

HEALTHCARE POLICY AND RESEARCH (HCPR)

HCPR 601. Introduction to Health Policy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The course will familiarize students with the major players and issues in health care policy, using health reform in the U.S. as a framework through which to analyze the issues of cost, quality and access, and will focus on the roles of payers, providers and patients in the health care system. This course is interactive and uses studies from the scientific literature, class discussion and lectures from experts in the field. Students are required to write a paper evaluating the challenges regarding a public health policy topic in the U.S. and prepare a group presentation addressing questions related to key issues of the U.S. health care system.

HCPR 602. Public Health Policy and Politics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: HCPR 601. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students. The course introduces students to the key players, processes and issues in U.S. healthcare policy, using health reform as a framework for understanding both formal and informal policy landscapes and decision-making processes. Students will explore the roles of payers, providers, patients, advocates, media, and policymakers while developing an understanding of federal and state policymaking. The course also examines how courts and administrative systems shape policy and its real-world implementation.

HCPR 610. Foundations in Health Services Research Methods. 1 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Will provide students with the opportunity to learn and apply basic data analysis skills and statistical methods common in health services research including programming, data cleaning and fundamental approaches in univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses.

HCPR 691. Special Topics in Healthcare Policy and Research. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. The course may include discussion of research topics of emerging interest/ importance and published papers of current interest; new findings in health services research, health economics and health policy; and the application of research methods and study design to current topics within the broad field of healthcare policy and health services research, focusing on interdisciplinary research and applied methods. Graded S/U/ F.

HCPR 692. Special Topics in Healthcare Policy and Research. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. The course may include discussion of research topics of emerging interest/ importance and published papers of current interest; new findings in health services research, health economics and health policy; and the application of research methods and study design to current topics within the broad field of healthcare policy and health services research, focusing on interdisciplinary research and applied methods.

HCPR 697. Independent Study in Healthcare Policy and Research. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Provides the opportunity for students to conduct research under the direction of a faculty member. A proposal for a course of study must be submitted to and approved by the program director of the Ph.D. in Healthcare Policy and Research. Credits will be assigned commensurate with the complexity of the project. Arrangements are made directly with the appropriate faculty member and department chair. Graded as S/U/F.

HCPR 699. Departmental Seminar. 1 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Students will attend seminars presented by faculty and invited guests on topics and trends within health policy and health services research. Students and faculty will meet weekly to discuss the theoretical concepts and papers presented and other related topics. Graded as S/U/F.

HCPR 701. Health Services Research and Policy I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The first course of a two-semester sequence intended to familiarize students with the major players and issues in health care policy, using health reform in the U.S. as a framework through which to analyze the issues of cost, quality and access and to help students develop an independent research proposal. The focus is on the roles of payers, providers and patients in the health care system. This course will be interactive and use studies published in the scientific literature, policy briefs, government reports and textbooks about the health care system as teaching tools. Students will be required to write several short response papers addressing questions related to key issues under health reform as well as develop a research topic and conduct a literature review related to that topic.

HCPR 702. Health Services Research and Policy II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: HCPR 701 or permission of instructor. The second course of a two-semester sequence intended to familiarize students with the major health care providers and issues in health care policy and health services in the U.S. The course will mainly focus on health care delivery and quality of care and also introduce the issues of costs and access. The course will be interactive and use studies published in the scientific literature. Students will be required to critique and present research articles related to the topics studied while developing conceptual frameworks, hypotheses and key measures of quality, cost or access for their own research papers.

HCPR 703. Health Economics: Theory and Principles. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A doctoral-level course in health economics with a focus on the theory and principles forming the basis of the field. Students will study foundational theory and research as well as recent applied studies contributing to the current knowledge in the field. Upon completing the course, students should have the theoretical grounding to allow them to frame applied research questions in health economics in terms of past theory and research as well as a sense of where further evidence is needed.

HCPR 720. Social and Economic Determinants of Health Disparities. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students who have completed a graduate course in biostatistics, epidemiology or econometrics. A doctoral-level survey course designed to study variations in social and economic outcomes and approaches to addressing them. Integrating perspectives from various disciplines, including sociology, psychology, epidemiology and health services research, students will examine the root causes of these health differences and evaluate potential solutions. Invited expert guest lecturers will enhance the students' learning experience during the course. Students will be expected to participate in all class discussions and activities, present a research topic of their choosing and complete a hypothesis-driven research project that demonstrates the ability to use theoretically grounded approaches to the empirical study of health issues.

HCPR 730. Survey Research Methods and Analysis for Health Policy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: ECON 612 or equivalent or permission of instructor. This course is intended to familiarize students with the design and use of surveys for health services research and health policy; to understand the strengths and limitations of health surveys; and to compare and contrast health surveys with other data sources such as administrative records, claims data and electronic medical records. The course is designed to focus more on the applied use of health surveys for research and less on the theoretical aspects of survey and sample design. Class lectures and assignments are designed to guide students incrementally through the actual development and completion of a research project using publicly available survey data.

HCPR 731. Principles of Programming for Health Services Research. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Data analysis in health services research requires data management, organization and manipulation. This course introduces principles of programming for health services researchers with applications in SAS and Stata. Upon completion, students should be familiar with techniques to load, clean, manage and manipulate data in preparation for data analysis.

HCPR 732. Research Design and Proposal Preparation. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Focuses on the design of experimental, quasi-experimental and nonexperimental studies in the healthcare field. Issues related to measurement will be stressed. Specific learning objectives include exploring the methodological issues in health services research; assessing scientific research and causal inference; evaluating a research problem and developing testable hypotheses; conducting data collection and assessing the sampling process; evaluating variable definition in terms of validity and reliability; assessing the various facets of experimental, quasi-experimental and observational designs; and preparing a healthcare research proposal.

HCPR 733. Statistical Methods in Analysis of Healthcare Research. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: BIOS 553; ECON 612; and one of BIOS 625, BIOS 631, BIOS 646 or ECON 642; or permission of instructor. Exposes students to large survey and administrative databases that are commonly used in health services research. Students will learn how to organize files, protect data and link databases from multiple sources by applying state-of-the-art deterministic and probabilistic linkage methods. Students will check the quality of merged datasets and learn the advanced techniques used in handling common problems such as missing data, selection bias and handling extreme outliers. Students will also apply the statistical methods that meet the qualities of these data in order to evaluate healthcare interventions and policies. This will be a hands-on course requiring students to download and manipulate data. While the primary emphasis is not on mathematical theory, a certain amount of theoretical background may be presented for some topics.

HCPR 734. Economic Evaluation and Decision Analysis in Health. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment requires an introductory course in probability and statistics. Introductory economics is recommended but not required. Introduces doctoral students to the methods, theory and growing range of applications of economic evaluation and decision analysis for health care technology assessment, health policy analysis, medical decision-making and health resource allocation.

HCPR 735. Health Policy in Virginia. 1 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. This course introduces students to legislative processes in Virginia, particularly as they relate to health policy-making. Students will learn how bills become law in Virginia, how to track their progress, how citizen and lobbyist input influences the legislative process. Students will also learn how to draft policy briefs to communicate research to a wide array of stakeholders.

HCPR 898. Directed Research. 1-9 Hours.

Semester course; 1-9 research hours. 1-9 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of nine credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the Ph.D. in Healthcare Policy and Research program who have successfully completed a written comprehensive examination and oral dissertation proposal exam and are in a funded assistantship or fellowship position. Students must be continually enrolled in this course until successful completion and approval. A minimum of nine credits of this course must be taken to complete the degree. Graded as satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

HCPR 899. Directed Research. 1-9 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 variable hours. 1-3 credits. Prerequisites: completion of required course work and comprehensive examination. Students are required to conduct and prepare a written dissertation under the guidance of a faculty committee. The dissertation is written in traditional academic style, consists of three papers and must be orally defended. Students must be continually enrolled in this course until the dissertation is successfully completed and approved. A minimum of nine dissertation credits must be taken. Graded S/U/F.