



Health Care Systems in Comparative Perspective

“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

~ Constitution of the World Health Organization

General Information

Course number, number of credits

PPHS/SOCI 525B, 3 credits

Meeting times and location for lectures

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:35-12:55pm, Purvis Hall, Room 25.

Prerequisites

Permission of the instructor.

Professor

Dr. Amélie Quesnel-Vallée, Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health.

Office: Peterson Hall, 3460 McTavish, room 344

Phone: 398-2758

Office hours: Tue and Th after class, in Purvis Hall (please make an appointment at

<https://calendly.com/amelie-quesnelvallee/pphs-soci-525-office-hours>), or by appointment at my main office:

Peterson Hall, 3460 McTavish, room 344 (please use <https://calendly.com/amelie-quesnelvallee/20min> to make an appointment).

Course content

This course is intended as an introduction to principles of health systems organization and comparative analysis. This course’s cross-listing in Sociology and Epidemiology reflects its multidisciplinary focus in drawing notions from social epidemiology, health services research, demography and medical sociology. Moreover, by bringing students from the Faculties of Arts and Medicine together to reflect on common issues, this course will ensure that seminar participants are exposed to the realities of engaging in a multidisciplinary dialogue around a shared problem.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

General

- Understand and track healthcare policy practices in key jurisdictions
- Use a comparative approach to make policy recommendations

Specific

- Develop an awareness of the role of social determinants in relation to population health
- Contrast different methods of financing and governing health systems
- Appreciate how health priorities are established in a world of limited resources
- Be informed about reforms in other jurisdictions
- Compare strengths and weaknesses of different health systems in reaching different goals

- Discuss pressing health issues in developed countries

Course requirements

This course is designed as a seminar. As such, you are responsible for reading the assigned material and coming to class prepared to discuss it. A set of questions to keep in mind when reading the assigned material is provided for every week and will serve as the backbone for our seminar discussions.

Required reading

Case Studies in Canadian Health Policy and Management, Second Edition. 2014. Edited by Raisa B. Deber with Catherine L. Mah, University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.

Available in print at the McGill bookstore, on Amazon electronically, and with University of Toronto Press, Indigo, and Amazon in print format.

Other readings will be made available on MyCourses or online (must be on McGill network or logged in to the library –please contact me if you are having difficulty accessing the readings).

Recommended reading

Blank, R.H. and Burau, V. *Comparative Health Policy*, (any edition). New York, NY: Palgrave McMillan.

If you need to get concrete examples (this material can get high-level and abstract at times), this is a general overview of health policy in comparative perspective, with specific country examples. I used it as a required reading in the past, so used copies of this book may be available at the McGill Bookstore.

Health and Wellness Resources at McGill

Student well-being is a priority for the University. All of our health and wellness resources have been integrated into a single Student Wellness Hub, your one-stop shop for everything related to your physical and mental health. If you need to access services or get more information, visit the Virtual Hub at mcgill.ca/wellness-hub or drop by the Brown Student Services Building (downtown) or Centennial Centre (Macdonald Campus). Within your faculty, you can also connect with your Local Wellness Advisor (to make an appointment, visit mcgill.ca/lwa).

Detailed outline

Sept 3. Course introduction and syllabus presentation

General discussion questions:

- What are the characteristics of a good health system?
- Why study health systems in comparative perspective?
- Concept mapping of a health system

Sept. 5 & 10. Policy: What, where, when, how? Introduction to the HRA. Guest Lecture by Eamon Duffy, McGill Libraries, on searching for policy information.

General discussion questions:

- Who makes policy decisions?
- How are these decisions made?
- How legitimate and ethical is the policy process?

Required readings:

- Carter and Quesnel-Vallée. [Expanding Pharmacist Services in Quebec: A Health Reform Analysis of Bill 41 and its Implications for Equity of Finance](http://nuffieldbioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Public-health-Chapter-3-Policy-process-and-practice.pdf). *Health Reform Observer - Observatoire des Réformes de Santé*

http://www.nchpp.ca/165/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=1077

http://www.nchpp.ca/docs/ModeleEtapesPolPubliques_EN.pdf

Coffman, J. 2007. Evaluation Based on Theories of the Policy Process. In *The Evaluation Exchange*. Harvard Family Research Project. Volume XIII, Number 1. (On MyCourses).

Sept 12. Population health. Obesity: A modern epidemic?

Required readings:

- Chapter 1: Sections

1	2.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.2	4.3	5.2	5.2.1	5.4	6.3	6.3.1	7.2	9.1	9.2
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- Chapter 4. Trimming the Fat: Dealing with Obesity

Discussion Questions:

- What is health?
- How can government policy help improve the health of a population?
- How does a population perspective affect the way we think about health care?
- What are the policy options for addressing obesity?
- What is the appropriate role of the state in addressing obesity?

Add/Drop deadline: September 17

Housekeeping: Groups announced; preferences for dates and book chapters set for first case study discussion

Sept. 17 & 19 Financing: priority setting and resource allocation

Required readings:

- Chapter 1: Sections

2.1.2	2.2.4	3.2	3.3	3.3.3	3.4	3.6	3.6.1	3.6.3	3.6.4	4	4.2	4.3	5.3	5.9	6.2	6.3.2	6.4	7.2
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- Chapter 18. Everybody Out of the Pool: Financing Health Expenditures through Medical Savings Accounts

Discussion Questions:

- What services should be provided, and to whom?
- Who should pay for what?

- What are the roles of: individuals, families, charity, and government?

Housekeeping: Topics for team project must be communicated with me.

Sept. 24. Delivering Services (provision)

Required readings:

- Chapter 1: Sections:

2.3	3	3.1	3.6.3	6.2	6.3.2	5.6	5.10	8.4	8.4.1
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- Chapter 13: What to Do with the Queue?

- Quesnel-Vallée. [Delisting Medical Imaging in Private Settings from Public Coverage in Québec](#). *Health Reform Observer - Observatoire des Réformes de Santé*

Discussion Questions:

- How would you characterize high-performing service provision?
- What are the determinants of access to health care?
- Is it possible to balance equity, cost-effectiveness and timeliness of access?
- How will population aging and patient expectations affect our capacity to pay for health care services?
- How will technological changes affect our capacity to pay for health care services?
- Assuming unlimited financial and human resources, should we allow unlimited access to health care?
- What should be the role of the private sector in our system? What are the risks and benefits of greater privatization?

Sept 26. Health Human Resources: Improving access

Required readings:

- Chapter 1: Sections

2.2.1	2.2.2	2.3	3	3.1	3.3	3.3.3	3.3.4	3.4	3.6	4	4.3
5	5.1	5.5	5.9	6.1	6.1.1	6.1.2	6.2	6.4	7.2	7.3	8.4.

- **Chapter #10. The Demanding Supply: Licensing International Doctors and Nurses in Ontario**

Discussion Questions:

- Discuss the implications of different remuneration mechanisms and their impact on access to health care
- How does the perspective of different stakeholders affect the way the issues are seen in this case?
- Why do the provincial and federal governments regulate practice permits and accreditation?

October 1 & October 3: Buffer week. Prep for case studies from textbook. HRA bibliography due on Oct. 1.

October 8 – October 29: Case studies from the book. If you are presenting in a given week, keep in mind you must meet with me at least a week prior to discuss your draft presentation and activity. If not presenting, read the chapter and come prepared to engage with the discussion!

October 31: Buffer class. Prep team case studies. HRA due.

Nov 5 – Nov 28 (Class is cancelled on Nov. 19) Your team case studies.

You must meet with me at least two weeks prior with a draft presentation and project report. Send the project report the week prior to the presentation to the class. Class, please read the reports, and come prepared to discuss!

Assignments and evaluation

	Due date	Total % of course grade
Individual component		55%
Concept mapping	Throughout the semester	10%
Class discussions and activities	Throughout the semester	5%
Team participation	Throughout the semester	5%
HRA annotated bibliography	October 1	10%
Health reform analysis	October 31	25%
Team component		45%
Leading discussion on a pre-existing case study	October 8 – October 29	15%
Developing case study and leading discussion on it	November 5 –November 28	30%

Participation: 10%

Since this course is run as a seminar, regular attendance and participation are mandatory. An individual participation grade will count for 5%, composed of the average of the professor's rating and the individual's self-rating (see participation grading criteria on MyCourses). Another 5% of the grade will consist of the average of the teammates' ratings of participation of the individual in team work. Finally, throughout the semester, we will be working towards the development of your concept maps of health systems.

Regular in-class assessments: 10%

Throughout the semester, we will be working towards the development of your concept maps of health systems issues in class.

Health reform analysis: 35%

There are two components to this assignment: an annotated bibliography and the health reform analysis per se.

The annotated bibliography (10%) consists of 10 citations and a short paragraph each justifying the contribution of these citations for your topic.

The **Health Reform Analysis** (25%) consists of a short report on a health reform of your choice in a given jurisdiction. You must follow the template at <https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/hro-ors/hra-template>.

You can find examples of published HRAs at <https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/hro-ors/index> (search for "mcgill". Most of these papers are from previous students of this class!).

Team component 45%

Groups will be created by the instructor (membership will be announced after the end of the drop-add period).

1. Leading class discussion on a case study from the book

Groups will first lead discussion on a case study from the book to gain experience with this mode of communication. Dates will be randomly assigned, taking your preferences into consideration as much as possible.

The goal of that first discussion is to familiarize yourself with the process of leading discussion on a case study. Teaching notes will be shared with the group to assist them in their preparation of the discussion agenda.

Timeline for deliverables:

At least 1 week prior to leading discussion: meet with instructor to go over your draft agenda.

2. Developing a case study and lead discussion

As a group, you will select an issue of importance to health systems and conduct an environmental scan of the situation in a particular jurisdiction. You *must* choose an international case to ensure a comparative perspective to your analysis.

The report should be succinct, but nevertheless provide a good overview of the main pertinent issues (use the case studies in class as an example; other examples: http://www.cadth.ca/media/pdf/Public_Funding_IVF_es-14_e.pdf).

Your report will likely cover at least some of these points:

- Why the issue you selected is relevant. What are the challenges and opportunities, and for whom?
- A presentation of the jurisdiction's relevant political, cultural and historical context, if applicable. Why is this an interesting jurisdiction to examine or contrast?
- Are these recent reforms, or is there a further need for reform?
- Lessons for Canada (if applicable).

Please bear in mind that a good team project is not the result of a patchwork of individual contributions, so allocate enough time to allow for the integration of these contributions.

Timeline for deliverables:

- 2 weeks prior to the discussion date (dates will be randomly assigned, trying to maximize your preferences): meet with the instructor to go over your draft report
- 1 week prior to the discussion date: share with the class your discussion questions and your report

Seminar participants' rights and responsibilities

Absence and late papers

Out of courtesy for your fellow seminar members and because your presentations and debates are integral components of the course, I would appreciate that you make every attempt to advise me *in advance* of any absence. Papers are considered late if handed in *after* class and will incur a penalty of 20%. Each additional 24-hour period of delay will incur penalties of 20%.

Attendance and participation in class discussions.

You are responsible for all announcements made in class, as well as for all course materials given out in class and posted (and updated) on MyCourses.

Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities

“If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 before you do this.”

Remise des travaux en français

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue). » **Prière de m’en avvertir au préalable!**

Review of a mark

You have the right to ask for a regrading if you feel that your work was not accurately graded. However, to request a regrade, **you must write a one-page paper indicating the reasons why your work should be regraded** and hand it in to me **within a week of receiving the grade.**

In addition, during the regrade process, the work is analyzed much more critically. The first time around, I tend to give students the benefit of the doubt. **Please also note that I have the right to lower your grade in this process.**

You may prefer to meet with me and talk about how you may have improved your work and your learning.

Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days

“1 Students are not to be penalized if they cannot write examinations or be otherwise evaluated on their religious holy days where such activities conflict with their religious observances. (...)

2 Students who because of religious commitment cannot meet academic obligations, other than final examinations, on certain holy days are **responsible for informing their instructor, with two weeks’ notice of each conflict.** (...)” (Approved by Senate - March 20, 1996 - Minute 92)

Statement on academic integrity at McGill

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).”

“L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).”