

**POLSC 236 Health Policy**  
*A Year of Health Course*

Fall 2008 Quigley Hall Room 122  
Mondays / Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:15

Professor Melissa Kovacs Comber  
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Office Hours: M, W 12:30 – 2:00; Th 10:00-12:00; F 11:00-12:00

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This course is part of an extraordinary four-course collaboration for Allegheny College's 2008-2009 Year of Health. Throughout the semester we will work in teams of students from our course and the following courses: GEO 108 Environmental Geology, FSENV 201 Environmental Problem Solving, and COMRT 360 Rhetoric and Civic Engagement. A key goal of the Year of Health initiative is to develop an educated citizenry – students who will become leaders in a wide variety of fields, from commerce to politics to education to science. Our course will accomplish this with a practical "task force" project surrounding the theme of water and health.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Understanding Health Policy, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Bodenheimer and Grumbach. 2009. (4<sup>th</sup> edition is ok too – see me if you have this)

Case studies from the Kennedy School of Government, accessible through [www.ksgcase.harvard.edu](http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu)

Course Packet

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Case Studies: This course will introduce public policy analysis and policy memo-writing through case studies on health-related issues. We will model policy analysis in class with the case, "Arsenic in Drinking Water." For our second case, the "Clinton Plan" case, we will work in class in groups as well as individually to write a policy analysis memo.

Year of Health Collaborative Assignment: Details to be distributed.

Final Exam: There will be one comprehensive, take-home exam in this course at the end of the semester. The exam will test your overall understanding of the course material and ability to synthesize course information and themes. The exam will be essay in nature.

Class Participation: Your attendance is expected in this course. It is also expected that you will read the assigned material prior to coming to class and be able to discuss the day's issues with your classmates. At times, I will also ask you to prepare discussion questions for your classmates based on the readings. Thoughtful discussion questions contribute toward your participation grade. Your attendance is also expected at two Year of Health public events. Events will be announced in class and posted on our Sakai page.

GRADE CONSTRUCTION:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| "Clinton" Case Homework Memo | 17% |
| Water Project                | 28% |
| Water Field Trip             | 5%  |
| Class Participation          | 11% |
| Discussion Questions         | 11% |
| Final Exam                   | 28% |

PLEASE NOTE:

Assignments are due on their due date according to this syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted except in the case of serious illness or tragedy.

Cell phones and other noise-making gadgets are to be turned off during class. Cell phones left on, but in "silent" mode, are unacceptable. No texting.

If you have provided documentation of a disability of any kind to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and will need academic accommodations, please see me so that we can make necessary arrangements.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Monday 9/01

Introduction to the course and to the current American health system

Wednesday 9/03

Our current system

B & G chapters 1, 15, and 16

Monday 9/08

Collaborative Class in Quigley 101, Auditorium

Film, "Water: An Endangered Resource."

Wednesday 9/10

Introduction to Water Project

USGS reading – course packet

Saturday, 9/13

Water Field Trip – in the morning

Monday 9/15  
KSG case, "Arsenic in Drinking Water"  
In-class group work and discussion

Wednesday 9/17  
Our current system cont'd.  
B & G chapters 4, 5, and 6  
Optional reading: B & G chapter 7

Monday 9/22  
WATER PROJECT TOPICS DUE  
History of American Health System  
Paul Starr – course packet

Wednesday 9/24  
History of American Health System cont'd.  
Mayes – course packet  
KSG case, "The Battle over the Clinton Health Care Proposal"

Monday 9/29  
Clinton case cont'd.

Wednesday 10/01  
Obama and McCain health proposals  
Various handouts

Monday 10/06  
Access to Care  
Cunningham and Hadley – handout on Sakai  
B & G chapters 2 and 3

Wednesday 10/08  
Collaborative Class in Carr Room 200 Auditorium  
Group Meeting Time

Monday 10/13 - NO CLASS Fall Break

Wednesday 10/15  
Costs  
B & G chapters 8 and 9

Monday 10/20  
Quality  
B & G chapters 10 and 17  
ERISA reading on Sakai

Wednesday 10/22  
States Taking Matters into their own Hands: MA and CA  
Readings on Sakai

Monday 10/27  
U.S. System in International Perspective  
Anderson et al. – handout on Sakai  
Blank and Burau chapters – course packet

Wednesday 10/29  
Collaborative Class in Carr Room 200 Auditorium

Monday 11/03  
Comparison: Germany  
Graig pp. 40-72 – course packet  
B & G pp. 163-166

Wednesday 11/05  
Comparison: Canada  
Graig pp. 121-150 – course packet  
B & G pp. 166-170

Monday 11/10  
Pharmaceutical Industry – New Medicare rules  
“Medicare Part D” reading on Sakai

Wednesday 11/12  
Pharmaceutical Industry Economics  
Film: “Big Bucks, Big Pharma” and discussion

Monday 11/17  
WATER PROJECT REPORTS DUE  
Influenza and Avian Flu  
“Influenza 1918” film and discussion  
“Why Revive a Deadly Flu Virus?” – reading on Sakai

Wednesday 11/19  
Ethics  
Annas article – handout on Sakai  
Gillick article – handout on Sakai  
Ganzini et al. article – handout on Sakai  
Steinbrook article - handout on Sakai  
B & G chapter 13

Monday 11/24  
Ethics cont'd.  
Terri Schiavo case – Reading on Sakai

Wednesday 11/26  
NO CLASS Thanksgiving Break

Monday 12/01  
NO CLASS – evening presentation make-up time

Tuesday 12/02  
Water Project presentations, Tippe Tillottson Room  
5:00 – 6:00 pm Food and set-up  
6:00 – 9:00 pm Project presentations

Wednesday 12/03  
Politics and Policies of Food – Bottles, Bananas, and Beef  
Nestle pp. 105–110; 145-158; 162-165; and chapter 14 – course packet

Monday 12/08  
Politics and Policies of Food cont'd. – Olestra and More on Beef  
Nestle chapter 15 – course packet  
Pollan, "Power Steer" – on Sakai

Wednesday 12/10  
Politics and Policies of Food cont'd., catch-up, and course review  
Take-home final exam distributed and posted on Sakai

Wednesday 12/17  
FINAL EXAM due by 12:00 noon