I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Course Number and Title: NRSC 310: Health, Healthcare, Research, and Public Policy

B. Level/Specialty: PhD

C. Pre- and Co-requisites: Enrollment as Doctoral Student or Consent of Instructor

D. Description: Explores and critically analyzes theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding dynamic synergies between nursing practice, research, healthcare organizations, and public policy and their impact on health. Strategies for dissemination, translation, and evaluation of evidence-based research findings to support healthcare practices and public policies to measurably improve health outcomes for selected populations and the student’s phenomenon of interest will be discussed. Local, national, and global implications will be explored.

E. Relationship to School’s Philosophy, Goals, and Organizing Framework:

1. Describe relationship between the course and philosophy of the Graduate School. This course presents fundamental content pertinent to the development of, evaluation of, and content contained in theories and models essential for understanding the formation of health care policy and its impact on the health of the public. The role of data and potential for research in health policy formation is also explored.

2. Meeting course objectives will facilitate student achievement of the following PhD Program core competencies:

   o Critically analyze theoretical and research literature.
   o Use abstract and theoretically driven arguments.
   o Identify areas for knowledge development.
   o Critically analyze sociopolitical issues impacting health, health care and the discipline.
   o Demonstrate knowledge of the effect of sociopolitical issues on theory, research, and practice.

F. Credit: 2 semester hours

G. Class Time: On campus meeting: 1/14/13, 9AM-12PM

   Synchronous chats: 2/14/13 9AM-10AM
   3/21/13 9AM-10AM

H. Course Faculty: Susan M. Swider, PhD, APHN-BC

   susan.swider@vanderbilt.edu
   773 320-7059 (cell)
II. **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss empirical frameworks to analyze extant evidence supporting existing practice, research, and health policies impacting selected phenomena.
2. Evaluate past, current and emerging trends affecting practice, research, and public policies related to selected phenomena.
3. Evaluate health policy efforts and identify processes and actions that influence development of health and nursing policy.
4. Describe the role and responsibility of the nursing discipline in informing, shaping, and implementing future practice, research, and public policy.
5. Discuss future research and funding opportunities for selected phenomena within the context of State and national agendas and funding priorities.

III. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

A. **Learning Experiences:**

   On line course with one live session and two synchronous discussion sessions. Application of policy analytic framework to current issue; discussion of role of data in policy making, and role of researcher in the policy process.

B. **Required Learning Resources:**


   Additional readings as assigned (see schedule).

   **Supplemental/recommended readings:**


   See *Policy References* in the *Course Documents* section of the course for other recommended and supplemental readings, and for policy resources on the web.
## Class Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1: Public Policymaking and Research</strong></td>
<td>Longest Chapters 1, 2 and 4</td>
<td>M1Discussion: Synchronous discussion on 1/14/13 (5 pts.)</td>
<td>1/14/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 7-21</td>
<td>Fielding JE, Briss PA. Promoting evidence-based public health policy: can we have better evidence and more action? <em>Health Affairs</em>. 2006; 25:969-978.</td>
<td>o National policy issues</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2: The Policy Process: Agenda Setting- Problems</strong></td>
<td>Longest, chapter 5</td>
<td>M1: Assignment-1: background on policy issue (P/F)</td>
<td>1/21</td>
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<td>M3Assignment-2: Peer critique (P/F)</td>
<td>3/11</td>
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<td>M4Discussion: Synchronous chat: March 21, 2013 (5 pts)</td>
<td>M4Assignment-1: Political analysis (10 pts)</td>
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<td>o Political culture</td>
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<td>o Elected officials-delegates or trustees</td>
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<td>M4Assignment-2: Peer critique (P/F)</td>
<td>3/29</td>
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<td><strong>Module 5:</strong> Formulating/Modifying/ Evaluating Policy</td>
<td>Longest, Chapters 6, 7 and 9</td>
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<td><strong>M5 Assignment:</strong> Implementation assignment (10 pts)</td>
<td>4/5</td>
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<td><strong>M5 Discussion:</strong> Policy evaluation discussion on line (5 pts)</td>
<td>4/12</td>
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<th><strong>Module 6:</strong> Putting it all together-the Policy Memo</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 8-23</td>
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<td><strong>M6 Assignment-1:</strong> Policy memo (30 pts)</td>
<td>4/22</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M6 Assignment-2:</strong> Peer critique (10 pts)</td>
<td>4/29</td>
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D. **Rules and Regulations:**

1. **Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend the scheduled seminar session and synchronous chat sessions, and arrive on time. Faculty must be notified in advance of any absence.

2. **Policy on late work and incompletes:** All work is due on the date assigned. Failure to submit work on the assigned date or submission of incomplete work will result in a reduction of one letter grade for each day late. In unusual circumstances, the professor may allow for an extension of time for completion, this must be negotiated in advance of the submission date.

3. **Honor Code Policy:**

   All work in this course is based on the Honor Code of Vanderbilt University. Each student has the responsibility to obtain a copy of the Graduate/Professional Student Handbook and to read and understand the Honor Code and consequences of violation.

4. **Complaint/Grievance Process:**

   The faculty member in this course welcomes the opportunity to work closely with you to facilitate your learning and assist you in meeting the course objectives. If at any time you have concerns regarding an instructor or the course, discuss the problem first with the instructor involved. If the problem persists, make an appointment with Linda Norman, Senior Associate Dean. At the time of your appointment with the Senior Associate Dean, you should bring a written statement of the problem or grievance. If still unresolved, contact Dean Colleen Conway-Welch for assistance.

5. **Disability Information:**

   Students who wish an accommodation for disability or health reasons are responsible for requesting accommodation from the appropriate faculty member. This self-identification is the only way to assure that the faculty can provide the appropriate accommodation.

   Anyone who has identified a need for an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the course coordinator to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment, you will discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. The Opportunity Development Center, located at the Baker Building 110 21st Avenue South, will need to verify the need for accommodation and develop accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Opportunity Development Center, please call 322-4705.

6. **Course and Faculty Evaluation:**

   It is the responsibility of the student to critique and evaluate the course and faculty, prior to submission of final grades. VUSN has a secure system, while maintaining the absolute confidentiality and anonymity of the information submitted by the student. Faculty expects that all students will complete a course and faculty evaluation. Student feedback is used for continual improvement of courses.
IV. EVALUATION

1. Methods: **Assessment of Student Performance:** Evaluation of student performance is based on active participation in seminars, successful achievement of course objectives, and satisfactory completion of required assignments.

   **Note:** All materials submitted for class must be word-processed and on one side of the paper only, with 1 inch margins on all sides. Grammar and punctuation always count towards the grade.

2. Evaluation elements
   - Active seminar preparation and participation: 20 pts
   - Homework assignments: 40 pts
   - Policy Brief/Memo: 30 pts
   - Policy Memo Critique: 10 pts

3. Assignments:
   a. **Seminar Participation** - Full preparation prior to, and participation during, seminar discussions is expected. Preparation includes completion of both assigned readings and on-going readings related to policies associated with your selected phenomenon. Meaningful contributions to discussions and provision of thoughtful comments to colleagues with regard to their ideas will be expected. Participation will be evaluated based on the logic and depth of your analysis of issues, comments reflecting your engagement with readings, and the extent to which you generate fresh insight about the issue.

   b. **Homework Assignments** – Choose a policy issue/problem of interest for analysis throughout the semester. Each homework assignment will involve applying a part of a policy analytic framework to this problem. Guidelines for each assignment are in the module. Assignments may be written as short paragraphs, or outlined in bullet format. The data used for each assignment will then be synthesized into your final policy memo/brief.

   c. **Policy Memo/Brief (due via email or posted on course site)** – Policy briefs provide policymakers and interest groups with a succinct overview of an issue. Key points are: a) your objective in preparing the brief (inform, direct, etc.); and b) target audience (what do they know, what are their interests in the issue?). The policy brief should include:
      i. Clear statement/definition of the problem,
      ii. Context and background of the problem,
      iii. Advantages and disadvantages of various policy options, including analysis of political implications of each and
      iv. Resources used to prepare the brief.

Many professional organizations develop policy briefs. The course has websites with memo/brief formats for your use. Memo/briefing format should generally be no longer than 4-6 pages including figures, tables, illustrations, and references. The following are web references on the policy memo. See the Course Documents section of the course labeled Policy memo for further information.

   d. **Policy Memo/Brief Critique** – You will each be assigned a peer partner to critique. As the semester unfolds, you will be asked to critique their homework postings.
Then you will provide a critique of their final policy memo, based on the criteria provided in the syllabus. Please e-mail this critique to the instructor and to your peer partner.

Students in the doctoral program in VUSN are required to achieve a grade of B- or better for each course counting toward the doctoral degree. Students who receive less than a grade of B- are required to retake the course and are given one additional opportunity to achieve a passing grade. Students who receive a grade of less than B- are placed on academic probation and are required to meet at least monthly with their academic advisor. When a grade of less than B- is received in a foundational course pertaining to the nursing science and research and theory development areas of the program, the student may be required to delay progression until the foundational content is mastered and an acceptable grade is achieved. Any student placed on academic probation may lose financial aid awards.

**Grading System**

The grading system in the Graduate School includes the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F. A student will not be granted graduate credit for any course in which a grade less than C is received. Grades below C may be repeated once at the discretion of the course director and the department. In this situation, the more recent grade will be calculated in the final grade point average. The letter I may be used at the discretion of the instructor in those cases in which the student is not able to complete work in the normal time. The notation W is entered onto the transcript when a student withdraws from a course or from the Graduate School. A grade point average of 3.0 is required for graduation. Letter grades are assigned grade point values as follows:

- A+ = 4.0
- A  = 4.0
- A– = 3.7
- B+ = 3.3
- B  = 3.0
- B– = 2.7
- C+ = 2.3
- C  = 2.0
- C– = 1.7
- D+ = 1.3
- D  = 1.0
- D– = 0.7
- F  = 0.0