

▶▶ JSGS 860 – Health Systems Research Methods

	University of Regina Campus	University of Saskatchewan Campus
Instructor:	Gregory P. Marchildon	
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Office Hours:	By appointment	
Office Location:	110-2 Research Drive	
Term:	Fall 2011	
Room:	Board Room, Gallery Building JSGS Outreach and Training College Avenue Campus	
Date and Time:	Fridays 2:15 to 5:00	

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course in research methods as applied to the analysis of health systems will develop students' knowledge and skills in health systems research including the criteria for formulating health system research problems and hypotheses, selecting the appropriate research design, conducting a systematic literature review, methods of data collection and use.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

This course is structured as a series of intensive, seminar-based workshops. Organized in conjunction with the Western Regional Training Centre in Health Services Research (WRTC) seminars, students are exposed to various methods and approaches to health systems research. Students are expected to use the seminars to further their own research projects and theses. While there are no required textbooks for the course, each seminar will have required as well as supplementary readings accessible through UR Courses.

EVALUATION

Assignment	Due Date	Percent Mark Assigned
Poster and presentation	Nov. 25	25%
Seminar participation	Throughout course	15%
Article-length paper	Dec. 9	60%

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements, based upon substantive reasons, are made with the instructors in advance.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students in the course who, because of a disability, may have a need for accommodations are encouraged to come and discuss accommodations with the instructor, and to contact the Coordinator of Special Needs Services at 585-4631.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

Understanding and following the principles of academic integrity and conduct as laid out in the University of Saskatchewan's Guidelines for Academic Conduct is vital to your success in graduate school (as attached; and available at http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports/archives/guide_conduct.shtml), and at the University of Regina (available at http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/calendar/policy_univ.shtml#conduct). Ensuring that your work is your own and reflects both your own ideas and those of others incorporated in your work is important: ensuring that you acknowledge the ideas, words, and phrases of others that you use is a vital part of the scholarly endeavour. If you have any questions at all about academic integrity in general or about specific issues, contact any faculty member and we can discuss your questions.

The seminars in this course will be shaped around the needs of students who will use the course to further their own health systems research projects. The course is combined with the Western Regional Training Centre in Health Services Research (WRTC) seminars every second Friday from 12:30 until 2:00 PM. On WRTC Fridays (as indicated below), the seminar will continue from 2:15 until 5:00 PM. On non-WRTC Fridays, the seminar will run from 2:15 PM until 5:00 PM. In addition to the required reading indicated below, all seminar participants are expected to read the background articles for all six WRTC seminars during the semester. These readings will be posted up to two weeks before each WRTC seminar. Seminar participants will be expected to probe the strengths and weaknesses of the presenter's research methods in each WRTC seminar. Due to the length of seminars on WRTC Fridays, there will be fewer seminar days in total during the semester.

Seminar 1: Introduction to Comparative Health System Research (Sept. 9)

Includes a review of health system categorization, the criteria for effective comparative health systems research (HSR), the limitations of comparative HSR, the unit of analysis challenge, the centralization-decentralization conundrum, and policy lesson-drawing

- Mills, A. 2011. Health policy and systems research: defining the terrain; identifying the methods. *Health Policy and Planning* 2011: 1-7.
- Figueras, J., et al. 2008. *Health Systems, Health and Wealth: Assessing the Case for Investing in Health Systems*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- Marmor, T., R. Freeman, and K. Okma. 2005. Comparative perspectives and policy learning in the world of health care. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 7(4): 331-348.
- Freeman, R., and L. Frisina. 2010. Health care systems and the problem of classification. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 12(1-2): 163-178.

Seminar 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Comparison (WRTC: Sept. 16)

The first half of the seminar focuses on quantitative comparisons through the use of league tables and other ranking methods while the second half will emphasize qualitative comparisons using the methods of historical institutionalism

- WHO. 2000. Why do health systems matter? [chapter 1]. In *The World Health Report 2000. Health Systems: Improving Performance*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Schoen, C., et al. 2005. Taking the pulse of health care systems: experiences of patients with health problems in six countries. *Health Affairs Web*
- Marchildon, G.P., and K. Schrijvers. 2011. Physician resistance and the forging of public healthcare: a comparative analysis of the doctors' strikes in Canada and Belgium in the 1960s. *Medical History* 55(2): 203-222.
- Tuohy, C.H. 2003. Agency, contract, and governance: shifting shapes of accountability in the health care arena. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 28(2-3): 195-215.

Seminar 3: Workshop on Establishing Research Question and Research Design (Sept. 23)

How to construct and then refine research questions and/or research hypotheses as well as set up a proper research design around the question or hypothesis: students use their own work to test various approaches aided by the constructive criticism of all seminar participants. The elements of a thesis research proposal is reviewed in the second half of the seminar.

- Sandberg, J., and M. Alvesson. 2011. Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization* 18(1): 23-44.
- Forrest, C.B., D.P. Martin, E. Holve, and A. Millman. 2009. Health services research doctoral core competencies. *BMC Health Services Research* 9:107:1-5.

Seminar 4: Approaches to Evaluating Access, Value for Money and Outcomes (WRTC: Sept. 30)

Review of the methodologies and approaches used to evaluate health system performance in terms of access, value for money in terms of health technologies as well as health system outcomes.

- Allin, S. 2008. Does equity in healthcare use vary across Canadian provinces? *Healthcare Policy* 3(4): 83-99.
- Guyatt, G.H., et al. 2007. A systematic review of studies comparing health outcomes in Canada and the United States. *Open Medicine* 1(1): E27-36.
- Cutler, D.M., and M. McClellan. 2000. Is technological change in medicine worth it? *Health Affairs* 20(5): 11-29.
- Wagstaff, A. 2009. *Social Health Insurance vs. Tax-Financed Health Systems – Evidence from the OECD*. Washington, DC: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (no. WPS 4821).

Seminar 5: Evaluating Aggregate Health System Performance: Amenable Mortality (WRTC: Oct. 14)

Overview of avoidable mortality methodology and its use in evaluating and comparing health system performance

- Nolte, E., and M. McKee. 2008. Measuring the health of nations: updating an earlier analysis. *Health Affairs* 27(1): 58-71.
- Gay, J.G., V. Paris, M. Devaux, M. de Looper. 2011. *Mortality Amenable to Health Care in 31 OECD Countries: Estimates and Methodological Issues*. Paris: OECD Health Working Paper No. 55 (40 pp).

Seminar 6: Workshop on Student Research Proposals – Class Papers (Oct. 21)

Seminar 7: Health System Expenditures and Underlying Cost Drivers (WRTC: Oct. 28)

Review of how health system expenditures are categorized, measured and compared in Canada and the OECD. Considerable attention is devoted to an analysis of the underlying cost drivers.

- Link to OECD health data at: <http://www.oecd.org/health/healthdata>
- Link to CIHI's National Health Expenditure Trends at: <http://www.cihi.ca>

Seminar 8: Review of Research Techniques and Workshop on Presentation of Quantitative Data (Nov. 4)

The first half of the seminar is devoted to electronic database searching, more effective use of RefWorks, as well as understanding and using statistical data sets. The second half of the seminar is a workshop on how to better prepare and present quantitative data where students present their own work and are provided peer-based constructive criticism.

Seminar 9: Workshop on Designing Posters based upon Research Papers (WRTC: Nov. 18)

Posters have become one of the major forms of dissemination in health systems research and this workshop provides the skills necessary in designing superior posters based on their own research

- Youtube video (MAST Institute, University of Northern Colorado): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqgigwIXadA>
- Miller, J.E. 2007. Preparing and presenting effective research posters. *HSR: Health Services Research* 42(1): 311-328.

Seminar 10: Workshop: Research Papers (Nov. 25)

Presentation of main thesis and supporting evidence of class papers in a powerpoint format

Seminar 11: Aboriginal Health Research Methods (WRTC: Dec. 2)

Review of contemporary research methods as applied to Indigenous communities inside and outside Canada.

- Wilson, K., and T.K Young. 2008. An overview of Aboriginal health research in the social sciences: current trends and future directions. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 67(2-3): 179-189.
- Jacklin, K. and P. Kinoshameg. 2008. Developing a participatory Aboriginal health research project: 'only if it's going to mean something'. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 3(2): 53-67.