

DEVELOPING POLICY FOR POPULATION HEALTH (2024)**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the *xwməθkwəy̓əm* (Musqueam) First Nation. This land has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who continue to pass on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. We have a collective responsibility to further action on reconciliation with these and other Indigenous Peoples who continue to steward this land. To understand how colonial policies created health inequities and continue to perpetuate harms, we strongly encourage you to read at least pages 6 to 19 of this report: [Understanding Indigenous Health Inequities Through a Social Determinants Model](#).

COURSE INFORMATION***Why should you want to learn about policy and how to influence policy to improve population health?***

Chances are, each of our own lives has been deeply affected by policies that have had an impact on the social and economic circumstances that ultimately influence our health. This course will help us learn about policies aimed at addressing the social determinants of health (SDoH) and their aims to improve both health equity and the health of populations. It draws on public policy competency frameworks to support students to play a role in advancing healthy public policy. The course is structured to provide graduate students with an introduction to core policy frameworks, perspectives on policy development and analysis, and foundational skills to play a role in advancing policies that address population health outcomes and their equitable distribution in both Canadian and global contexts.

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value	Timing	Location
Developing Policy for Population Health	SPPH 581 Y PPGA 591 T	3.0	Wednesdays 9:30-12:30	Neville Scarfe (SCRF) Room 1020 2125 Main Mall

OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will provide graduate students in public health and related disciplines with an introduction to policy development and analysis, with a focus on developing key competencies to work in advancing policies that address population health outcomes and their equitable distribution, including both Canadian and global content.

We have designed this course with specific goals in mind. If you are willing to meet the requirements, by the end of this course you will be able to:

- Recognize core competencies central to playing a role in advancing healthy public policy, and advance your skills in these areas
- Describe and apply key policy frameworks and consider their relevance in the 'real world' of public policy and complex systems
- Outline how policy development and implementation processes involving institutions, politics, and organizational actors may enable or constrain effective policy development and implementation
- Apply this knowledge to consider and evaluate effective approaches to influence policy processes, both in general and more deeply as applied to a specific issue in a particular context
- Work in teams to develop a rich understanding about the policy context and consider relevant policy options in relation to specific policy topics
- Work in teams to develop a policy brief intended to influence policy decision-makers in relation to a specific policy issue
- Give, receive and use constructive peer feedback in written and oral formats
- Learn to use GenAI in policy work effectively and with integrity

PREREQUISITES

This course is open to graduate students in SPPH and SPPGA. Previous learning in SPPH 527 Social Determinants of Health is an asset, although this could be taken concurrently or after. Graduate students from other programs are welcome if there is space available.

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Charlyn Black (she, her) began her career as a medical doctor, practising in a major teaching hospital. She subsequently trained in health policy, and her research has focused on health services and policy research, with a major focus on knowledge translation in this area. Her more recent research interests relate to the prevention and reversal of non-communicable (chronic) diseases, food and nutrition policy, and the synergistic role of food systems to optimize both human and planetary health.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Lisa Wight is a (very) recent graduate from the Master of Public Health program in the School of Population and Public Health. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Global Development Studies from Queen's University. She was born and raised on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples in Toronto, and she's been occupying the stolen lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations in Vancouver for two years.

Lisa works as a Contractor with *Changemark Research + Evaluation* on innovative substance use and harm reduction topics. She's also a Research Assistant with *the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI)* at the University of British Columbia. Although she's been a Research Assistant for several years, she is committed to pushing results past peer-reviewed publications and moving knowledge into action. She strives to engage in knowledge translation activities that effectively convey 'evidence' to research participants, communities, public health professionals, *and* politicians.

As a gay woman, Lisa is committed to supporting events by and for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community! When she's not on campus, you can find her at the Biltmore, the Hive, Aperture Coffee Bar, Guilt & Co, or the Birdhouse ☺

CONTACTS

Students are invited to use office hours to discuss specific course content, competencies and assignments. In addition, you are invited to dialogue about career aspirations and the role of this course or your degree more generally in advancing your career objectives. Office hours can also be used to consider how the course content may illuminate practicum or thesis opportunities that you may wish to pursue.

Instructional team	Role	Contact details	Office Location	Office Hours
Charlyn Black	Instructor	charlyn.black@ubc.ca	136 - 2206 East Mall or online	Wednesdays 2-4 pm
Lisa Wight	Teaching Assistant	lmwight@student.ubc.ca	I would be more than happy to schedule an in-person or virtual meeting with any student over email.	

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will meet weekly in person. Each three-hour session will typically consist of a 45 to 50 minute interactive lecture/presentation, followed by small group work or class-based learning exercises, and wrapping up with a plenary discussion and student reflection assignment. The class requires students to engage with prescribed readings and video/audio materials outside the class sessions. The first six sessions focus on foundational concepts and approaches relevant for the population health policy environment, the policy process, and strategies to influence and shape policy. The next five sessions of the course focus on particular determinants of health that impact population health, such as food, nutrition, climate and housing; these sessions will be chosen with input from students based on their interests. The last two sessions of the course will be devoted to student presentations of work in progress for final papers, with opportunities for feedback from the class and instructors.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS (note: preliminary & subject to change)

Week number	Date	Topic
1	September 4	Course introduction, key concepts and approaches
2	September 11	A changing landscape: Frameworks and competencies
3	September 18	Public policy and the policy process
4	September 25	Analysing public policies and proposing policy guidance
5	October 2	Influencing public policy development
6	October 9	Supporting public policy implementation and evaluation
7	October 16	Policy topic: Commercial determinants of health
8	October 23	Policy topic TBD
9	October 30	Policy topic TBD
10	November 6	Policy topic TBD
--	November 13	MID-TERM BREAK
11	November 20	Policy topic TBD
12	November 27	Student presentations
13	December 4	Student presentations & course wrap up

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The course is being offered in an updated format to focus on supporting students to develop competencies and skills relevant to playing a role in the policy process. Given this new approach, we are introducing some 'learning experiments' that we hope will lead to engaging and exciting learning for both you as students, and also for us as instructors. We hope that you will engage with this approach, and give us real-time feedback on what works (and what does not) for you as learners. We recognize that some of these experiments may work, and others may 'flop', so we hope that you will give us honest feedback.

Key aspects of this updated format include:

- A recognition that we learn best when we work together in person and that we can learn *with* and *from* each other (instructors included)
- A focus on active, interactive, and student-centred learning
- Introduction of 'scaffolding' to support ongoing development and application of our learning
- Assignments aimed at developing key competencies and real-world skills
- Introduction of experiments to learn about how we can (or cannot) use AI effectively and with integrity to influence and advance health policy

LEARNING MATERIALS

The required materials for each class will be made available in Canvas under Modules.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

The six assessments of your learning in this course will draw on a mix of both individual and group work and are aimed at supporting you to develop real-world skills and competencies. They are briefly outlined below. More specific details will be provided in class and on Canvas as the course progresses.

ASSIGNMENT NAME	ASSIGNMENT TYPE	GOAL	DUE DATE	
In-Class Written Reflections	Individual assignments on weekly course content & learning	Encourage reflection on key learning and sharing perspectives to foster ongoing course improvement	End of each class	15%
News Article Analysis	Individual assignment on a policy topic of your choosing	Develop understanding about how traditional media portrays and shapes public perceptions and policy debates	Sun, Sep 22 at 11:59 PM	15%
Policy Analysis	Group assignments on a policy topic to be chosen by the group	Identify a key policy issue and apply key policy analysis frameworks to identify potential policy options and tools to address the issue	Fri, Oct 4 at 11:59 PM	15%
Policy Brief		Develop a briefing note – a concise document that succinctly communicates policy information and options to a senior decision maker	Fri, Nov 1 at 11:59 PM	20%
Policy Brief Presentation		Present the contents of your group briefing note to an audience that is fairly knowledgeable about the issue	In class on Wed, Nov 27 or Wed, Dec 4	20%
Knowledge Translation (KT) Product	Individual assignment related to your group's policy topic	Develop a knowledge translation product that effectively communicates to a specific audience relevant to your group's policy topic	Fri, Dec 13 at 11:59 PM	15%

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the [UBC Senate website](#).

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance in-person during class is strongly recommended to maximize our mutual learning. If you are unable to attend class, please inform Lisa Wight via email.
2. You are expected to come prepared to discuss required readings and to actively participate in class discussions.
3. You are allowed to use laptops or tablets, but please limit your use to taking notes (and also take a look at [this article](#) discussing the impact of in-class laptop use on learning outcomes!). Please refrain from using mobile phones or other electronic devices in class.
4. We will aim to answer all emails within 24 - 48 hours.

5. We are committed to maintaining a productive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. During the first class, we will collectively agree upon strategies for ensuring a constructive classroom environment. Throughout the term, any suggestions for improving our learning environment will be greatly appreciated and given serious consideration.

COURSE POLICIES ON USE OF GENAI TOOLS

This course will assume that students are using ChatGPT and other Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI or AI) tools, and use of these tools will be integrated into multiple activities and assignments. Given the rapid growth in availability and use of these tools, it is important that we (instructors included!) learn to use them effectively, responsibly and ethically. These tools are extremely powerful and can provide an effective way to generate content including text, audio, images, music and video based on the data on which they have been trained. They can improve the quality of written work, prompt new ideas, or generate simplified explanations of complex topics to support learning, among others. They are likely to become more important as we all move forward in our careers, so learning how to use them is an important skill for us all to develop. We will be learning and sharing together about opportunities to use GenAI tools, **as well as the many risks of using them** to influence the development of health policy.

While GenAI tools can be helpful to support learning, **information that is generated by a GenAI tool is not, and should not be presented as our own work.** Please review UBC guidance on [Learning with GenAI](#). Submitting your own work means that if you use external resources, including GenAI, you should take that information and apply your own analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critique. Simply paraphrasing GenAI output does not, by itself, make it your own work.

Given privacy and equity concerns for us all as we learn to use these tools, UBC currently requires us to use only two tools for our learning in this area: Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT 3.5. In using these tools to get ideas, create content, or assist with preparing an assignment, you and your group must declare that you have used them and describe the extent to which they have been used. Specific details are provided below:

- You may use the following specific AI tools in completing their assignments for this course: Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT 3.5. No other generative AI tools or technologies are permitted for assessed work. We will develop a shared understanding of their use as we move forward in the course.
- You will be encouraged to use these UBC-approved GenAI tools to gather information, review concepts and/or to help produce assignments. However, you are ultimately accountable for the work you and your group submit, and any content generated or supported by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately.
- You must be transparent in how you have used AI-based tools. This will require you to clearly identify the use of AI tools in your work by including a description of the way in which they were used (e.g., idea generation) and/or content that was created or edited.
- You must take ultimate responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the content generated by these tools.
- You must ensure your use of AI-based tools does not violate any copyright or intellectual property laws.
- You must not use AI-based tools to plagiarize without citation.

LEARNING ANALYTICS

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. In addition to In-Class Written Reflections, this course will use data generated by Canvas to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

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