

Course Syllabus Jump to Today Edit

Master of Applied Psychology (MAP)
 Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)

Rutgers University
 New Brunswick, New Jersey

18:844:512 Public Policy in Mental Health
Instructor: Judith Glassgold, PsyD

E-mail: judith.glassgold@rutgers.edu

2022 Introduction

The world has been changed by COVID-19. As a health crisis, COVID-19 pandemic affects our health, particularly our mental health, substance use, and psychological wellbeing. Many have dealt with uncertainty, fear, isolation, hardship, and loss.

At the same time in the last few years we have come face to face with the impact of discrimination, prejudice, and violence in our society. The pandemic also raises profound questions of fairness and equity in our society as the pandemic affected Americans' health unequally. Finally, changes in climate are impacting our world raising issues for mental health and wellbeing.

It would be remiss to have a class on behavioral health policy and not address the times we live in and the challenges that shape our lives and careers. I hope this class can provide you a foundation on which you can build your career in behavioral health and help you understand the times we live in. So, this semester, we will include the effects and implications of COVID-19 and issues of behavioral health equity in the U.S.

The existing behavioral healthcare system in the U.S. is the foundation upon which any response to these challenges is based, so we examine the existing policies and seek to understand where we need to go. There are many improvements that need to be made to our behavioral health system so that all of you can innovate and make a positive difference in our world.

Finally, this is a course on policy, which will include a section on how to understand, analyze, and when necessary change the status quo and public policy via science and advocacy. I hope this course gives you a sense of how to be active and engaged in these complicated times. We will also examine the first years of the Biden/Harris administration to examine their policies. This year there are Congressional elections that will impact policy making at the federal level; we will discuss behavioral health policy differences in a nonpartisan manner.

Note: I will use the term behavioral health as an overarching term to describe the mental health, substance use, performance/organizational psychology and neurodevelopmental policies. Specific terms will be used to describe those unique topics.

Course Description

This course examines the federal and state policies affecting behavioral health, in this course this includes: mental health, substance use, performance/organizational, and neurodiversity. Students will develop an understanding of policies affecting access, financing, and treatment. Insights from psychology also can improve policy. We will discuss and explore how to integrate psychological science into public policy. Skills learned will include skills in research and advocacy for behavioral health policies.

An emphasis will be on learning skills for critical analysis of contemporary policy issues especially policies that aim to: expand access to care, reduce behavioral health disparities, improve treatment alignment to patient needs, encourage service delivery reform, increase community services, and reduce re-institutionalization. Students will be trained in gathering and evaluating information that can inform their perspective on policy and services.

Reading and topics may change during the class.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to analyze problems related to current healthcare dilemmas in mental health, substance misuse treatment, performance/organizational, and neurodevelopmental/neurodiversity issues.
2. Students will complete research in public policy.
3. Students will develop a scientifically-based proposal for policy change.
4. Students will learn skills to advocate for policy change.

Course Responsibilities

Expect to spend 6-7 hours per week on the class in both synchronous and asynchronous activities.

- Engaged reading of materials
- Active, informed participation in weekly discussions
- Participation in class/group tasks and assignments
- Students will prepare 2 written public policy documents

Course Format/Structure/Attendance

GSAPP has requested that we offer classes in person this semester. This will be the norm; however, this course has been designed to be flexible with hybrid or fully asynchronous options. If you wish either a hybrid or asynchronous option, please discuss with me in the first or second class.

Also, I will monitor the Rutgers COVID-19 policies and adapt accordingly. Most likely, there will be mostly synchronous (in real time) classes with the possibility of a Zoom class or asynchronous (self-paced) class. We have access to a classroom with audio/visual capabilities.

Course material is online on the Canvas Learning Management System.

Class Format

The expectation is that students will attend in person, unless there is a change made by the university and/or the instructor, which would be announced to the students in a timely fashion. Students must wear masks during class. Students NOT following this guideline will be asked to put on their masks or to leave class. Students drinking or eating during class must replace their masks quickly. Please do NOT attend class in person if you are experiencing symptoms of illness.

For classes that are done via synchronous sessions on Zoom, You will be sent the link in advance. Due to class size, please mute your microphone. Please use Chat for questions. I will answer questions that are posted in the Chat: please indicate it is a question. Please use your camera when possible, it is helpful to me to see if you look bored, confused etc.

Attendance

Each student is required to attend class. If you are unable to attend a class due to unusual circumstances (e.g., illness, child care) or religious observance, please inform the instructor via email as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to obtain any missed notes and handouts from your peers, so please make arrangements with them in advance.

Notes on Asynchronous Options

Anyone can take this class totally asynchronous (self-paced) and do the assignments and watch the class sessions. The main difference between asynchronous and synchronous course is that the class discussions for the asynchronous course are entered in the discussion portal via Canvas for that class date. Synchronous students will simply participate in the synchronous discussions in-person or on Zoom. Please let me know if you want this option within 2 weeks of the class start date.

If you choose a synchronous option you are required to attend synchronous sessions in real time (unless excused with permission of the instructor or asynchronous participation). Zoom sessions will be conducted by the professor and guest lecturers if any. Students who wish to attend class via Zoom must make prior arrangements with the Professor. I hope to record class sessions for those who can't attend or who wish to review the material.

Special Circumstances

1. Students indicating they have a disability should be directed to the Office of Disability Services: ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered
2. Students indicating they have a temporary disabling condition (e.g., broken leg) should be directed to the Dean of Students Office: deanofstudents@rutgers.edu
3. Students indicating the need for online accommodations related to being international students can be directed to the office of the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs.

Course Basics

You will need to have access to a computer with an up-to-date browser, operating system and some additional software on your computer to take this class. All questions regarding CANVAS should be directed the [Help Desk](#).

Please bring a device to in-person classes that has internet access and that you can read/download files.

Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer, you can download it by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Announcements

Announcements will be posted in CANVAS. They will appear on your CANVAS dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly through your preferred method of notification from CANVAS. Please make certain to check them regularly, as they will contain any important information about upcoming projects or class concerns.

Email

In this course we will use email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the CANVAS system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages regularly. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name, week and message subject. For example: YOUR NAME WK2 ASSIGNMENT.
- Send email only to Inbox and not my personal email account.
- Technical questions about CANVAS should be sent to help@canvas.rutgers.edu
- Do not submit your assignments by message.
- Make certain to check your messages frequently.

Questions

In online courses it is normal to have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments.

Discussions

Certain classes have a Canvas discussion assignment that are a way for you to engage with each other about the course content. In order to get full credit for each discussion, you will need to post a thoughtful, well-written response to the question and respond to one of your classmates' answers by the deadline noted on Canvas. See the Discussion Rubrics for more information on how to create these posts.

Office Hours

I will be available before/after class when in-person and for private virtual office hours using Canvas. Other times can be scheduled via Zoom.

Turnaround/Feedback

Written Discussions and Assignments will be graded within 14 days.

Important Dates

The due dates for your assignments can be found below and are linked to the Calendar in Canvas found in the global navigation links at the top of your screen. Please submit assignments in Canvas in the link found in the Module for that date. Please review these. In addition, I will post reminders prior to the due dates in the Announcements and the Module's overview file. There are deadlines for certain assignments to keep you on task but extensions will be granted.

Weekly Assignments

Each week you will need to complete the following:

- Engage with Canvas system and review Modules.
- Follow Class syllabus and Calendar
- Complete Reading or watch/listen to audiovisual files.
- Participate in-class or online in any Discussion
- Complete any weekly quizzes, assignments, or other tasks

Course Modules

Each week in the class is listed as a Module in Canvas. The module will include an overview document, **Objectives & Activities**, that explains the topics, learning goals, and assignments/discussion topics for that class. The reading materials, assignments, and discussion topics are listed in separate sections in that module. Some modules may include synchronous lectures via Zoom (recorded), or slides that can be reviewed at your own pace. Assignment due dates are listed in the Modules.

Each week I will send out an announcement of what to expect for the next week and reminders for assignment due dates.

Reading/Podcasts/Materials:

There is no text book, resources will be posted in Canvas. Readings will include current articles, chapters from books, reports, podcasts, video news reporters, blogs, documentaries, and legislation, which will be available online in Canvas in each Module. If you have trouble viewing the pdf's in the Canvas browser, download them for easier viewing. There are articles from the New York Times in the reading. If you have trouble viewing them in the Canvas browser, as all Rutgers students get free access to the New York Times, go the library online and subscribe.

Certain publications from the federal government publications (available online for no-charge via download) are useful as background and sections may be assigned weekly:

- Behavioral health trends in the United States: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2019-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases>
- [Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health](https://www.kff.org) (2016) <https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/front-matter.pdf>
- [Guidance to State and School Systems on Addressing Mental Health and Substance Use Issues in Schools.](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/477/priv/pep19-school-guide.pdf) <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/477/priv/pep19-school-guide.pdf>

Sources

To find legislation at the federal level for Congress go to www.congress.gov

To find legislation for New Jersey: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/Default.asp>

In this era, there is a great deal of information online, much of it unverified. We will use scholarly journals from psychology, public health, and medicine. *Health Affairs* is the leading policy journal, available through Rutgers libraries. Journals published by the American Psychological Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, Lancet and other professional publishers are generally reliable. *Kaiser Family Foundation Health News* is a good source of general health-related policy news, <https://www.kff.org> e. Certain news outlets, PBS, NPR, the New York Times, Washington Post, and Wall Street Journal are generally reliable news sources for policy. Rutgers Library has online subscriptions for the major newspapers and students can find apps/articles there. But separate out the opinion articles from news stories and seek at least two sources for news stories. Please check every assertion you see with independent sources. [Politifact](https://www.pewresearch.org/) e is a fact-checking news source.

Note: *Causation vs. Correlation*. One of the challenges in explaining policy to nonscientists is to distinguish between research that can determine direct causal relationships, usually experiments with random selection of participants and controlling variables, and correlation where two factors seem associated but we do not know the causal relationship. Most research in real life focuses on correlations and is not causal. For example, during the summer both ice cream consumption and violence increase but neither causes the other; rather, a third factor, heat plays a role in the increase. Although many policies are based on correlations, such policies might not address the underlying concerns.

Written Assignments

There are two written assignments: creation of a **one-page** public policy proposal (references are extra) to address a problem in mental health, substance use, special education, and neurodiversity. You are expected to describe a problem and then an evidenced-based solution. For example, a possible problem is the lack of employment opportunities for adults with autism. A possible solution are policies that provide enhanced vocational training in secondary school programs and specialized vocational programs for adults throughout their lifetime that reflect current scientific advances in neurodiversity. The one-page public policy proposal has three stages and tasks: a) selection of topic and justification due September 27; b) annotated bibliography due October 25; c) final document is due November 29, two weeks before the class end.

The other written assignment is a **letter** to a public office holder Member of Congress, State Legislator, Administrator, Mayor, School Board on the behavioral health problem in the public policy proposal. This is due December 13. Frameworks and examples for written assignments is available in the [Welcome](#) module.

I will make myself very available the first few weeks of class to assist you in selecting your topics. Below are the dates and assignments for the project. Please note, there are two graded assignments: an annotated bibliography and the final project; the other two steps, topic selection and outline are graded incomplete/complete.

Policy Project Schedule

Assignment Dates			
Assignment	Date Due	Grade	
Topic Selection & Outline	September 27	I/C	
Annotated Bibliography	October 25	Letter grade	
Final Policy Project	November 29	Letter Grade	
Letter to Policy Maker	December 13	Letter Grade	

Grading

Periodic Reading quizzes (generally 3-5 multiple choice questions) = 5% of grade;

Assignments = 15% of grade, Complete/Incomplete

In-class/on-line Discussions = 15% of grade; graded Complete/Incomplete

Preparation for Public Policy Project = 20% of grade

- Topic Selection and Justification, Complete/Incomplete
- Annotated Bibliography, Complete/Incomplete

Public Policy Proposal = 30% of grade, Letter Grade

Letter to Public Official = 15% of Grade: Letter Grade

Each of these tasks will have a Rubric found in the Welcome Module that explains the grading standards and evaluation methods.

MAP Grades and Grading Policy

Grade Description Numerical Equivalent

- A Excellent 90-100 (4.0)
- B+ Very Good 87-89 (3.5)
- B Good 80-86 (3.0)
- C Average 70-79 (2.0)
- F Failure 69 or below (0.0)

- EX Excellent (rare)
- C Complete
- INC Incomplete
- S Satisfactory
- U Unsatisfactory

PA Pass

NC No credit given

MAP Program requirement: All MAP students must achieve a grade of B- or better and maintain a GPA of 3.0, or academic remediation will be enforced.

Rubrics

Frameworks and examples for written assignments is available in the Welcome module.

Rutgers Resources

Information on resources, computing, accessibility and other issues, go to the final Module.

Proceed to [Learning Support Resources](#) and review the resources before starting the module (Week 1) activities.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Tue Sep 14, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01.Publ.1.9/14.3.30-5.00 pm	3:30pm to 5pm
Tue Sep 21, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6:15pm
Tue Sep 28, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 5pm
Tue Oct 12, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Oct 19, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Oct 26, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Nov 2, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Nov 9, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Nov 16, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01.Guest Lecture	5pm to 6pm
	Module 12: In-class assignment: Policy issues	due by 11:59pm
Fri Nov 19, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01.office hour	4pm to 5pm
Tue Nov 23, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Nov 30, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Dec 7, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Dec 14, 2021	2021FA - PUB POLIC MEN HEALTH 18.844:512-01	3:30pm to 6pm
Tue Sep 6, 2022	Canvas Orientation	due by 11:59pm
Tue Sep 13, 2022	Module 1: Assignment for All: Register or Check materials to Vote	due by 11:59pm
Tue Sep 20, 2022	Module 3: For all Class Students: Complete CANVAS discussion: Civil Rights, Stigma, and Behavioral Health Populations	due by 11:59am
Tue Sep 27, 2022	Module 4: Reading & Multimedia Quiz	due by 11:59pm
	Public Policy Proposal: Choose a Topic	due by 11:59pm
Tue Oct 4, 2022	Module 5: Reading & Multimedia Quiz	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion: Mental Health Policy Improvements	due by 11:59pm
Tue Oct 11, 2022	Module 7: Assignment for All: Identify your Federal and state law makers	due by 11:59pm
Tue Oct 18, 2022	Module 7: Reading & Multimedia Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Tue Oct 25, 2022	Assignment - Public Policy Proposal: Select & Annotate References	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 1, 2022	Module 9: Assignment - There is an election: What are your Congressional Candidates' Views on Behavioral Health Policies?	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 8, 2022	Module 10: Discussion - Weighing Tradeoffs	due by 11:59am
Tue Nov 15, 2022	Module 10 - Discussion: Financing Provider Education	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 29, 2022	Public Policy Proposal	due by 11:59pm
Tue Dec 6, 2022	Module 13: Advocacy: Reading & Multimedia Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Fri Dec 16, 2022	Letter to Policy Maker	due by 11:59pm
	Module 15: Class Discussion - Future of Behavioral Health	

<	September 2022							>
28	29	30	31	1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
25	26	27	28	29	30	1		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8		

Assignments are weighted by group:

Group	Weight
Assignments	15%
Reading Quizzes	5%
Discussion	15%
Letter to Policy Maker	15%
Preparation for Public Policy Proposal (Topic, Bibliography)	20%
Public Policy Proposal	30%
Total	100%