

**PubH 6049-Section 001
Legislative Advocacy Skills for Public Health
Spring 2009**

Credits: 3
Meeting Days: 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/26, 4/9, 4/23, 5/7
Meeting Time: 3:35 – 5:35 p.m.
Meeting Place: Moos Tower 1-435
Instructor: Traci Toomey, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor
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Office Hours: By appointment

I. Course Description

The state legislature is an arena for public health practice. This course will provide skills necessary to operate in that arena. Each student will be assigned to work with a lobbyist for a non-profit agency, a legislative staff person, or a legislative liaison from a public health organization. With the help of that person, the student will identify one or two issues which will be addressed during the legislative session, and follow that issue from beginning to end at the legislature. Students will be matched with organizations that: (1) take positions on issues that are supportive of public health, and (2) have strong legislative advocacy experience. Pro public health issues will be defined based on current APHA policy positions, if they are available, or on instructor judgment, if APHA has not taken a position on the issue.

II. Course Prerequisites

PubH 6078

III. Course Goals and Objectives

The purposes of this course are:

- To introduce students to the state legislature as an arena for public health practice;
- To provide the opportunity to develop skills necessary to operate in that arena;
- To analyze the emergence, development, and resolution of legislative issues of public health importance.

This course is designed to be an intervention course in the Community Health Education major.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this course, students will begin to be able to:

- Identify the information resources at the state legislature available to public health advocates;
- Understand the opportunities and limitations of various roles such as lobbyist for voluntary agencies, contract lobbyist, legislative staff person, and state agency legislative liaison as each works for the enactment of a legislative agenda;
- Frame public health issues, and marshal information and arguments on the issues to maximize the support of legislators;
- Identify relevant constituencies for a public health issue, and mobilize them to influence their elected representatives in the legislature;
- Analyze the configuration of political forces in the legislature around a public health issue, and determine strategies for mobilizing political pressure in support of the issue;
- Identify key sources of support from individuals and agencies representing related interests, and develop effective coalitions with these representatives;
- Develop effective working relationships with relevant legislators and legislative staff persons;
- Understand the role of the media in influencing the outcome of legislative debates, develop effective working relationships with media representatives, and frame public health issues to capture the attention of the media.

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

Students will enroll in this course spring semester for 3 credits. Each student will be assigned to work with a lobbyist for a non-profit agency, a legislative staff person, or a legislative liaison from a public health organization. With the help of that person, the student will identify one or two issues which will be addressed in the 2009 legislative session, and follow that issue from beginning to end (or close to the end) at the legislature. The lobbyists have agreed to permit the student to accompany him or her at functions and meetings related to the issue, so that the student will learn firsthand the political skills necessary to see an issue through the session. In addition, students will be required to participate in the necessary background work (developing materials, calling constituents, researching the issue, helping to organize testimony).

Students will be required to commit **a minimum of 8 hours per week on average** to the course, with the expectation that those hours will be used flexibly depending upon how their issue proceeds through the legislature.

Students will meet as a group with the instructors: (1) 8 times for 2 hours each during regular classroom hours, (2) one time for 1.5 hours at the Capitol for a tour during the beginning of the semester, and (3) one time for 2.5 hours (final class) at the end of the semester. During class meetings, the instructors or guest speakers will be scheduled to present a particular perspective on legislative activity, and/or students will report on progress on their issues, and discuss their observations and activities at the legislature.

V. Course Text and Readings/Resources

Required reading will be posted on WebCT:

Ewald, D. *The Minnesota Legislature: Secrets for Citizen Lobbyists*. Ewald Consulting Group Inc., St. Paul, 1990. **(Due by 2nd Class)**

Avner, M. *The Lobbying Advocacy Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations*. Amherst H. Wilder foundation, St. Paul, 2002, pp. 33-57, 85-119, 121-129 (**Due by 4th Class**)

Public Health Policy and Advocacy – Online Module

In this online module, learners will examine how policy becomes law and the "nuts and bolts" of advocacy that influence legislators.

- Access Module <<http://ecommunication.umn.edu/t/82521/4606119/41091/0/>>

View by Feb. 5

Other Resources:

The following books are on reserve at the Wilson Library:

Kingdon, J.W., *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*. Harper Collins, New York, 1995.

Gieske, M., ed. *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics*. Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1984.

Phillips, G.M. *How to Support Your Cause and Win*. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1984.

Ross, M.J. *State and Local Politics and Policy: Change and Reform*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1987.

Hanson, R. *Tribune of the People: Minnesota and its Leadership*. Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1989.

Elazar, D., Gray, V., Spano, W. *Minnesota Politics and Government*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1999.

Richan, W.C. *Lobbying for Social Change*. Haworth Press, New York, 1996.

Students are expected to follow their issues in one of the local daily papers (websites:

www.pioneerplanet.com or www.startribune.com), submitting relevant printouts or clippings at the end of the semester.

Other helpful websites:

- General information about MN Legislature: www.leg.state.mn.us
- House and Senate committee and session schedules: www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/sched.asp
- Bill tracking: www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.htm
- General information about the Capitol area, including driving and parking: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faq/faqtoc.asp?subject=14>
- Legislative Reference Library: www.leg.state.mn.us/lr/lr.htm
- Everything you need to know about Minnesota: www.state.mn.us
- Outstate and other news sources, political parties, interest-advocacy groups: <http://www.e-democracy.org/links/>

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

January 22:	Introduction to the course
To be scheduled:	Tour of the capitol area – meet at the State Office Building
February 5:	“How an idea becomes law”
February 19:	Guest speaker: Gary Goldsmith
March 5:	Guest speaker: Todd Rapp
March 26:	Student Reports

April 9:	Student Reports
April 23:	Guest Speaker - TBA
May 7:	Guest speaker - TBA
To be scheduled:	Final reports, evaluation, dinner

VII. Evaluation and Grading

Students will be required to keep a daily log of their hours and activities related to the course that will be turned in on the last day of class. The logs should include the date, a one sentence general description of each activity, and the time period in which the activity was completed. The intention of this log is not to have every detail listed, but rather to provide the instructors with information about the hours spent in the field and the general scope of activities that the student worked on. Students will also be asked to submit a file of background information, fact sheets, newspaper clippings, etc. on their issue.

Students will be expected to take a participatory role in class discussions of the issues and strategies they observe during the legislative session. Students should ask one of the instructors for permission to miss a class because of legislative schedule conflicts **prior** to the class meeting.

Students will also be required to write a paper (see below) that presents the background on their issue, traces its progress through the session, analyzes the political forces that influenced the outcome, and analyzes the role of the media, constituents, and other interests in determining the outcome of the issue.

Requirements for Final Paper – 10-15 double-spaced pages (Due: May 8)

- (1) Present the background of your issue (\approx 2 pages; 10 points),
- (2) Tell what happened during the session in terms of your issue (e.g., bill introduced, two hearings, voted down in committee, etc.; \approx 3 pages; 10 points),
- (3) Analyze the political forces that influenced the outcome, and analyzes the role of the media, constituents, and other interests in determining the outcome of the issue (\approx 4-6 pages; 15 points), and
- (4) Analyze the strengths/weaknesses of the organization you worked with (\approx 1 page; 5 points)

Note: This is the basic information your paper should cover – it does not have to follow this structure – i.e., you can create a narrative that integrates this information throughout the paper. Please contact one of us if you have questions about how to focus the paper (e.g., if you were following multiple issues).

The paper, background information, and activity log are due by 4:00 May 8, 2009 at Dr. Toomey's office. Five points will be taken off for each day these documents are late.

All students will be graded on an A-F basis. Final grades will be based on class participation (40%), file and logs (20%), and paper (40%). Letter grades and associated points are awarded in this course as follows below, and will appear on the student' official transcript.

A	4.0	Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. (95-100 points)
A-	3.67	(90-94 points)
B+	3.33	(87-89 Points)
B	3.00	Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to met course requirements. (83-86 points)

B-	2.67	(80-82 points)
C+	2.33	(77-79 points)
C	2.00	Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. (73-76 points)
C-	1.67	(70-72 points)
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
F	0.00	Represents failure and signifies that the work was completed but not at a level of achievement worthy of credit or work that was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student should be awarded an "I".

Incomplete Contracts

A grade of incomplete "I" shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an "I" requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements.

Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student's college). For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to:

www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy

A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Evaluation

Beginning in fall 2008 the SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval. The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade. All students will have access to their final grades two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.

VIII. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable)

For full-semester courses, students may change their grad option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Withdrawal

Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Student Services Center at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct, Scholastic Dishonesty and Sexual Harassment Policies

Students are responsible for knowing the University of Minnesota, Board of Regents' policy on Student Conduct and Sexual Harassment found at www.umn.edu/regents/polindex.html.

Students are responsible for maintaining scholastic honesty in their work at all times. Students engaged in scholastic dishonesty will be penalized, and offenses will be reported to the Office of Student Academic Integrity (OSAI, www.osai.umn.edu).

The University's Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as "plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; or altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying of data, research procedures, or data analysis."

Plagiarism is an important element of this policy. It is defined as the presentation of another's writing or ideas as your own. Serious, intentional plagiarism will result in a grade of "F" or "N" for the entire course. For more information on this policy and for a helpful discussion of preventing plagiarism, please consult University policies and procedures regarding academic integrity: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/>.

Students are urged to be careful that they properly attribute and cite others' work in their own writing. For guidelines for correctly citing sources, go to <http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/> and click on "Citing Sources".

In addition, original work is expected in this course. It is unacceptable to hand in assignments for this course for which you receive credit in another course unless by prior agreement with the instructor. Building on a line of work begun in another course or leading to a thesis, dissertation, or final project is acceptable.

If you have any questions, consult the instructor.

Disability Statement

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services to have a confidential discussion of their individual needs for accommodations. Disability Services is located in Suite 180 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street. Staff can be reached by calling 612/626-1333 (voice or TTY).