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why</i> . Ch. 2. Herd and Moynihan. 2020. “Administrative Burdens in Health Policy.” <i>Journal of Health and Human Services Administration</i> . Yaver. 2024. “Rationing by Inconvenience: How Insurance Denials Induce Administrative Burdens.” <i>Journal of Health Politics Policy and Law</i> . Resources: Michigan State Legislature National Conference of State Legislatures https://www.congress.gov/ https://www.federalregister.gov/ https://www.regulations.gov/

1/20 (NO CLASS MLK Day) & 1/22	Health Advocacy and Policy	<p>Farrer et al. (2015). "Advocacy for Health Equity: A Synthesis Review." <i>The Milbank Quarterly</i>.</p> <p>Shilton (2006). "Advocacy for physical activity– from evidence to influence." <i>IUHPE – PROMOTION & EDUCATION</i></p> <p>Chapman (2004). "Advocacy for public health: a primer." <i>Journal of Epidemiol Community Health</i>.</p>
1/27 & 1/29 (NO IN- PERSON CLASS)	Policy Image and Solutions, Stakeholders & Power Mapping	<p>Stone. 1989."Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas." <i>Political Science Quarterly</i>.</p> <p>Schneider, & Ingram, 1993. "Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy." <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 87(02), 334-347</p> <p>Gilens. 1999. <i>Why Americans Hate Welfare</i>. Ch. 5.</p> <p>Noy. 2008. "Power Mapping: Enhancing Sociological Knowledge by Developing Generalizable Analytical Public Tools." <i>The American Sociologist</i>.</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>Varvasovszky and Brugha. 2000. "How to do (or not do)...A Stakeholder Analysis." <i>Health Policy & Planning</i>.</p>
2/3 &	Guest Speaker (Zoom): Jeremiah Van Auken (Senior Associate; The	<p>Yackee. 2015. "Invisible (and Visible) Lobbying: The Case of State Regulatory Policymaking." <i>State Politics & Policy Quarterly</i>.</p> <p>McKay. 2022. <i>Stealth Lobbying</i>. Ch. 2</p>

2/5	Ferguson Group) Formal Lobbying and Policy Advocacy	<p>Baumgartner et al. 2009. <i>Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why</i>. Ch. 8</p> <p>Carpenter. 2004. "The Political Economy Of FDA Drug Review: Processing, Politics, And Lessons For Policy." <i>Health Affairs</i>.</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>APHA LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY HANDBOOK Global Health Incubator Advocacy Action Guide. Rutgers: "Developing an Advocacy Strategy."</p>
2/10 & 2/12	Guest Speaker: Rhiannon Hampson (Biden Administration's USDA Rural Development State Director for Maine) Media Advocacy	<p>Guo C, Saxton GD. 2014. "Tweeting Social Change: How Social Media Are Changing Nonprofit Advocacy." <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>.</p> <p>Ezelio et al. 2023. "Use of Social Media for Health Advocacy for Digital Communities: Descriptive Study" <i>JMIR Form Res</i>.</p> <p>Dorfman & Krasnow. 2014. "Public Health and Media Advocacy." <i>Annual Review of Public Health</i>.</p> <p>Billard. 2024. <i>Voices for Transgender Equality</i>. Ch. 4 & 5. "From Right Here to Everywhere."</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>Dorfman. et al. 2022. "Media Advocacy." Ch. 24. In <i>Community Organizing and Community Building For Health and Social Equity</i>.</p>
2/17 & 2/19	Guest Speaker TBA;	Hoffman. 2012. <i>Heath Care for Some</i> . Chapter. 7. "The Rise of Health Care Activism."

	Community Organizing, Grassroots, Social Movements, & Intersectional Advocacy	<p>Reagan. 1997. Ch. 8. "Radicalization of Reform." <i>When Abortion Was a Crime</i>.</p> <p>Stone et al. 2022. "Moving the Policy Dial Through Equity-Focused Community Organizing." Ch. 22. In <i>Community Organizing and Community Building For Health and Social Equity</i>.</p>
2/24 & 2/26	Review Midterm Exam	None.
Unit 2		
3/10 & 3/12	Guest Speaker TBA; Overview of the Issue	<p>Miller et al. 2013. "Firearms and Violent Death in the United States." Ch. In. <i>Reducing Gun Violence in America</i>.</p> <p>McGinty EE, Webster DW, Jarlenski M, and Barry CL, News Media Framing of Serious Mental Illness and Gun Violence in the United States, 1997-2012, <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 2014; 104:406- 413.</p> <p>Barry et al. 2013. "After Newtown — Public Opinion on Gun Policy and Mental Illness." <i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i>.</p>
3/17 & 3/19	Guest Speaker TBA; Overview of the Issue (cont.) & Stakeholder Analysis	<p>Koper. 2013. "America's Experience with the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, 1994-2004." Ch. In. <i>Reducing Gun Violence in America</i>.</p> <p>Potts. 2023. "In Red States, 'Gun Reform' Means Making It Easier To Buy And Carry Guns". <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>.</p> <p>Koerth. 2023. "The Hardest Part Of Red Flag Laws Isn't Getting Them Passed" <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>.</p>

		<p>Rosenthal and Winker. 2013. "The Scope of Regulatory Authority Under the Second Amendment." Ch. In. <i>Reducing Gun Violence in America</i>.</p> <p>Lacombe. 2021. <i>Firepower: How the NRA Turned Gun Owners into a Political Force</i>. Ch. 3.</p>
3/24 & 3/26	Student Presentations	
Unit 3		
3/31 & 4/2	Guest Speaker TBA; Overview of the Issue(s)	<p>McFarlane and Hanson. 2024. <i>Regulating Abortion</i>. Ch. 1 & 3 & 7.</p> <p>Singh and Yu. 2019. "Infant Mortality in the United States, 1915-2017: Large Social Inequalities have Persisted for Over a Century." <i>International Journal of Maternal and Child Health and AIDS</i>.</p> <p>Collier & Molina. 2019. "Maternal Mortality in the United States: Updates on Trends, Causes, and Solutions." <i>NeoReviews</i>.</p> <p>Almazan and Keuroghlian. 2021. "Association Between Gender-Affirming Surgeries and Mental Health Outcomes." <i>JAMA Surgery</i>.</p> <p>Kearney and Levine. 2012. "Why is the Teen Birth Rate in the United States So High and Why Does It Matter?" <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>.</p>
4/7 & 4/9	Overview of the Issue (cont.) & Stakeholder Analysis	<p>Reagan. 1997. Ch. 6-7. "Raids and Rules." & "Repercussions." <i>When Abortion Was a Crime</i>.</p>

		<p>Chin. et al. 2023. "United States Health Policies on Gender-Affirming Care in 2022." <i>Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery</i>.</p> <p>Kreitzer et al. 2021. "Affordable but Inaccessible? Contraception Deserts in the US States." <i>Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law</i>.</p> <p>Villavicencio. 2020. "Overview of US Maternal Mortality Policy." <i>Clinical Therapeutics</i>.</p>
4/14 & 4/16	Student Presentations	None
4/21	Student Presentations & Conclusions	None
4/28	Op-Ed Due	None