

School of Public Health

Syllabus and Course Information



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

PubH 6049 Legislative Advocacy Skills for Public Health Spring 2017

Credits: 3

Meeting Days: 1/19, 1/26, 2/2, 2/16, 3/2, 3/9, 3/30, 4/13, 4/27, 5/4, 5/9 (meeting time for May 9 = 4:30-7:00)

Meeting Time: 3:35 – 5:30 p.m. except for 5/9

Meeting Place: MoosT 1-435

Instructors: Traci Toomey, PhD, MPH, 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 that 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 or instructor permission.

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.
- To understand policy making at other levels (e.g., federal, city, or institutional level)

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

Community Health Promotion Competencies Addressed

- Plan effective public health programs, policies, and practices that focus on individuals, institutions, communities, and policies to improve health.
- Communicate in writing and orally to lay and professional audiences about the needs of populations, intervention plans, and evaluation outcomes.

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 2017 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 them 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 105 hours** to the course in the field, with the expectation that those hours will be used flexibly depending upon how their issue proceeds through the legislature. Typically students put in 8 hours per week in the field for most of the semester. Often times fewer hours may be accrued in the field at the beginning and the end of the semester depending on the issue and organization.

Students will meet as a group with the instructors: (1) 9 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 policy activity, and/or students will report on progress on their issues, and discuss their observations and activities at the legislature.

V. Course Text and Viewing

Required text:

Avner, M. The Lobbying and Advocacy Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations, 2nd edition. Fieldstone Alliance, St. Paul, MN, 2013. Available on Amazon.com.

(Additional reading assignments may be posted below or announced before guest speakers.)

VI. Assignments

Assignment #1: Information Resources. Students should provide a brief summary for #1, #4, #6, #7, #12 for “**1. Locate information resources**,” which are described on the first page of Worksheet 7 in the Avner book (5 points). **(Due Date: February 2)**

Assignment #2: Draft Fact Sheet: Students should create a one-page fact sheet for the primary bill they are following this session. The fact sheet should be simple, easy to read, and supportive of the policy change the student’s organization is advocating for; the fact sheet should be written for legislators (5 points). **(Due Date: February 16)**

Assignment #3: Final Fact Sheet. Finalize your fact sheet based on peer and instructor review (20 points). **(Due Date: March 2).**

Assignment #4: Formal PowerPoint Presentation: Students will be required to make a formal presentation using PowerPoint on one of the two student presentation class periods. The presentations should provide an overview of their topic, their organization, and the progress they have made toward achieving their Capitol meetings requirement (30 points). **(Due Date: March 9 or 30)**

Assignment #5: Viewing Legislative Activities: Students’ experiences in this course vary based on the matched organization, the issue they are following, and the legislative session. However, all students are expected to obtain exposure to legislative activities, either with their matched organization or on their own. By the end of the semester, at a minimum, students should have completed and summarized one of each of the following legislative activities:

- a. *One Senate committee hearing*
- b. *One House committee hearing*
- c. *One House floor session*
- d. *One Senate floor session*
- e. *One conference committee in the House or Senate*
- f. *One Day on the Hill*

Students can attend activities directly related to the issue they are following or activities related to other topics. The summary for each of the required activities should include the date, beginning and end times, title of the activity, and a brief summary of topics and decisions that occurred (5 points each). **(Due Date: May 4)**

Assignment #6: Media Monitoring Summary: Students are expected to follow their issues in one of the local daily papers (websites: www.pioneerplanet.com or www.startribune.com). Students should

track number of newspaper articles covering their topic and provide one-sentence summary for each article (10 points). **(Due Date: May 4)**

Assignment #7: Daily Log: Students will be required to keep a daily log of their hours and activities related to the course. 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 (20 points). **(Due Date: May 4)**

Assignment #8: Brief Presentation: Students will be expected to provide a brief oral summary of the legislative outcome of their issue and final analysis of the session and organization (10 points). **(Due Date: May 9)**

Final Paper: Students will also be required to write a paper that presents the background on their issue, provides an analysis of the arguments for and against their policy 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. Full details about the required paper will be provided in class. **(Due Date: May 4)**

VII. Resources:

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/lrl/lrl.htm
- Everything you need to know about Minnesota: www.state.mn.us

VIII. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

- January 19:** Introduction to the course
Reading: Avner pp. 17-87 (i.e., Introduction & Ch. 1)
- January 26:** Tour of the capitol area – (Location: Capitol)
Reading: Avner, pp. 89-159 (i.e., Ch. 2-Ch. 4), Review p. 50 (“Treasure Hunt at the Capitol or City Hall”)
- February 2:** “How an idea becomes law”
Reading: Avner, pg. 179-186 (i.e., Appendix C); 223-229, (i.e, Worksheet 7)
Assignment Due: Locate Information Resources
- February 16:** Peer Review & Guest Speaker: Clark Biegler, MN Council of Nonprofits (3:35-4:45)
Assignment Due: Draft Fact Sheet
- March 2:** Guest Speaker: *Todd Rapp*
Assignment Due: Final Fact Sheet
- March 9:** Student Presentations
Assignment Due: PowerPoint Presentation
- March 30:** Student Presentations
Assignment Due: PowerPoint Presentation
- April 13:** Guest Speaker: *TBA*
- April 27:** Guest Speaker: *TBA*
- May 4:** Guest speaker: *Alicia Leizinger, Betsy Brock, Kristen Werner, Local-level Policy Change*
Assignments Due: Media Monitoring Summary, Viewing Legislative Activities, Daily Log, and Final Paper
- May 9:** **Dinner: 4:30-7:00**
Final reports, evaluation, dinner (Location: *Traci’s house*)
Assignment Due: Informal Presentation

The final paper and daily log are due on May 4, 2017. One point will be taken off for each day assignments and final paper are late.

IX. Evaluation and Grading

Students’ grades will be based on successful completion of assignments, participation in the classroom, and participation in field activities. 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 the instructor for permission to miss a class because of legislative schedule conflicts **prior** to the class meeting. The instructor will conduct a brief interview with matched organizations to assess students’ participation in field activities.

All students will be graded on an A-F basis. Final grades will be based on class participation (10%), assignments #1-8 (35%), satisfactory participation with organization (15%), and paper (40%). Letter grades

and associated points are awarded in this course as follows below and will appear on the student' official transcript.

This course cannot be taken on a S/N basis. Letter grades will be determined by total effort as follows:

A = 95-100 pts	Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
A-= 90-94 pts	
B+= 87-89 pts	
B = 83-86 pts	Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
B- = 80-82 pts	Represents achievement that meets the minimum course requirements
C+= 77-79 pts	
C = 73-76 pts	
C- = 70-72 pts	
F (or N)	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit, or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I

Course Evaluation

The SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval: www.sph.umn.edu/courseeval. 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 in SPHGrades: www.sph.umn.edu/grades. All students will have access to their final grades through OneStop 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 an 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.

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 official 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 SPHGrades at: 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.

X. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable)

For full-semester courses, students may change their grade option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester courses) 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 Office of Admissions and Student Resources at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means 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; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: <http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html>. If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate

shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: <http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center Student Services is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 or ds@umn.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website, <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

The Office of Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota:

The Office for Student Affairs provides services, programs, and facilities that advance student success, inspire students to make life-long positive contributions to society, promote an inclusive environment, and enrich the University of Minnesota community.

Units within the Office for Student Affairs include, the Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, Boynton Health Service, Central Career Initiatives (CCE, CDes, CFANS), Leadership Education and Development –Undergraduate Programs (LEAD-UP), the Office for Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, the Office for Student Engagement, the Parent Program, Recreational Sports, Student and Community Relations, the Student Conflict Resolution Center, the Student Parent HELP Center, Student Unions & Activities, University Counseling & Consulting Services, and University Student Legal Service.

For more information, please see the Office of Student Affairs at <http://www.osa.umn.edu/index.html>.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility: *for courses that do not involve students in research:*

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of

study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. *[Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]*

OR:

Academic Freedom and Responsibility, for courses that involve students in research:

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom and conduct relevant research. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.* When conducting research, pertinent institutional approvals must be obtained and the research must be consistent with University policies.

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. *[Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]*

** Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".*