

**Syllabus for PUBPL 496**  
**Independent Study: The Opioid Crisis in Rural Pennsylvania**  
**Spring 2020**

**Professor:** Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

Office: W-160K  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3pm, Tuesday and Thursday 1:30 - 3pm  
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**Course Description:** This course is an independent study co-designed by the student and instructor. The student will gain an understanding of the opioid crisis in American, writ large, as well as the specific contours of the problem in Pennsylvania. There will be a further focus on the specific challenges facing rural locales. The student will learn about the physical, psychological, and social origins of opioid addiction. They will also evaluate how policy choices contributed to the problem and the policy experiments occurring across the United States aimed at reducing overdose and addiction rates. The student will produce a final research report that could set the stage for later publication. The instructor will mentor and meet with the student on a monthly basis, as well as correspond regularly via email and Zoom, to discuss the material and development of the final project.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Critical Thinking
  - The student will read and critically evaluate biological, psychological, social, and policy research on opioid addiction
- Information Literacy and Research Skills
  - The student will complete a research project that uses evidence and builds on existing scholarly literature
- Program Competence
  - The student will gain a better understanding of public policy theory and its usefulness in understanding contemporary public problems
  - The student will gain a better understanding of how the policy cycle leads to both new problems and novel solutions

**Methods for Learning and Teaching:** This independent study will require substantial self-paced work on the part of the student. We will meet regularly to discuss how the study is progressing and to tackle any questions about the material.

## Reaching Our Goals

**E-mail Policy:** I will work to respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

## Assigned Background Readings

The following readings are required and arranged by topic:

### Opioid Epidemic Primer

- Olsen, Yngvild and Joshua M. Sharftein. (2019). *The Opioid Epidemic: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### Opioid Epidemic in Pennsylvania

- Volume 20, No 2-3 (2018): *Commonwealth: A Journal of Pennsylvania Politics and Policy*. Special Issue on Opioid Crisis.

### Opioid Addiction in Rural Pennsylvania

- Sable-Smith, Bram. (2020). “[Family Doctors In Rural America Tackle Crisis of Addiction and Pain.](#)” *Kaiser Health News*. January 10.
- Feldman, Nina. (2020). “[PA is Paying Hospitals to Get Patients Into Opioid Treatment After Overdosing - And It’s Working.](#)” *WHYY*. January 10.
- Hold, Harry D., Matin Katirai, and Whitney Katirai. (2019). *[The Availability of Medication-Assisted Treatment of Opioid Addiction in Pennsylvania](#)*. Center for Rural Pennsylvania.
- Center for Rural Pennsylvania. (2015). *[Pennsylvania Municipal Police Departments and Naloxone](#)*.
- Center for Rural Pennsylvania. (2015). *[Heroin: Combating this Growing Epidemic in PA](#)*.

## Policy Process Theory and Opioid Policy

- Zahariadis, Mikolaos. (2018). “Ambiguity and Multiple Streams.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 25-58.
- Schneider, Anne L., Helen Ingram, and Peter deLeon. (2018). “Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 105-150.
- Gupta, Kuhika and Hank Jenkins-Smith. (2015). “[Anthony Downs: 'Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle.'](#)” In *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration*. Martin Lodge, Edward C. Page, and Steven J. Balla, eds.
- Rutkow, Lainie and Jon S. Vernick. (2017). “Emergency Legal Authority and the Opioid Crisis.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 377: 1512-2514.
- Riley, Diane and Pat O'Hare. (2000). “Harm Reduction: History, Definition, and Practice.” In *Harm Reduction*. James A. Inciardi and Lana D. Harrison, eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Beyond these readings, the student will need to conduct a literature search and read additional research relevant to their selected research topic.

## Assessing Progress Towards Our Goals

The following assessments will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: annotated bibliography, literature review, final paper. Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Annotated Bibliography of Course Readings	25%
Literature Review	25%
Final Paper	50%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	70 to 76
D	60 to 69
F	Below 60

**Annotated Bibliography of Course Readings:** This first assignment is meant to help you gain the necessary background in policy theory and the opioid epidemic. As you read the assigned chapters and journal articles, produce an annotated bibliography using guidance from the readings listed above. We will meet and discuss your annotations for the readings.

**Literature Review:** As you identify and read additional articles and books relevant to your research question, keep a running annotated bibliography that helps you understand the literature. This assignment is meant to develop your review of literature relevant to your research question. Original sources include scholarly journal articles, think tank and policy center research reports, government reports, speeches, pamphlets, and interviews. You should not rely on secondary sources like news articles. A literature review is not just summarizing all of the literature, but analyzing what is known, what is not known, and showing how your study fits into that. This should be no longer than 5 pages.

**Final Paper:** You will now combine your literature review (incorporating my feedback) with an introduction that includes your research question(s), your study design, and results. The paper should have the following format:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Section explaining your methodological approach to answering your questions
4. The results of your analysis
5. Conclusion

A good paper will be roughly 25-30 pages. This, of course, can vary depending on the number of research questions and how much evidence you need to discuss. We will work to keep the following schedule:

### Deadlines

Assignment	Due Date
Annotated Bibliography	Weekly through May 1
Topic Selection	Feb 1
Literature Review	Feb 28
Rough Draft	April 1
Final Paper	May 7

## Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is not limited to simply cheating on an exam or assignment. The following is quoted directly from the *PSU Faculty Senate Policies for Students* regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty: “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.”

All University and Penn State Harrisburg policies regarding academic integrity/academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Refer to the following URL for further details on the academic integrity policy of Penn State Harrisburg: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/academics/academic-guidelines-and-policies>. Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University and Penn State Harrisburg policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of “F” or “XF” as the final grade for the student.

## Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has a Student DisAbility Resources office. Student DisAbility Resources at Penn State Harrisburg is located in SEC 205. The Disability Services Coordinator, Alan Babcock, can be reached via email at [aub15@psu.edu](mailto:aub15@psu.edu) or phone 717-948-6025.

To receive consideration for accommodations, you must contact Student DisAbility Resources (SDR), participate in an intake interview, provide documentation of your disability, and complete a Self-Assessment. Additional information is available on the Disability Services website (<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/disability-services>). If the documentation supports requests for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide you with an accommodations letter, which you will give to your professors. You will receive accommodations after you give your accommodations letters to your professors. You should share your accommodations letters with your professors as early in the semester as possible. Professors do not provide accommodations retroactively.

## Counseling Services

Students may face a variety of concerns over the course of their time at PSH- depressed mood, anxiety, stress, family concerns, body image, substance use, sexuality and many others- that

may interfere with their ability to focus on their studies. Counseling Services provides FREE mental health and social support for all currently enrolled students. Staff follow strict legal and ethical guidelines concerning the confidentiality of counseling. Counseling services is located in SEC 205 and can be reached by phone at (717) 948-6025. You can find more information at the Counseling Services webpage, <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/counseling-services>.

## Educational Equity

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity at the Report Bias site: <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/statement>. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to our Penn State Harrisburg Office of Student Affairs at the following link <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/webform/office-student-conduct-incident-report-form>.

## Mandated Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as an educator. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, per University policy AD85 (<https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad85>), I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime with the University including incidents of sex-based discrimination and harassment (discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation). While faculty are ethically bound to report any information as it relates to University policy, we are also a resource and want to be sure you are aware of the services available to you.

The first resource that should you should contact is Felicia Brown-Haywood at the Penn State Harrisburg Title IX Office (E131 Olmsted Building): 717-948-6180.

Other resources that are available include:

- Penn State Harrisburg Counseling and Psychological Services, E131 Olmsted Building: 717-948-6025
- Department of Safety & Police
  - Campus Police: 717-979-7976

– Local Police: 717-543-2200 or 911

- YWCA Confidential Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services: 1-800-654-1221 (available 24/7)
- Contact Helpline: 800-932-4616 (24-hour community crisis hotline)
- Pinnacle Health Harrisburg: 717-782-3131
- Penn State Harrisburg Student Health Services, 220 Capital Union Building: 717-948-61015
- Penn State Hotline: 800-560-1637 (Anonymous reporting)

## Basic Needs Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Office of Student Affairs ([syw10@psu.edu](mailto:syw10@psu.edu), 717-948-6180) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess.

## Writing Tutoring and Other Academic Support

The [Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center](#) provides tutoring for writing assignments as well as for other aspects of the academic experience. You can make an appointment in one of the four ways listed below. An appointment is recommended, though not required.

Website	Online Scheduler	Phone	In Person
<a href="http://harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center">harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center</a>	<a href="http://psuh.mywconline.com">psuh.mywconline.com</a>	717-948-6475	SEC 201

### Writing

The Learning Center provides tutoring support for writing assignments in this class. Do you need help developing your thesis and ideas? Do you need objective feedback when you're drafting or revising your papers? Do you have questions about MLA, APA, or Chicago styles? Do you want to improve your academic writing skills? The writing tutors at the Learning Center are experts at helping students improve their writing. Writing handouts are available at [psu.box.com/v/WritingResources](http://psu.box.com/v/WritingResources) and in print in SEC 201.

### Other Academic Support

Is English an additional language for you and your home language is “getting in the way?” Are you spending excessive amounts of time trying to finish your assigned readings? Are



you nervous about participating in class and presenting speeches? American & Academic Literacy (AAL) appointments support international and other multilingual students with their transition to the U.S., and can help all students with their speeches. Our Academic Skills Consultants can also help with time management, organization, and study skills. Like us at [facebook.com/RussellEHornSrLearningCenter/](https://facebook.com/RussellEHornSrLearningCenter/) and follow us on Twitter @PSUHLC.