

Health Care Policy and Practice in Ireland

SAR HS 425

Lecturer: Dr. Eve Watson (PhD, MICP, RegPract APPI)

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Class Times: Mondays, 10:00 pm – 1:00 pm (1st half of program)
Fridays, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm (2nd half of program)

Venue: See Calendar

Course Description

This course explores health care policy and practice in Ireland which is a diverse and complex system of care, service provision, human resource management, policy, practice, administration, as well as an arena of political focus and intervention. We will explore these aspects of health care that are unique to Ireland. Students will initially be introduced to broader questions and considerations of “health” and “wellness” and will then consider the economic, cultural and social influences on Irish health care policy and practice, and the role of the church, and state and non-state actors in this development in order to understand contemporary challenges for the delivery, financing and governance of health care. Health care policy and practice has more recently seen almost continuous reform since 2005, symptomatic of Ireland’s fragmented and two-tiered system. A big question is how this can be improved in light of the launch a ten-year healthcare programme in 2017 called Sláintecare.

The six building blocks of the World Health Organisation (WHO) health system framework will be used to analyse and critically reflect on the Irish health system and compare it with other systems to achieve desired outcomes. These building blocks are: service delivery, health workforce, information, medical products vaccines and technologies, financing, and governance.

The impact of and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic form an area of special focus and analysis, as will two special areas of study: women’s health and mental health.

Assessment for the course consists of:

- class attendance and participation (10%)
- a class presentation (20%)
- an essay (40%)
- a final examination (30%)

Hub Learning Outcomes

Social Inquiry I (one unit)

- Students will identify and apply major concepts used in the social sciences to explain individual and collective human behaviour including, for example, the workings of social groups, institutions, networks, the role of the individual, and social, political, cultural factors in them.

Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy

- Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, an understanding of global diversity as expressed in at least two different languages, cultures, religions, political systems, or societies.

To meet the Hub areas above, on completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the meaning of health, health policy and health systems generally and using the six building blocks of the WHO health system framework (Social Inquiry I)
2. Analyse the economic, cultural, and social factors that influenced the development of healthcare policy and practice in Ireland; (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy)
3. Evaluate health service delivery structures, financing, and governance in Ireland (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy)
4. Analyse health workforce challenges facing health systems in Ireland and internationally (Social Inquiry I)
5. Analyse the role of information and information systems in health care (Social Inquiry I)
6. Analyse challenges in meeting demands for medical products, vaccines, and health technologies (Social Inquiry II)
7. Evaluate healthcare reform strategies and impacts on access, coverage, quality and safety to meet the goals of health systems (including equity, health improvement, efficiency, responsiveness and risk protection); (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy)
8. Compare the effectiveness of the Irish healthcare system with other health care systems, including equality of access and provision (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy)

Instructional Format

Class time will be used for a combination of seminar-style lectures, discussions, project work and presentations. Two guest lectures will be organised to supplement classroom learning (see course schedule for those three dates). Students will be given a break over the course of each three-hour lecture.

Recommended Sources

Although the three texts below are available and useful for historical context, there are no recent comprehensive textbooks that adequately meet the needs of students on this course. Specific reading will be recommended and made available for each course topic.

- Tormey, W. (2022). *Turbulence in Health and Social Care: Ireland*. Eliva Press.
- Brady, A.-M. (2010). *Leadership & Management in the Irish Health Service*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan
- Burke S. (2009). *Irish Apartheid: Healthcare Inequality in Ireland*. Dublin: New Island

Additional reading

1. Buse, K., Mays N. & G. Walt (2010) *Making Health Policy: Understanding Public Health*, London: OUP. Available online at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.474.6452&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
2. Levesque J., Harris M., Russell G. 2013. "Patient-centred access to healthcare: conceptualising access at the interface of health systems and populations." *Int J Equity Health*;12:18. [doi:10.1186/1475-9276-12-18](https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-9276-12-18).
3. Dept of Health (2001) *Primary care- a new direction*. Dublin: Stationery Office. <http://www.ncnm.ie/files/publications/Primary%20care%20strategy.pdf>

4. Dept of Health (2006) A Vision for Change- Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy http://www.dohc.ie/publications/vision_for_change.html
5. Forster T, Kentikelenis A & C Bambra. 2018. Health Inequalities in Europe: Setting the Stage for Progressive Policy Action. Dublin: TASC. <https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/1845-6%20health%20inequalities%20inner-hr.pdf>
6. HIQA. 2016. A guide to Health Technology Assessment at HIQA 2016 <https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2017-01/A-Guide-to-Health-Technology-Assessment.pdf>
7. Houses of the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare Sláintecare Report May 2017. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/committees/32/future-of-healthcare/> and Implementation Strategy August 2018 <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/slaintecare-implementation-strategy/>
8. HSE. 2013. E-health strategy for Ireland <https://www.ehealthireland.ie/Knowledge-Information-Plan/eHealth-Strategy-for-Ireland.pdf>

Key Websites

- Department of Health <http://health.gov.ie>
- Health Information and Quality Authority www.hiqa.ie
- Health Service Executive www.hse.ie
- WHO COVID-19 related resources: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Assignments and Grading

Further details on the assignments will be distributed during lectures and discussed. Opportunities for questions about and clarification of all the assignments will be given during the course. Your grade for the course will be based on your work as follows:

Weekly participation:	10%	Incl. contribution to in-class discussion/debates
Individual Presentation Project	20%:	
Essay	40%	
Final Examination	30%	

Individual Presentation Project: Students will choose an area of healthcare practice from within one of the Health Service Executive (HSE) Clinical Care Programmes (see <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/>) agreed with the lecturer by week 2. The presentation should last 20 minutes and will include: scope of the service, history, access, coverage, safety, quality, effectiveness, efficiency, challenges/barriers and any innovations in care including those related to the COVID-19 impact or response.

Essay titles are distributed at the end of week four. The essay should be approximately 1,500 words long, excluding reference list. Essay requirements will be distributed with the titles.

For the **examination** you are required to answer three (essay-style) questions from a total of 10.

Plagiarism

It is every student's responsibility to read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be

recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean.” **Note: Students must retain an electronic copy of all work submitted for assessment.**

Course Schedule

For each topic, please read the specified chapter in the required text. Additional reading, from the complementary materials list, such as articles together with links to relevant websites will be made available on Moodle one week in advance of each class. PowerPoint presentations will also be available two days prior to the class and it is recommended that learners print out/access these presentations and have them electronically or physically available in class.

Detailed Course Schedule: Health Care Policy and Practice in Ireland

Week	Topic	Assessment
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Lecture is a module introduction and includes a review of the syllabus and the assessments. We will explore the influence of culture generally on health/illness perceptions and approaches, the meaning of health and sickness in a society and how it stacks up in Irish society. What is a “social construction of illness”? Who looks after the sick in society? What are some philosophical principles of health? The history of the Irish health care system is explored, a history that lays the groundwork for a two-tier structure of public and private care and unclear governance. We will begin to generally review the Irish health policy and health systems, drawing from the six building blocks of the WHO health system framework.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ireland Country Health Profile 2021. See https://www.oecd.org/ireland/ireland-country-health-profile-2021-4f7fb3b8-en.htm/ 2. Burke, S. (2009). “Ireland’s Unequal System of Healthcare.” In Irish Apartheid: Healthcare Inequality in Ireland. Dublin: New Island. 	Course Outline and Schedule discussed
2	<p>Health Policy and Governance</p> <p>This lecture gives an overview of recent changes and reforms of the health system in Ireland and will build to a focus on a vast program of reform introduced in 2017, Sláintecare. Learners will explore key issues and concerns of policy and governance in respect of access, coverage, quality, and safety.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sláintecare Implementation Strategy. See https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0d2d60-slaintecare-publications/. 2. Burke, S. (2009). “Why We Have Never Adopted a Universal Healthcare Model.” In Irish Apartheid: Healthcare Inequality in Ireland. Dublin: New Island. 	Presentation themes distributed
3	<p>Health Policy and Financing</p> <p>Lecture will explore the key area of financing. The system of financing health care in Ireland is complicated and we will discuss the ways money is raised for healthcare and spent within the healthcare</p>	

	<p>system, and the effects of these strategies. The current structures of service delivery and governance will also be described and discussed.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butler, M. (2010). "Health Policy & Economics." In <i>Leadership & Management in the Irish Health Service</i>. Gill & MacMillan. 2. HSE 2021 Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements. See https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/media/pressrel/hse-publishes-2021-annual-report-and-annual-financial-statements.html 3. "HSE Defends Recruitment Plans and Financial Governance." 2022. The Irish Times. See https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/hse-defends-recruitment-plans-and-financial-governance-in-wake-of-claims-1.4801339 	
4	<p>Health Workforce, Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies</p> <p>This lecture covers the challenging area of the costs and demands for medicines and related technologies, public health vaccine programmes, and a focus on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Health systems rely on an effective and adequate workforce and most systems are challenged by staff shortages and other challenges. We will discuss the health workforce challenges facing health systems in Ireland and internationally and how they are best met. Finally, the role of health information and systems for supporting better health care delivery will be debated.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burke, S. (2009). The 'Black Hole' Myth and Hospitals - Activity, Unequal Access, Consultants, Staffing and 'Crises.' In <i>Irish Apartheid: Healthcare Inequality in Ireland</i>. Dublin: New Island. 2. Burke, S. et al. (2021). "Building Health System Resilience through Policy Development in Response to Covid-19 in Ireland: From Shock to Reform." In <i>The Lancet</i>. 3. WHO Report on Critical Preparedness, Readiness and Response Actions for Covid-19. See https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/critical-preparedness-readiness-and-response-actions-for-covid-19 4. "Brexit and the Financial Crisis Helped Ireland Prepare for Covid-19." (Oct, 2021). DCU Brexit Institute. https://dcubrexitinstitute.eu/2021/10/brexit-financial-ireland-covid/. 	Essay titles distributed
5	<p>Inequalities in Health Care: The History and Situation of Women's Health Care</p> <p>Are there inequalities in health care? The history of women's health women and research indicates this is that case. Numerous scandals in women's health care through the decades, especially since the 1990s make for difficult reading. This seminar explores how women have historically accessed and gained healthcare treatment, the role of "export" in addressing gaps, and how maternity, fertility and ideals of womanhood have influenced the treatment of women's health.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Women's Health in Ireland: Evidence Base for the Development of the Women's Health Action Plan." 2017. NCWI/DOH/HSE. See 	

	https://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/Womens_Health_in_Ireland - Evidence Base for the Development of the WHAP - 2019.pdf 2. Murphy-Lawless, J. (1993). "Fertility, Bodies, and Politics: The Irish Case." In <i>Reproductive Health Matters</i> 1:2, 53-64, DOI: 10.1016/0968-8080(93)90007-G. RTE. (2022). "Are Women Listened to in the Irish Healthcare System?" See https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2019/0730/1065997-are-women-listened-to-in-the-irish-healthcare-system/	
6	Inequalities in Health: The Situation of Mental Health Care in Ireland This seminar explores in detail the Irish Mental Health care system and considers its successes and its challenges. This includes a history of the "asylum," the role of the "mental" in healthcare, recent innovations in the sector, and the sector's aspirations for improvement. A critical review of the aspirations and implementation of "A Vision for Change" in Mental Health will be evaluated as a case study. 1. DOH. (2006). A Vision for Change. See https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/999b0e-a-vision-for-change/ 2. College of Psychiatrists (Aug, 2022). "College of Psychiatrists of Ireland: Government Failings on Mental Health Putting Patients Lives at Risk." See https://www.irishpsychiatry.ie/blog/college-of-psychiatrists-government-failings-on-mental-health-putting-patients-lives-at-risk/ .	
	<i>Mid-semester break</i>	
7	Student Presentations	Presentations in class
8	Quality and Safety Concerns, Challenges for the Healthcare System. We will revise the key concerns and challenges for quality and safety in the healthcare system in Ireland. Learners will evaluate, with support of the WHO framework, health reform strategies and their impacts, comparing across systems in order to better understand the Irish system. Reading: 1. HIQA. (2020). Overview Health Care Report 2020. See https://www.hiqa.ie/reports-and-publications/key-reports-investigations/healthcare-overview-report-2020 . 2. "The Good, the Bad and the Alright. Ireland's Health Care System Compared to the rest of the EU. (June, 2022). See https://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-healthcare-system-compared-to-eu-5778807-Jun2022/ .	
9	Guest Lecture. Ms. Laura Tarafas Spirasi, National Centre for Victims of Torture 213, North Circular Rd, Phibsborough, Dublin DO7 KH9C	
10	Revision session, Presentations Feedback Course reflection and evaluation will be undertaken. Exam preparation starts.	Essay Submissions

11	Guest Lecture – Ms. Irene Crawley , HOPE (Hands on Peer Education) Specialist in the field of addiction in Ireland for 25 years. 5 Killarney St. Upper Buckingham St., Mountjoy, D01 E2NB	
12	Exam preparation Individual essay feedback will be offered. Exam preparation will continue, with a student-led focus.	
13	Exam	Exam