HEALTH POLICY ANALYSIS IN LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES

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Department: International Health

Course Title: Health Policy Analysis in Low and Middle Income Countries

Abbreviated Course Title: Health Policy Analysis LMICs

Credits: 3

Grading Options: Letter Grade

Prerequisites: Introduction to International Health

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Provides an overview of key political frameworks and theories related to policy development and offers practical perspectives on their application to health policy in LMICs. Analyzes the political economy of health policy: how the political environment, country institutions, and economic and planning systems come together to influence the process of health policy development. Introduces the main actors, processes and contextual features that are typical of policy development and implementation in LMICs, and actors and processes at the global level that influence LMIC policy.

Topics covered encompass national policy and planning frameworks; relationships with aid donors and issues of aid harmonization and alignment; the role of policy networks and in particular, civil society actors; policy implementers and their role in shaping policy development; and mechanisms for global health governance. Final sessions focus on practical strategies to strengthen policy development processes including use of evidence and creating alliances.

Teaching will draw upon examples from a range of diseases and services (e.g. HIV/AIDS; tobacco; childhood illnesses) as well as health systems issues, such as health financing. The course is designed to be accessible and relevant to students with varied primary interests, it builds upon and complements the course “Health Systems in Low and Middle Income Countries”. Theories will be introduced briefly at the beginning of the course and then elaborated through application to specific topics.
COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students should be able to:-

1. Apply the key features of various frameworks and models for understanding the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
2. Identify, describe, analyze and manage common processes and actors involved in health policy development with a particular focus on LMICs
3. Appreciate the need for national policy leadership in the health sector, and when working in LMICs, act in ways that respect national processes
4. Help develop and implement strategies to promote successful policy development and implementation for a range of different health policy issues
5. Write a policy communication such as a policy brief

RATIONALE FOR COURSE

Understanding the processes and actors involved in policy development is important for public health practitioners to be effective in any setting, but especially in low and middle income countries (LMICs). While there are many current courses at the School that address policy analysis, these focus primarily on appraisal and selection of specific policy options and moreover do not focus on LMICs. No course within the International Health Department focuses explicitly on health policy in LMICs, although it is a minor element of multiple courses. This course is designed to fill this gap, focusing on the political economy of policy, and in particular policy processes in LMICs.

METHOD OF STUDENT EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Online quiz on weekly readings &amp; lectures</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Closes Friday, February 15th, 2019 (11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Assignment 1 – elevator speech (group assessment)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 5 – work completed in class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Assignment 2 – Policy analysis essay using one of the theories or</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due Saturday, March 2nd, 2019 (11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>frameworks presented in class to analyze a case study policy</td>
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<td>➔ Selected topic &amp; framework due February 20th, 2019 (11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Assignment 3 – Policy brief developed on a topic of your choosing</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due Saturday, March 16th, 2019 (11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>5</strong> Class participation – class attendance (5%); participation in</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Throughout term</td>
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<tr>
<td>discussions (5%); peer evaluations for small group work on final case (5%)</td>
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Online quiz on weekly readings and lectures (10%)

An online quiz will assess students’ reflections of the weekly readings and lectures. Students will answer short, open-ended answer questions synthesizing their assessment of the class material along with in-class discussions and their personal experiences.

Quiz closes on Friday of Week 4 at 11:59 PM.

Assignment 1 – Elevator speech (15%)

During Week 5 students will work in small groups to develop an elevator speech that seeks to persuade a stakeholder of the need for policy reform in their chosen area. In preparation, each group will determine how to frame their policy position in light of the stakeholders engaged on the issue. Each group will receive a group grade for the preparatory work conducted and final elevator speech delivered.

Assignment 2 – Policy case study (30%)

During the course, four policy case studies will be read and/or discussed (polio vaccination, HIV/AIDS policy in South Africa, the Mexican health sector reform and the development of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). In addition, during the fifth week of class students will be working in groups on policy issues to be announced in class.

For the second assignment, students will write up any one of these case studies as a policy analysis, using one of the theories or frameworks introduced in the course to analyze the case and understand the multiple dimensions of the policy-making process in question. Students can use any of the frameworks discussed in class EXCEPT the Shiffman model of political priority (which will be covered in the first assignment) and the PESTLE framework. If a student wants to use a different policy case study, they will need to get approval from the co-instructors in advance.

The final essay should be no more than 4 pages in length (typed, 1.5 spacing). Please see the detailed description of the assignment on the CoursePlus website.

Assignment 3 – Policy brief (30%)

Students will write a policy brief on a topic of their choosing to advocate for a policy to improve health in an LMIC. They should make sure that (i) they have a clearly defined policy issue and (ii) there is some kind of evidence base on which to base their brief (preferably a review or systematic review of the evidence). For example, possible topics for a policy brief include:

- Should the government repeal user fees at the primary care level?
- Should clinical officers take on a greater role in provision of anti-retroviral therapy?
- Should a system of community health workers be developed?

The course instructors are happy to discuss selection of topics for the policy brief. Please see the detailed description of the assignment on the CoursePlus website. The IDRC reference in the required reading list for Week 5 has more information on writing effective policy briefs.
Please see further details on Courseplus regarding Assignment 3.

**Attendance and participation in discussions (15%)**

- 5% of the grade will be on the basis of attendance in class. The class attendance policy is described below. Students will start with 5% and will have marks deducted in case of transgression of the policy.
- 5% of the grade will be based on the quality and quantity of student contributions in class, as assessed by the instructors.
- 5% of the grade will be awarded by other students based on the group work conducted during the iCCM case study.

**GRADING POLICY**

Standard rubrics will be used by the teaching team to evaluate and grade assignments. These rubrics will be available on CoursePlus for students’ information.

Late written assignments will be assessed a 5% penalty for every day that the assignment is late.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Marks will be deducted from the class participation grade for all unexcused absences and late arrivals in class.

If a student knows that they will be absent then they should excuse themselves in advance by writing to all members of the teaching team. Students who have an excused absence will be requested to complete written work instead. If students miss a lecture, then they will review the lecture materials and provide a summary and reflection of the lecture materials. If students miss group work then they will review the materials and provide a write up of the tasks covered in the group work. This should be submitted by the end of the week in which the absence takes place.
COURSE OUTLINE

This class uses a mix of more traditional lecture formats and group work, with a flipped classroom approach where students will be asked to view the lecture online and then work on learning activities during class. Note that during weeks 3, 5 and 7 there will be no formal lecture, but instead students will view the lecture online.

The face-to-face lectures will be interactive and will cover the core concepts and theories for that particular topic. The group work or exercises seek to reinforce learning through a set of policy case studies that illustrate particular issues or theories, but are also integrative combining learning across different weeks.


NOTE: It is not compulsory to buy this book but it is a useful reference book for the whole course, and several required readings are drawn from it. It is also available as an electronic book through the Welch library portal.

WEEK 1 – (1) INTRODUCTION TO CLASS AND (2) POLICY ANALYSIS THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN LMICS

23rd January 2019 – Interactive lecture format

1. Overview of course: introductions, syllabus
2. Class exercise: Applying the policy triangle to polio vaccination in Pakistan

Required reading/listening

- Listen to the lecture overview of health policy analysis frameworks and theories
  - Policy stages: agenda setting; formulation, implementation; evaluation
  - Policy elites; Policy networks
  - Analyzing power
- Buse, Mays, Walt (2012) Making Health Policy, Chapters 1 and 2

Additional recommended reading


Homework Week 1 – Listen to the lecture on health policy analysis frameworks and theories by 28th January.
WEEK 2 – NATIONAL LEVEL POLICY AND PLANNING PROCESSES, AND GOVERNMENT ACTORS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Articulate the various political, social and economic contextual factors (PESTLE) that might affect health policy and identify them in real world cases.
- Understand what is meant by the term “policy elites” and how to go about identifying different attributes, goals, ideological perspectives, relative power and influence of policy elites.
- Compare and contrast different approaches to health sector policy and planning.

28th January 2019 – Interactive lecture format

Required reading

Recommended reading
- Pisani, E., Kok, M. O., & Nugroho, K. (2016). Indonesia’s road to universal health coverage: a political journey. Health Policy and Planning, czw120.

30th January 2019 – Mexican health sector reforms (case and activity)

Required reading for group work (30th January)

Additional reference readings for this case are available on CoursePlus
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe how policy making environments and processes have evolved over time
- Compare and contrast different types of policy networks in terms of how they are structured and how they share resources such as information across the networks.
- Evaluate the legitimacy of different non-governmental actors and what they are able to contribute to the health policy process.

4th February and 6th February 2019 – Development and implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (flipped classroom and activity)

This case study examines the factors underlying the successful development, by WHO and its partners, of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, examining in particular the role of networks of non-governmental actors and other actors, and the contribution of high level political leadership. During the two class sessions students will be organized into different country representatives and representatives of other actors, such as NGO networks, tobacco companies, etc.

Required reading/listening

- Listen to the lecture on non-government stakeholders and policy networks
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control draft text (see instructions for the group work on CoursePlus)
- Additional required readings for the group work are available on CoursePlus

Recommended readings

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and classify different types of international aid agencies and development partners
- Explain the different mechanisms through which policy ideas may be transferred across time and across geographies
- Understand the meaning of and identify practices that promote, aid harmonization, coordination and alignment

11th February 2019 – Interactive lecture format

Required reading


Recommended reading


13th February 2019 – South African HIV/AIDS policy (case and activity)

This case study examines the factors contributing to the disastrous HIV/AIDS policy in South Africa, from the democratic elections in 1994 until recently. The case study examines the domestic political and social factors that framed the policy debate, examining in particular how evidence was used in the debate. The case study also looks at the role of domestic and international advocacy and how transcalar advocacy networks (i.e. networks that worked across national and international levels) contributed to policy change.

Required reading for group work (13th February)


Additional reference readings for this case are available on CoursePlus

ONLINE QUIZ ABOUT READINGS CLOSES 15TH FEBRUARY BY 11:59 PM.
WEEK 5 – AGENDA SETTING AND POLICY FORMULATION (FLIPPED CLASSROOM)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify factors that contribute to a particular issue receiving political priority.
- Develop strategies to generate higher political attention to particular issues
- Describe types of policy formulation processes in LMICs

18th February and 20th February 2019 – Elevator speeches (Assignment 1)

During these two classes students will work in small groups to develop a strategy for getting an issue onto the national policy agenda of a particular country. Policies under consideration are:

1. Tobacco health warning labels law in India
2. Introduction of a CHW program in Myanmar
3. Integration of refugees in Kenya

Students will be asked to (i) identify key stakeholders, (ii) determine how best to frame the policy issue for these stakeholders, and (iii) develop an elevator speech that could be used with some of the key stakeholders in order to promote uptake of the policy.

Required reading

- Listen to the lecture on agenda setting and policy formulation
- Additional required readings for the group work are available on CoursePlus

Recommended reading


SELECTED TOPIC AND FRAMEWORK FOR ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE 20TH FEBRUARY BY 11:59 PM.
WEEK 6 – STRENGTHENING POLICY THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Articulate different ways in which evidence may influence policy
- Develop strategies to communicate research evidence to different types of target audience
- Develop and write a policy brief

**25th February 2019 – Interactive lecture format**

**Required reading**


**Recommended reading**

- Malaria Knowledge Programme (undated) Enhancing research uptake through communication, networking and capacity development Malaria Knowledge Programme Policy Brief available at [http://www.healthlink.org.uk/PDFs/mkp_uptake.pdf](http://www.healthlink.org.uk/PDFs/mkp_uptake.pdf)

**27th February 2019 – The 2018 Health Policy Brief Awards (activity)**
The teaching team will provide a selection of health policy briefs published during 2018, which students will screen using suggested criteria so as to identify a shortlist of high quality briefs. During the class, students in small groups will discuss and score the shortlisted policy briefs on the basis of (i) their use and application of evidence, (ii) their understanding of and responsiveness to the policy context, and (iii) the degree to which they successfully engage their audience.

Small groups will then present and advocate for their selected policy brief, and a winner of the 2018 health policy brief award will be identified. This exercise is designed to support individual student work on Assignment 2.

*Homework Week 6 - Review assigned policy briefs for class on Wednesday.*

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**ASSIGNMENT 2: POLICY CASE STUDY – DUE BY 11:59 PM ON SATURDAY, 2ND MARCH**

Revised on Jan 10, 2019
WEEK 7 – (1) POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION AND (2) CCM CASE

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Describe different theories regarding how policies approved by government get implemented, including both top-down and bottom-up models of implementation, and the role of frontline bureaucrats
- Explain different strategies that may be employed to strengthen policy implementation
- Articulate how evaluation can contribute to policy development and the challenges in ensuring strong policy evaluation.

**4th March 2019 – Interactive lecture format**

*Required reading*


*Recommended reading*

- Erasmus, E., Orgíll, M., Schneider, H., & Gilson, L. (2014). Mapping the existing body of health policy implementation research in lower income settings: what is covered and what are the gaps?. *Health policy and planning, 29*(suppl_3), iii35-iii50.

**6th March 2019 – Policy development and actor management for Community Case Management of childhood illnesses in Burkina Faso (flipped classroom and activity)**

- Development of actor management plan and policy for Community Case Management for Childhood Illness in Burkina Faso (see CoursePlus for more information)
- Design stakeholder assessment

*Homework Week 7 – Listen to the lecture on political management of reforms by 6th March.*
WEEK 8 – (1) CCM CASE, CONTINUED AND (2) WRAP-UP

11th March 2019 – Policy development and actor management for Community Case Management of childhood illnesses in Burkina Faso (group work)

- Interview key stakeholders
- Develop actor management plan

13th March 2019 – Policy development and actor management for Community Case Management of childhood illnesses in Burkina Faso (group presentations & debrief)

- Group presentations of iCCM policy and actor management strategy to Minister of Health
- Final debrief session on iCCM case
- Course wrap-up and evaluations

ASSIGNMENT 3: POLICY BRIEF – DUE BY 11:59 PM ON SATURDAY, 16TH MARCH

ICCM PEER EVALUATIONS - DUE BY 11:59 PM ON SATURDAY, 16TH MARCH