

SPPH 542 – Canadian Health Care Policy

Mondays, 9:00am – 10:30am, alternating between online and in-person

This course is about the Canadian health care system and the political and economic forces that shape it. It is for anyone – regardless of academic or professional background – interested in the intersection of health care, economics, and public policy in Canada. The course involves a purposeful mix of independent learning, in-person lectures, and Zoom seminars involving groupwork.

Learning Outcomes

Students in this class will learn that “Canadian Medicare” is not what many people think it is. For starters, it is not a “public health care system.” It is a public health *insurance* system with a long and bumpy history.

Students will learn that the laudable aspirations of “Canadian Medicare” are consistent with the right to health framework of the UN and WHO. They will also learn that Canadian Medicare is not meeting those aspirations: it is incomplete, inequitable, and remarkably fragmented/disorganized. Canada’s health care system does have some strengths but it could be – indeed should be – a lot better.

This course will help students to understand how Canada’s health care system came to be the way it is and what can be done to improve it. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Describe the main features, strengths, and weaknesses of the Canadian health care system
- List the key stages in the evolution of what is called “Canadian Medicare”
- Explain how institutions, interests, and ideas shape health care policies in Canada
- Express informed opinions on several current health care debates in Canada

Topics covered

This course combines basic theory pertaining to public policy analysis with specific topics necessary to understand the organization, delivery, financing, and governance of Canada’s health care system. Students do not need training in fields related to public policy studies (history, political science, economics, etc.) to perform well in the course; indeed, this course is designed to *introduce* students to relevant policy theories in order to develop and deepen their insights into health care policy issues.

<i>Public policy topics</i>	<i>Health care system topics</i>
An introduction to public policy analysis	The right to health framework of the UN
The role of institutions in public policy	The history of “Canadian Medicare”
The role of interests in public policy	Health care cost-drivers
The concept of welfare in public policy	Health care financing in Canada and abroad
The concept of equity in public policy	Primary health care in Canada
The concept of efficiency in public policy	Pharmacare (or lack thereof) in Canada
An introduction to writing Briefing Notes	Wait times for health care in Canada

Course Structure

This course uses a blended learning format involving mixed-modality for synchronous sessions.

Blended learning means that 50% of the learning activities are things students do on their own, at their convenience **before** weekly lectures/seminars: e.g., completing readings, watching pre-recorded lectures, taking Canvas quizzes, and participating in Canvas discussions.

Mixed-modality means the other 50% of learning activities are a purposeful mix of in-person and online synchronous sessions. Online lectures will cover topics for which students will engage in problem-based learning in small groups. In-person lectures will cover topics for which there are no small group exercises to complete during class time.

Students must attend the final exam in person.

Learning Activities

For most weeks, the course will involve the following learning activities:

1. **Completing** assigned readings and lecture videos **before class**.
2. **Reflecting** on assigned materials via a Canvas quiz or discussion post **before class**.
3. **Engaging** in the synchronous lecture and problem-based groupwork **in class**.

Students will require access to a computer (not simply a cellphone or tablet), a reliable internet connection, and an appropriate study space to participate in the Zoom sessions of this course.

Learning Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. Course readings are selected articles, chapters, and reports that will be made available via Canvas.

Other types of learning material will be also posted to Canvas, including the following:

- Pre-recorded lectures for this course
- Publicly accessible videos and/or podcasts of interest
- Recordings from synchronous classes
- “Cheat sheets” to assist with studying and note-taking
- Class discussion threads

Instructor

Steve Morgan is a full professor in UBC’s School of Population and Public Health. An economist by training, Dr. Morgan’s research has sparked national debate about how national pharmacare can provide Canadians with universal access to appropriately prescribed, affordably priced, and equitably financed prescription drugs. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed research papers and is a trusted advisor to governments across Canada and around the world.

Office Hours: available by phone, Zoom, or in person as arranged by email (steve.morgan@ubc.ca).

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of learning will be based on the following, with weights reflecting contributions to overall grades in the course:

Weekly, pre-class assignments (total)	10%
Groupwork during class time	10%
Individual briefing note (based on ComPAIR)	10%
Feedback given to peers on briefing notes	5%
Group briefing note	10%
Peer assessment of group contributions	5%
Course reflection essay	10%
In-person final exam (held during the exam period)	40%

Assignment details and, where relevant, grading rubrics will be distributed via Canvas.

Letter grades will be assigned according to [UBC's campus-wide grading guideline](#).