

**Political Analysis And Strategy For U.S. Health Policy:**  
**HCP 175**  
**Harvard University**  
**John F. Kennedy School of Government**  
**Spring 2003**

**Course Syllabus**

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*Teaching Fellow: Wilson Zhang*  
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**Meeting Time:      4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., MW**

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to meet the following objectives:

- (1) to analyze the politics of major health policy developments in the United States;
- (2) to improve student skills in developing political strategies for influencing future health policy debates and reforms;
- (3) to understand the ways political analysis can improve health policy design, research and implementation;
- (4) to analyze health politics and policy within the context of political debates on US domestic and entitlement spending.

**Course Overview**

This KSG course offers political and analytical insights into understanding U.S. health policy-making and into developing strategies that influence health policy outcomes. The course provides both the theoretical basis and strategic skills for influencing the health policy process within U.S. political institutions. The course is organized around the following themes:

**I. Health Politics**

- The Politics of Health Care
- The Politics of Agendas

- The Politics of Health Care Reform
- Health Politics From The States
- Politics and Policy Research
- The Future of Health Policy and Its Politics

## II. The Strategy of Health Politics

- The Media in Health Politics
- Influencing Issues and Elections
- Influencing Public Opinion
- Strategies for Interests Groups
- Influencing Political Institutions

## **Course Requirements**

Students will be expected to complete assigned readings, participate in class discussions, prepare for case discussion, and write (2) political strategy/policy memos. The final exam will be given during the last day of class.

## **Case Assignment**

All students are expected to prepare for case presentation and to submit a political strategy memo on (2) selected cases for political analysis. Memos are due the day of case discussion.

## **Course Grading**

Final grades for the course will be determined as follows:

Class Participation:	10%
Political Strategy Memo 1:	20%
Political Strategy Memo 2:	20%
Final Exam:	50%

**Key Required Reading:** (These books are available for purchase at the Harvard Square Coop.)

Johnson, Haynes and Broder, David S. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. ISBN 0316469696

Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. ISBN 0637523896

## **Course Participants**

All students are welcome. However, students will most benefit from this course if their professional interests include improving their skills and insights into how to influence effectively

the outcomes of future health policy debates. The principal focus of the course is political strategy in this field rather than the historical or theoretical aspects of health policy.

We suggest that students have read prior to enrollment: Starr, Paul. 1982. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books.

**Session 1: Course Introduction (Shopping Period)**

1/27/2003 Robert J. Blendon

**Session 2: How Health Politics Differs from Health Policy**

1/29/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

Blendon RJ, Benson JM, "Americans' Views on Health Policy: A Fifty-Year Historical Perspective." *Health Affairs*, 20(2):33-46, March/April 2001.

Blendon, Robert, et al. 1995. "Who Has the Best Health Care System? A Second Look." *Health Affairs* 14(4): 220-230.

Blendon RJ, Kim M, "When It Comes to Health Policy, Americans Are Not British." *Harvard Health Policy Review*, 2(1):72-75, Spring 2001.

**Session 3: Data for Political Strategy**

2/3/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

Johnson, Haynes and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company. Chapters 1-6.

Novotny P. "From Polis to Agora: the Marketing of Political Consultants." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 5(3): 12-26, Summer 2000.

Blendon, RJ. "American's Health Priorities: Curing Cancer and Controlling Costs." *Health Affairs*. To be published November/December 2001.

**Session 4: Developing a Political Strategy for Health Politics**

2/5/2003 Robert J. Blendon and Julie Donohue, Ph.D. Program in Health Policy

Assigned Readings:

Downs, Anthony. 1972. "Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle." *The Public Interest* 28:38-50.

Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers. Chapters 1-3, 5-10.

Mebane F, Blendon R, "Political Strategy 101 :How to Make Health Policy and Influence Political People." *Journal of Child Neurology*, 16:513-519, July 2000.

Marmor, Ted. 1994. "The Politics of Universal Health Insurance: Lessons from Past Administrations?" *Political Science and Politics* 28(2):194-198.

Mebane, Felicia and Robert J. Blendon. 2001. "Political Strategy 101: How to Make Health Policy and Influence Political People" *Journal of Child Neurology*. Volume 16, No. 7.

Meredith, J.C., and L. Myer. 1982. "Laying the Groundwork for a Successful Campaign." *Lobbying on a Shoestring Budget*. Auburn House Publishing Company (pp. 6-19).

Wittenberg, E. and Wittenberg, E. 1989. "Winning with Established Grassroots Organizations." *How to Win in Washington*. Chapter 6.

**Session 5: Political Institutions**

2/10/2003     *Guests: Patricia Keenan and Colleen Barry, Ph.D. Program in Health Policy*

Assigned Readings:

- Ellen, Immergut. "Institutions, Veto Points, and Policy Results: A Comparative Analysis of Health Care." *Journal of Public Policy* 10(4): 391-416.
- Lawrence R. Jacobs. "Institutions and Culture: Health Policy and Public Opinion in the U.S. and Britain." *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2. (Jan., 1992), pp. 179-209.
- Johnson, Haynes, and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company. Chapters 7-10.
- Steimo, Sven, and Watts, John. 1995. "It's the Institutions, Stupid!" *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 20(2): 329-372.

**Session 6: The Politics of Special Interests**

2/12/2003     *Robert J. Blendon*

Assigned Readings:

- Berenson, Robert A. 1994. "Do Physicians Recognize Their Own Best Interests?" *Health Affairs* 13(2): 185-193.
- Brown, Larry, and Lawrence Jacobs. 1994. "Dogmatic Slumbers: American Business and Health Policy." In *The Politics of Health Care Reform*, edited by James Morone, et al. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (pp. 205-223).
- Makison, Larry. 1992. "DataWatch: Political Contributions from Health and Insurance Industries." *Health Affairs* 11(4): 119-134.
- Rozell, Mark and Clyde Wilcox. 1999. *Interest Groups in American Campaigns*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press (pp. 16-28).
- Wilkerson, J. and Carrell D. "Money, Politics and Medicine: The American Medical PAC's Strategy of Giving in U.S. House Races." *Journal of Health Politics Policy and Law* 24(2): 335-354.

**2/17/03       No Class Presidents Day**

**Session 7: Health Politics in the States**

2/19/2003     *Robert J. Blendon*

Assigned Readings:

- Gray, Virginia. 1994. "Federalism and Health Care." *Political Science and Politics* 27(2): 217-220.
- Paul-Shaheen, Pamela. "The States and Health Care Reform: The Road Less Traveled and Lessons Learned from Seven that Took the Lead." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 23(2): 319-361.
- Sparer, Michael S., and Lawrence D. Brown. "States and the Health-Care Crisis: The Limits and Lessons of Laboratory Federalism." In *Health Policy, Federalism, and the American*

*States*, edited by Robert F. Rich and William D. White. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 1996.

**Session 8: Case Discussion: Catastrophic Health Insurance for the Elderly**  
2/24/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

KSG Case Program: Catastrophic Health Insurance for the Elderly: C118-95-1278.0.  
Straw, Margaret. 1990. Polling on the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act: Findings and Lessons Learned. Unpublished paper presented at the 45th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. 1-56.  
Vladeck, Bruce. 1999. "The Political Economy of Medicare." *Health Affairs* 18(1): 22-36.

**Session 9: Case Discussion: Abortion and the Missouri General Assembly**  
2/26/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

KSG Case Program: A Change of Heart: Abortion and the Missouri General Assembly. Case # 1007  
Blendon, Robert J., et al. 1993. "The Public and the Controversy over Abortion." *JAMA* 270(23): 2871-2875.  
Blendon, Robert J. 1989. "The 1988 Election: How Important Was Health?" *Health Affairs* 8(3): 6-15.  
Hershey, Marjorie R. 1986. "Direct Action and the Abortion Issue: The Political Participation of Single Issue Groups." In *Interest Group Politics*, edited by Allan J. Cigler and Burdett Loomis (pp. 27-45).

**Session 10: Educating and Influencing the Broader Public**  
3/3/2003 Guest: Mollyann Brodie, Vice President, Public Opinion and Media Research, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

Assigned Readings:

Johnson, Haynes and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company (Chapters 14-17).  
Brodie, Mollyann et al. 1998. "Media Coverage of Managed Care: Is There a Negative Bias?" *Health Affairs* 17(1): 9-25.

**Session 11: Public Trust in Health Policy**  
3/5/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Chanley V., Thomas Rudolph, Wendy Rahn “The Origins and Consequences of Public Trust in Government” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 2000

Blendon R, John Benson , Rich Morin , David Altman , Mollyann Brodie, Maria Brossard Matt James “Changing Attitudes in America” in *Why People Don’t Trust Government* Edited by Joseph Nye, Philip Zelikow, David King

**Session 12: The Politics of Health Care Reform: Strategic Choices**

3/10/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Reading:

Greenstein, Robert. 1991. “Universalism and Targeted Approaches to Relieving Poverty: An Alternative View.” In *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson (pp. 437-460).

Johnson, Haynes and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company (Chapters 18-20).

Skocpol, Theda. 1991. “Targeting within Universalism: Politically Viable Policies to Combat Poverty in the United States.” In *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson (pp. 411-437).

**Session 13: Campaigns, Elections, and Health Policy**

3/12/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

Blendon RJ, Altman DE, Benson JM, Brodie M, "The Implications of the 2000 Election." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 344(9): 679-684, March 1, 2001.

Blumenthal, David. 1992. “Health Policy on the High Wire: Thirteen Days with a Presidential Campaign.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 17(2): 353-373.

**Session 14: The Media and Public Opinion**

3/17/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

Blendon, Robert J., and Mollyann Brodie. 1997. “Public Opinion and Health Policy.” *Health Politics and Policy* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), edited by Theodor J. Litman and Leonard S. Robins. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers (pp. 201-219).

Graber, Doris A. 1989. “News Making and News Reporting.” *Mass Media in American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly (Chapter 3).

Jacobs, Lawrence R. “The Politics of American Ambivalence Toward Government.” In *The Politics of Health Care Reform*, edited by James A. Morone and Gary S. Belkin. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.

Benjamin I. Page, Robert Y. Shapiro, Glenn R. Dempsey. “What Moves Public Opinion?” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 1. (Mar., 1987), pp. 23-44.

**Session 15: Key Political Decisions Behind Health Care Reform and their Implications**

3/19/2003     *Robert J. Blendon*

Assigned Readings:

Johnson, Haynes and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company (Chapters 21-23).

**3/22-3/30     Spring Break**

**Session 16:   Case Discussion: The Clinton Health Plan**

3/31/2003     *Robert J. Blendon*

Assigned Readings:

Staff Analysts. 1994. *Summary and Overview. An Analysis of the Administration's Health Plan. Congress of the United States*. Congressional Budget Office. Chapter 1: 1-23.

Blendon, Robert J., Mollyann Brodie, and John Benson. 1995. "Health Reform: What Happened to Americans' Support of the Clinton Plan?" *Health Affairs* 14(2): 7-23.

Skocpol, Theda. 1995. "The Rise and Resounding Demise of the Clinton Plan." *Health Affairs* 14(1): 66-85.

Starr, Paul, and Walter A. Zelman. 1993. "Bridge to Compromise: Competition under a Budget." *Health Affairs* 13: 7-23.

**Session 17:   A Governor's Perspective**

4/2/2003     *Guest: Governor Michael Dukakis*

Assigned Readings:

Berenson, Robert A., and David Blumenthal. 1989. "Health Care Issues in Presidential Campaigns." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 321(13): 908-912.

Schneider, SK. 1989. "Governors and Health Care Policy in the United States." *Policy Studies Journal* 17(4): 909-926.

**Session 18:   Open Discussion and Q & A**

4/7/2003

**Session 19:   Politics and Policy Research**

4/9/2003     *Guest: Diane Rowland, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, HHS*

Assigned Readings:

Blendon, Robert J, John Benson, and Tracey Stelzer Hyams. 1993. "Bridging the Gap Between Expert and Public Views on Health Care Reform." *JAMA* 269(19): 2573-2578.

Brown, Lawrence D. 1991. "Knowledge and Power: Health Services Research as a Political Resource." In *Health Services Research*. Eli Ginzberg, ed. Chapter 2: 20-45.

Newhouse, Joseph P. 1995. "Economists, Policy Entrepreneurs and Health Care Reform." *Health Affairs* 14(1): 182-198.

**Session 20: Health Politics in the U.S. Senate**

4/14/2003 Guest: Sheila Burke, Former Chief of Staff, Senator Robert Dole, Kansas

Assigned Readings:

Hardin, John W. "An In-Depth Look at Congressional Committee Jurisdictions Surrounding Health Issues." *Journal of Health Politics Policy and Law* 23(3): 517-550.  
Johnson, Haynes and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company. Chapters 11-13.

**Session 21: Health Politics in the U.S. House**

4/16/2003 Guest: Brian Biles, Former Health Staff Director, House Ways and Means Committee

Assigned Readings:

Hansen, Orval, Robert J. Blendon, et al. 1996. "Lawmakers' Views on the Failure of Health Reform: A Survey of Members of Congress and Staff." *Journal of Health Policy, Politics and Law* 21(1): 137-151.  
Morone, James. 1994. "Neglected Institutions: Politics, Administration, and Health." *Political Science and Politics* 27(2): 220-223.  
Peterson, Mark. 1994. "Congress in the 1990s: From Iron Triangles to Policy Networks." In *The Politics of Health Care Reform*, edited by James Morone and Gary Belkin. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (pp. 103-147).

**Session 22: Case Discussion: The Patient Care Bill of Rights**

4/21/2003 Robert J. Blendon

Assigned Readings:

Jost, K. 2001. "Patients Rights" in *The CQ Researcher: Issues in Health Policy*. Washington, D. C., CQ Press. pages 97-114.  
Blendon, R. J. et al. 1998 "Understanding the Managed Care Backlash" *Health Affairs*, 17 (4): pages 80-94.  
Moore, W.J. 1998. "Health Care- Playing Footsie with Health Care" *National Journal*. June 27, 1998.  
Carney, E. N. 1998. "Congress- Are HMOs Off the Critical List?" *National Journal*. August 15, 1998.  
Serafini, M. W. 1998, "Lobbying- Where Managed Care Stands in Congress." *National Journal*. February 27, 1999.

**Session 23: Case Discussion: California Referendum Politics- Proposition 99**

4/23/2003 Robert J. Blendon and Robert Meyers, Director, National Press Foundation

Assigned Readings:

Meyers, Robert. The California Tobacco Education Campaign: The Media Component. A Special Report. Submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation by the Center for Health Communication, Harvard School of Public Health (pp. 1-17, 75-76).  
Heiser, Paul, and Michael Begay. 1997. "The Campaign to Raise the Tobacco Tax in Massachusetts." *American Journal of Public Health* 87(6): 968-973.  
Blendon, Robert J., and John T. Young. 1998. "The Public and the Comprehensive Tobacco Bill." *JAMA* 280(14): 1279-1284.

**Session 24: Course Wrap-up and Review**

4/28/2003 *Robert J. Blendon*

Assigned Readings:

Johnson, Haynes, and David S. Broder. 1996. *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. Chapter 24 and epilogue.

**Session 25: Final Exam (in class)**

4/30/2001

Monday, October 28, 2002