

NURS-3500: HEALTHCARE POLICY, LEADERSHIP, AND ETHICS

Cuyahoga Community College

Viewing: NURS-3500 : Healthcare Policy, Leadership, and Ethics

Board of Trustees:

October 2025

Academic Term:

Fall 2026

Subject Code

NURS - Nursing

Course Number:

3500

Title:

Healthcare Policy, Leadership, and Ethics

Catalog Description:

This course explores the dynamic relationship between healthcare policy, leadership, and ethics. Students analyze healthcare systems, engage in ethical decision-making, and apply leadership strategies to advocate for change and improve healthcare outcomes. Special focus is placed on developing professional identity, accountability, and advocacy skills within complex healthcare environments.

Credit Hour(s):

3

Lecture Hour(s):

3

Requisites

Prerequisite and Corequisite

NURS-3100 Transition to Professional Nursing Practice.

Outcomes

Course Outcome(s):

Examine the impact of healthcare policy on nursing practice and patient outcomes.

Objective(s):

1. Describe the structure and function of U.S. healthcare systems.
2. Explain how healthcare policies are developed and implemented.
3. Identify key stakeholders in healthcare policymaking.
4. Analyze a current healthcare policy issue that affects the nursing profession.

Course Outcome(s):

Apply ethical principles and decision-making frameworks to complex healthcare scenarios.

Objective(s):

1. Define major ethical principles in healthcare.
2. Evaluate ethical frameworks and their application to real-world nursing dilemmas.
3. Examine the nurse's role in upholding ethical practice.

Course Outcome(s):

Demonstrate leadership skills that integrate ethical, evidence-based, and policy-informed approaches to improve care delivery.

Objective(s):

1. Analyze leadership theories relevant to nursing.
2. Identify characteristics of effective nurse leaders.
3. Discuss the relationship between leadership, patient outcomes, and team dynamics.
4. Apply systems thinking to solve organizational problems.
5. Integrate evidence-based strategies to improve team/organizational outcomes.

Course Outcome(s):

Advocate effectively for policies that promote health equity and improve healthcare systems.

Objective(s):

1. Define advocacy and its importance in nursing.
2. Identify steps for engaging in policy advocacy.
3. Examine how social determinants of health influence healthcare policy and patient outcomes.
4. Evaluate policy-driven strategies aimed at reducing health disparities and promoting health equity.
5. Examine the nurse's role in advocating for equitable, policy-informed care at the organizational and systems level.
6. Develop and critically analyze effective communication for a healthcare policy advocacy message.
7. Apply leadership and advocacy principles to influence healthcare policy.
8. Reflect on the experience of advocating as a nursing professional.

Course Outcome(s):

Integrate professional values and accountability into nursing practice.

Objective(s):

1. Articulate your professional identity and accountability as a baccalaureate prepared nurse.
2. Develop a personal action plan for ongoing leadership development.

Course Outcome(s):

Reflect on the nurse's leadership role in shaping ethical, patient-centered, and evidence-based care.

Objective(s):

1. Evaluate ethical and leadership challenges in healthcare systems.
2. Reflect on lessons learned throughout the course.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Weekly discussion boards:
2. Case study and action plan analyses:
3. Video advocacy project
4. Final reflection paper
5. Papers
6. Quizzes

Course Content Outline:

1. Introduction to Healthcare Systems & Policy
 - a. Structure of U.S. Healthcare System
 - b. Function of U.S. Healthcare System
 - c. Policy Development
 - i. Key stakeholders
 - ii. Stakeholder roles and influence
2. Leadership in Nursing Practice

- a. Leadership theories
- b. Leadership styles
 - i. Democratic
 - ii. Servant
 - iii. Transactional
 - iv. Transformational
- c. Impact on patient outcomes and team dynamics
- 3. Ethics and Ethical Decision-Making
 - a. Ethical principles in healthcare
 - b. Real-world ethical dilemmas
 - c. Nurses role in ethical practice
 - d. Case Study: Ethical Dilemmas
 - i. Patient autonomy vs. family wishes
 - ii. Professional guidelines
 - iii. Legal and ethical consequences
- 4. Policy Advocacy and the Nurse's Role
 - a. Importance of advocacy in nursing
 - b. Steps to engage in policy advocacy
 - c. Current healthcare policy analysis
- 5. Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health
 - a. Policy strategies for reducing health disparities
 - b. Advocating for equitable, policy-informed care
- 6. Advocacy in Action
 - a. Definition of advocacy
 - b. Advocacy principles
 - c. Importance of advocacy in nursing
 - d. Steps for engaging in policy advocacy
 - e. Reflection
- 7. Leadership and Ethics in Complex Systems
 - a. Ethical and Leadership challenges
 - b. Systems thinking
 - c. Evidence-based strategies for improvement
- 8. Professional Identity and Accountability
 - a. Professional development plan
 - b. Reflections

Religious Accommodation

Before reviewing the course schedule, students should carefully review the following religious accommodation policy and other required instructional policies:

Religious Accommodation:

Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction. Please submit requests for accommodations at this link: <https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/> Religious Accommodation Form. Students with questions about their religious accommodations under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act may contact the College's Office of General Counsel and Legal Services by phone at 216.987.4856 or via email at legal@tri-c.edu.

Other Required Instructional Policies:

<https://www.tri-c.edu/student-resources/curriculum/documents/syllabus-part-b.pdf>

Weekly Schedule

	Topics
Week 1	Introduction to Healthcare Systems & Policy
Week 2	Introduction to Healthcare Systems & Policy
Week 3	Leadership in Nursing Practice
Week 4	Leadership in Nursing Practice

Week 5	Ethics and Ethical Decision Making
Week 6	Ethics and Ethical Decision Making
Week 7	Policy Advocacy and the Nurse's Role
Week 8	Policy Advocacy and the Nurse's Role
Week 9	Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health
Week 10	Advocacy in Action
Week 11	Advocacy in Action
Week 12	Leadership and Ethics
Week 13	Leadership and Ethics
Week 14	Professional Identity and Accountability
Week 15	Professional Identity and Accountability
Week 16	Final Project

The Course Schedule is subject to change due to pedagogical needs, instructor discretion, parts of term, and unexpected events.

Required/Recommended Readings

- **Required:**

- Porche, D.J. *Health policy: Application for nurses and other health professionals*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Ernstmeyer, K., & Christman, E. *Nursing management and professional concepts*. Wistech Open.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Healthy People 2030*. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

- **Recommended:**

- American Psychological Association. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Resources for the Instructor

Porche, D. J. (2023) *Health policy: Application for nurses and other health professionals* , Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Ernstmeyer, K., & Christman, E. (2024) *Nursing management and professional concepts* , Wistech Open.

American Psychological Association. (2020) *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Healthy People 2030*, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

Hamilton, J. D. . (2023) *Excellent healthcare leadership requires systems thinking*, MGMA.

American Nurse Journal. (2020) *Systems thinking and nursing innovation*,

American Nurses Association. (2021) *Nurses' professional responsibility to promote ethical practice environments. ANA Position Statement*,

Additional Resources for the Instructor

1. American Nurses Association (ANA) Policy and Advocacy
2. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Resources

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Health Equity Materials
4. The Hastings Center Bioethics Resources

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