

School of Social Policy & Practice
University of Pennsylvania
MSSP 704-001
Spring, 2020
Wednesday 9:00am-11:30am, Fisher-Bennett Hall 138

“You can't have public health without a public health system. We just don't want to be part of a mindless competition for resources. We want to build back capacity in the system.”

Paul Farmer, M.D., Ph.D., Harvard University

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

The relentless focus on the *being* of health inequity often overshadows the *becoming* of health inequity. Each drip of social injustice pools into a confrontation that disproportionately affects the health and healthcare of the socially disadvantaged groups. This course navigates health policymaking through a sociohistoric lens and grapples with contemporary perspectives in health equity. We explore the theoretical frameworks that best informs the existence of health inequity along with the practices that eliminate health inequity. Students will have the opportunity to learn how to effectively communicate evidence-based strategies in both policy and academic grant formats. While generally structured as a seminar, this course extends the walls of the classroom and encourages students to confront real-life health policy issues while engaging local, state, and federal health policy influencers. Students will spend time in the robust archives and cutting-edge medical facilities at Penn to best hone their policymaking voice.

Course Objectives

Course Objectives

1. To **know** the difference between equity, equality, and justice
2. To investigate critical theories of health inequity
3. To understand sociologic perspective on race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, and their impact on health
4. To investigate the legal implications of policy on the health and healthcare within socially disadvantaged populations
5. To create actionable health policy translational products (e.g. podcast, op-ed, and policy brief)

Readings and Course Materials

Required Reading

Hofrichter, Richard (2003). *Health and Social Justice: Politics, Ideology, and Inequity in the Distribution of Disease 1st Edition*

Recommended

Longest, B. B. (2016). *Health policymaking in the United States*. Chicago: Health Administration Press.

An online version can be found here: https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog/FRANKLIN_9970922873503681 [Links to an external site.](#)

Beyond the required text, peer-reviewed articles as well as informative periodicals will be posted in weekly modules within Canvas.

Teaching Philosophy

Every person encounters an intellectual giant who can change the course of one's life. They push you to an uncomfortable point of clarity that amplifies a fledgling whisper to a scholarly roar. Professor accessibility coupled with open bilateral

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interactions between students and instructors foster boundless learning environments. A scholarly voice comes from this atmosphere. My teaching philosophy embraces respectful educational exchanges rooted in an approach that embraces sociology, history, and social epidemiology. The foundations of my teaching philosophy calibrate, challenge, critique, and commission my students educational experience. I believe students should be fairly critiqued through transparent metrics. My course assignments are designed for critical thinking not calculated trickery. Assignment rubrics are provided with each description to mitigate confusion and firmly establish expectations.

My pedagogical style intertwines traditional lectures, social media, and highly interactive student activities. I challenge my students to articulate the course content and the procurement process using translational communication tools and traditional measures. My lectures convey elements of pop culture, case & statutory law, and stimulating graphics. Following and during every lecture, students use social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook, & Instagram) to answer instructor stimulated prompts. Students rarely connect lectures with these intellectual scavenger hunts. I require iteratively constructed written and oral expressions of course mastery. #PennInPolicy

Course Requirements

Requirement	Due Date	% of final grade
Bootcamp Paper	January 29	10%
State of States' of Offices of Minority Health Assessment	February 26	25%
Op-Ed	April 29	25%
Podcast	April 29	20%
Discussant Execution	Ongoing	20%

Bootcamp Paper

Case Study (Truncated)

Taylor was born on September 5, 2000 in Lake Charles, Louisiana. She was extremely sick with repeat infections, persistent abdominal pain, nausea, and diarrhea. Susan Duhon, nurse practitioner, owned magnolia Clinic. Ms. Duhon obtained her nursing certificate in 1974, subsequently; she obtained her certification as a pediatric nurse practitioner in 1977. Current 2011 statutes require nurse practitioners to receive a bachelors and masters of science in nursing. Without any college-level training, Ms. Duhon was grandfathered in as a nurse practitioner. She was able to purchase medical malpractice insurance with nurse practitioner status and start the Magnolia Clinic. In accordance with Louisiana Medical Malpractice Act, Ms. Duhon is required to collaborate with a physician. Dr. Jeanette Bergstedt agreed to work Ms. Duhon for primary care matters.

On 32 occasions, Taylor's parents complained of frequent complications, and asked Ms. Duhon to consult a physician. Despite the legal requirement to refer the patients to the collaborating physician, Ms. Duhon refused. The Oliver's saw no improvement and finally took Taylor to Women & Children's Hospital in Lake Charles where Dr. Bergstedt finally treated the child on to refer her to Texas Children's Hospital. Taylor was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a childhood nerve tissue cancer.

When Taylor was just 15 months old, she was given the diagnosis of phase 4 neuroblastoma. This disease is perfectly treatable when caught before a child turns 12 months old. Despite extensive chemotherapy, Taylor was not expected to live to see her second birthday. But Taylor survived - even when the tumors grew and protruded out of her head disfiguring her face, threatening her sight and even brain development.

Experts suggested that this disease was survived event-free if treated in the first year. Ms. Duhon's inaction failed meet this threshold. A jury found Magnolia Clinic liable for the damages and awarded the Olivers \$6.233 million in damages. A trial judge later determined under the Louisiana state malpractice cap that \$500,000 was the lawful maximum. The Olivers appealed the decision arguing the medical malpractice cap protects health care providers who inflict severe damage.

Decision. The appellate court found that MMA law provided no intention to include or protect nurse practitioners at the time of its passage or in the present context. The inclusion of nurse practitioners was "overly inclusive" according to the court. The defense argued the Olivers never argued the inclusiveness of the MMA, therefore, the court could not rule on that premise. As for the MMA damages cap, the judge highlighted the complications manifested by this cap, and felt its intent is very antiquated. The judge stated the legislature, not the court, should decide this issue and the court should honor the jury's initial decision to award the Olivers \$2.333 million. Affirmed in part and Reversed in part.

1. The case of Taylor Oliver in Lake Charles, Louisiana highlighted many intersections of inequality. Discuss at least three issues with the access to healthcare that contributed to Taylor's untimely death. Your reflections should embrace the Penchansky and Thomas approach to access.
2. Reflect on how patient access can be improved given the Penchansky and Thomas concepts that you have highlighted.

Paper Structure

- APA Citations should be followed.
- Papers should be 1-inch margins on all sides with 12-point Garmond font throughout.
- Each page should include a page numbers and footer with your alter ego name. [e.g. Notorious KAJ].
- The maximum length of the paper should be 2 pages, double or single spaced.
- The overall document will be evaluated using the provided rubric. Allow your responses to each prompt to align with the rubric for maximum credit. (see Bootcamp Paper Rubric)
- All sources must be peer-reviewed articles or books.
- Key terms and definitions can be defined at any point throughout the paper. Please underline each term upon the first time of invocation.
- Printed out copies of the paper and rubric are due February 5, 2020 at the start of class.
- Please staple all papers and nothing should be handwritten on your papers.
- No late papers will be accepted

Course Challenges

Assessment of Research, Outreach, and Strategic Implementation of State Offices of Minority

For many states, Offices of Minority of Health drive the health initiatives of disadvantaged groups. The constituency and priorities vary drastically by state. We will be conducting an analysis of all 50 states' offices of minority health activities over the last five years. Students will analyze no more that 5 states. Assessments will yield the following:

1. Funding Support
2. Dissonance in Allocation (set aside) vs Appropriate (dispersed)
3. Legislative Efforts
4. Annual Reports
5. Length
6. Themes
7. Disadvantaged Groups
8. Veteran's?
9. Outreach (only through web or reports. No interaction with group)
10. Webinars
11. Meetings
12. Social Media
13. Followers
14. Themes

We will take all of this information and consolidate it into publishable paper.

Best Guide to State Offices of Minority Health

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/assets/PDF/OMH-Health-Disparities-Report-State-and-Territorial-Efforts-October-2018.pdf>

Understanding the Historical Landscape of Minority Health

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ppt/nchs2015/Bakos_Tuesday_Plenary.pdf

Legislative Work

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/2012-health-disparities-legislation.aspx>

<http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislators/legislative-leaders/dan-glickman-on-partisanship.aspx>

Great Alabama Example

<http://www.astho.org/Programs/Health-Equity/State-Snapshots-Map/Materials/AL-Snapshot/>

State of North Carolina

<https://www.ncminorityhealth.org/>

State of Virginia

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-equity/>

Op-Ed and Podcast

Communicating complicated policy problems to broad audiences is simply a skill. How do you use your voice to bring attention to pressing health issues that requires legislative focus and community pressure? The answer can sometimes be an Op-Ed. The objective for this assignment is to create an editorial that is no more 1,200 words that addresses an issue sparked by your passion for a population health issue. We will discuss how to write an editorial along with strategies for submission.

A podcast is another way to illuminate and educate people on challenges in health. As a class, we will produce a podcast on the last day in front of the Penn community. We will plan the graphics, scripts, and content. Who needs a boring presentation when we can do something TOGETHER and bring serious health problems of disadvantaged communities into focus for the Penn community.

Course Outline

Week/Date	Topic	Reading(s)
Week 1 January 22	<p>Course overview & syllabus review</p> <p>“What is YOUR problem?”</p> <p>Policy Warriors Bootcamp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality, equity, and justice Penchansky’s 5 A’s of Access Health vs Healthcare vs Health Insurance Finding and displaying the numbers 13 Steps of the Legislative Process 	<p>Longest, Chapters 1-3</p> <p>Penchansky & Thomas, 1981</p> <p>Recommended: “Variations to the Social Determinants of Health”</p>
Week 2 January 29	<p>Policy Warriors Bootcamp (Cont’d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventative, Restorative, and Palliative Health Services Judicial Policy/Common Law Presidential Policy Researching, Writing, & Presenting Health Policy 	<p>Longest, Chapters 10, 7-8</p> <p>Bootcamp Paper Due</p>
Week 3 February 5	Social Forces of Health Inequities	Hofrichter, Chapters 2-4
Week 4 February 12	Social Forces of Health Inequities (Cont’d)	Hofrichter, Chapters 6-9
Week 5 February 19	Theory, Ideology, and Politics	Hofrichter, Chapters 10, 18, 19
Week 6 February 26	Strategies for Social Policy and Practice	Hofrichter, Chapters 20, 22, 23, 24
Week 7 March 4	State of States’ Offices of Minority Health	Office Assessments Due
Week 8 March 7-15	Spring Break	
Week 9 March 11	<p>Community Producers of Health Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith-based 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic • Fraternity/Sorority 	
Week 10 March 18	<p>A Quiet Threat to Generation: Environmental Health and the Disadvantaged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Disease at The Nexus of Water & Air Quality • Unqualified Water Filters Cause More Harm 	
Week 11 March 25	<p>The Role of Research in Health Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Trials Inclusion • LGBTQ Populations • Tribal Communities • Gender Studies 	
Week 12 April 1	<p>Disappearing Act: Oral Health and Public Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of Care with Primary Healthcare Services • Oral Health Literacy • Children’s Access to Oral Health 	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Oral Health Coordinating Committee. “U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Oral Health Strategic Framework, 2014–2017”
Week 13 April 8	<p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Interventions & Mental Health • Mental Health Decline and Chronic Disease • Rebranding Mental Health in Policing 	
Week 14 April 15	<p>Caregivers and Health Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-Term Care Highlights Social Inequalities in Gender Health • Access to Family Resources 	<p>James, E; Hughes M. “Embracing The Role Of Family Caregivers In The U.S. Health System”</p> <p>Family Caregiving Resources https://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/caregiving/</p>
Week 15 April 22	Pen IN Policy Podcast & Op-Ed Preparation	
Week 16 April 29	Penn IN Policy Podcast	

Grading Scale

Numerical Scale	Letter Grade Equivalent
100-104	A+
96-100	A
90-95	A-
85-89	B+
80-84	B
76-79	B-
70-75	C+
65-69	C
60-64	C-
55-59	D
Else	F

For greater detail on the meaning of letter grades and university policies related to them, see the Registrar’s Grade Policy regulations at <http://www.upenn.edu/registrar/m/m.grades.html>

Participant Expectations

This course embodies the professional experience through detailed pedagogical exercise. Subsequently, such a unique approach to learning requires a set of standards that preserve this course's intentions and integrity. While this is not exhaustive, these are the expectations of this course.

1. **Be on time.** The instructor expects an email to kje@upenn.edu if you are going to be late to class. Tardiness without notification to instructor will result in a loss of 2 points to your overall all grade for each infraction. The weekly frequency of this course only allows for 2 missed classes for the whole semester. Please plan accordingly and remember to communicate any unexpected complication via email.
2. **Class participation.** This class mainly embraces a seminar and small-group format that requires quality student participation. Students who do not participate are compromising their intellectual retention of the subject matter and their classmates' preparatory efforts. Simply stated, be ready!
3. **Respect each other.** Our backgrounds yield different versions of our truth. Disagreeing should not equate to disrespect. Moreover, different opinions should not translate to deficient treatment.
4. **Electronic devices.** Electronic devices are only allowed during prompted times during class. Social media has changed the way we experience the world, and this instructor embraces this movement for educational purposes only during class. The use of laptops and other handheld devices for note taking and social media posts will be encouraged during designated times only. No electronic devices are allowed during unprompted times.
5. **Note Taking.** Notes will be made available to students to help aide the retention and mastery of course material. These notes will not be annotated so all students are encouraged to get the notes from their group mates if they miss class.
6. **Course communication.** All announcements germane to this course will come through Canvas. Students with direct questions please email the instructor directly, NOT through Canvas, at kje@upenn.edu.
7. **Have fun.** We all have bad days. Life unequivocally happens without your permission! So, try to enjoy learning. Smile. Prepare. Smile. Talk to different people. Challenge yourself to be better than last class.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Pennsylvania policy on academic integrity (see Student Conduct Code, the Graduate Student Handbook or this web site for more details:

www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.php

Cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

*We, the members of the University of Pennsylvania community,
pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the
highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Be sure to give yourself enough time for research and writing.

You are most likely to plagiarize when you are struggling to write a paper at the last minute. If you haven't done any research and haven't had time to construct a true argument, you might be tempted to save time by relying heavily on one or two resources. In your rush you might closely paraphrase large sections of text or unintentionally use direct quotations without giving credit. To give yourself time for research and analysis, start thinking about the paper well before it is due.

2. Take careful notes and keep records of sources.

When done well, research includes taking lots of notes. Note taking style varies from researcher to researcher, but certain patterns should always be followed. Clearly indicate and provide location information for any duplication or paraphrase of original text in your note. This will help you avoid accidental plagiarism and allow you to quickly locate the original text. Furthermore, maintain a working bibliography while you research. This will assure that you don't forget or lose a work that needs to be cited.

3. Limit quotations and paraphrases to instances when they are really necessary.

The more you rely directly on the work of others, the more likely you are to accidentally plagiarize. Remember, research papers rely on but do not simply duplicate the work of others. An over-reliance on quotes or paraphrases when they are unnecessary could suggest that you do not understand the information well enough to synthesize it for yourself. Quotes or paraphrases are useful when another's work is being used as a primary resource, when you want to appeal to authority, or when you are summarizing.

4. When in doubt -- cite.

You will not always be clear about what needs to be cited. In times of doubt, err on the side of caution. If a paraphrase seems similar to the original source, cite it. If it includes complex ideas that you wouldn't have thought of on your own, cite it. If large sections of your paper were generated through consideration of someone else's argument, include a general citation that explains how it influenced your work.

Source: <http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/avoidingplagiarism.html>

Class Attendance and Make-up Work

The expectation is that you will attend class and be prepared to participate in all class sessions. Personal issues with respect to class attendance or fulfillment of course requirements will be handled on an individual basis.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must first register with the Office of Student Disabilities Services (<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>) Office of Student Disabilities Services will provide documentation to you, which you then give to the instructor when requesting accommodation. The instructor is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Counseling and Student Health

Students may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at the University of Pennsylvania Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 215 -898-7021. Visit their web sites for more information: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>. Office hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9am-5pm

Wednesday and Thursday 9am-7:00pm

Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:

Pennsylvania Hospital: (215)-829-5433.

HOWEVER – Please do not wait until you reach a crisis to talk to someone. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Assignment Rubrics

Podcast and Op-Ed Rubric

CATEGORY	Exemplary	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Incomplete	POINTS
Introduction	5-6 points Catchy and clever introduction. Provides relevant information and establishes a clear purpose engaging the listener immediately.	3-4 points Describes the topic and engages the audience as the introduction proceeds.	2 points Somewhat engaging (covers well-known topic), and provides a vague purpose.	0-1 points Irrelevant or inappropriate topic that minimally engages listener. Does not include an introduction or the purpose is vague and unclear.	
	8-10 points Creativity and original content enhance the purpose of the podcast in an innovative way. Accurate information and succinct concepts are presented.	4-7 points Accurate information is provided succinctly.	3-4 points Some information is inaccurate or long-winded.	0-2 points Information is inaccurate.	
Delivery	5-6 points Well rehearsed, smooth delivery in a conversational style. Highly effective enunciation and presenter's speech is clear and intelligible. Correct grammar is used throughout the podcast.	3-4 points Rehearsed, smooth delivery. Enunciation, expression, pacing are effective throughout the podcast. Correct grammar is used during the podcast.	2 points Appears unrehearsed with uneven delivery. Enunciation, expression, rhythm are sometimes distracting during the podcast. Occasionally incorrect grammar is used during the podcast.	0-1 points Delivery is hesitant and choppy and sounds like the presenter is reading. Enunciation of spoken word is distant and muddled and not clear. Poor grammar is used throughout the podcast.	
	5-6 points Open ended questions are used that draw interesting and relevant information from the interviewee.	3-4 points Open ended questions and follow-up questions are used appropriately.	2 points Open ended questions and follow-up questions are occasionally irrelevant to the topic.	0-1 points Only yes-or-no questions are used. No follow-up questions are asked.	

Appendix

Appendix A Email Etiquette

18 Etiquette Tips for E-mailing Your Professor

- 1. E-mail is forever.** Once you send it off, you can't get it back. Once your professor has it, he or she owns it and can save it or, in the worst case, forward it onto colleagues for a good laugh—at your expense.
 - 2. E-mail goes where it's told.** Check—and double check—to see that the right address appears in the "To" line. Just because your mom and your professor are both named "Lynn" is no reason to send all your love to Professor Lynn.
 - 3. Professors might not be using the cruddy university e-mail system.** So send it to the address they actually use, not the one on the university directory. (Check the syllabus or assignment sheet for clues.)
 - 4. Professors might not open mail sent from luckydogpig@thepound.com.** They prefer to open mail sent from more reputable addresses, like you@theCruddyUniversityE-mailSystem.edu.
 - 5. Subject lines are for subjects.** Put a brief explanation of the nature of the e-mail (like "question about paper") in the subject line. Never include demands such as "urgent request—immediate response needed." That's the surest way to get your request trashed.
 - 6. Salutations matter.** The safest way to start is with "Dear Professor So and So" (using their last name). That way you won't be getting into the issue of whether the prof has a Ph.D. or not, and you won't seem sexist when you address your female-professor as "Ms." or, worse yet, "Mrs. This and That."
 - 7. Clear and concise is best.** Your prof might get 25 or 30 E-mails a day, so, it's best if you ask your questions in as focused and succinct a way as possible. (Hint: it's often good to number your questions). And, if your question is very elaborate or multifaceted, it's best to go to an in-person office hour. You'll get better service that way.
- Extra Pointer.** Before sending a draft of a paper to a professor as an attachment, check to see that he or she is willing to accept such longer documents. If not, see if he or she will look over a page or even a central paragraph of your work incorporated into the body of the E-mail. And be sure to "cc" yourself any time you send a piece of work; who knows the fate of the copy you're sending?
- 5-Star Tip.** Never e-mail your paper as an attachment in a bizarre format. You might think that .odt is really cool since you didn't have to pay for Open Office. But what when the professor discovers it takes him or her 20 minutes to find the plug-in that doesn't work, then another half hour to download Open Office (which ties up all too much space on his computer). What was supposed to be a 15-minute grading job on your paper is now taking over an hour. And then the prof has to assign your grade? Stick to Word.
 - 8. Always acknowledge.** If your professor deigns to answer—or send you the handout or reference that you asked for—be sure to tell him or her that you got it. That way he or she will think kindly of you next time they see you in class.
 - 9. THIS IS NOT A SHOUTING MATCH.** Don't write in all uppercase letters, which is an E-mail convention for anger or other strong emotions. No one likes yelling.
 - 10. No one really likes emoticons and smileys.** Trust us on this one. :)
 - 11. This is not Facebook.** Don't write the professor in the way you'd write on your friend's wall.
- 5-Star Tip.** It's never a good idea to "poke" your professor, no matter how funny it seems at the time.
- 12. This is not IM-ing.** So pls dun write yor profesSR llk ur txtN. uz abbrz @ yor own rsk. coRec me f lIm wrng. (Translation thanks to www.transl8it.com, which features a neat little Facebook widget.)
 - 13. This is not CollegeHumor.** Resist the temptation to talk about the "bad ass" paper you need help with, your "loser" TA who didn't teach you what you needed to know, or the "crappy" grade you just got on the midterm.
 - 14. This is not RateMyProfessors.com.** The professor doesn't want your comments about his or her performance in the class. Save those for the end-of-semester evaluations, where you'll be able to spout off. Anonymously.
 - 15. Spelling mistakes make you look like a doofus.** So always use the spel check, and proofread yyour e-mail, two.

- 16. Signoffs and signatures count.** Always end by thanking the professor for his or her time, and closing with "Best wishes" or "Regards" (or some other relatively formal, but friendly, closing). And always sign with your (entire) real name, not some wacky nickname like Ry-Ry or Biff.
- ~~17. Your prof doesn't want to hear your philosophy of life.~~ Skip the cute quotes or statements of your religious or political views at the bottom of your E-mail. You never know what offends.
- 18. Don't lay it on too thick.** It's one thing to be polite and friendly in your e-mail; it's another thing to wind up with a brown nose.

Source: <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2010/09/30/18-etiquette-tips-for-e-mailing-your-professor>

Appendix B

Ten Most Common Grammar/Mechanics Mistakes

1. Simple spelling mistakes or oversights

Common typo	Explanation
Its vs. It's	<i>Its</i> is a possessive pronoun; <i>It's</i> is a contraction for 'it is'
Their vs. They're vs. There	<i>Their</i> is a plural possessive pronoun; <i>They're</i> is a contraction for they are; <i>There</i> is a pronoun or reference to a place
Who's vs. Whose	<i>Whose</i> is a possessive pronoun used in questions; <i>Who's</i> is a contraction for 'who is'
Affect vs. Effect	<i>Affect</i> is a verb; <i>effect</i> is a noun. Hint: Affect is an action and starts with 'a'

2. The dangling participial phrase (participial phrase: a phrase composed of a participle; a verbal phrase used as an adjective to the sentence subject)

Rule: the participial phrase must directly agree with its subject and the subject of the sentence. If not, the sentence will not make sense—the shoreline cannot remove its coat.

Example: **Removing his coat**, Jack walked towards the shoreline.

Common incorrect use of participial phrase: **Removing his coat**, the shoreline was appealing as Jack walked towards it.

Rule: the participial phrase must directly agree with its subject and the subject of the sentence. If not, the sentence will not make sense—the shoreline cannot remove its coat.

3. Subject-verb Disagreement

Rule: In a simple sentence, a singular subject must have a singular verb agreement and a plural subject must have a plural verb agreement.

Hint: Make the subject and verb agree in number

Example: The **mayor and his staff** are going on the business trip. (While at first the subject may seem to be ONLY the mayor, the 'and' makes the subject plural and therefore requires a plural verb)

Incorrect sentence formation: The **captain of the guards** don't like broccoli. (The plural guards can throw you off, but the actual subject of the sentence is 'the captain.')

4. Use of who and whom

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Rule: Because "who" and "whom" are pronouns, they have case as determined by function in a particular sentence. In other words, what you use will depend on if it is the direct or indirect object (is the subject acting (DO) or is it being acted upon (IO)).

Example: **Who** is at the door? (Who is the subject-case pronoun)

Example: To **whom** are you speaking? (You are speaking words [understood] to a person [the indirect object])

Hint: Whom is always used as an indirect object. *Who* and *whom* parallel with *he* and *him*. Recast the sentence using he and him and whatever makes sense is what you use.

Example: Kenneth is someone **whom** I admire.

Recasted sentence: I admire **him**. OR I give my admiration to **him**.

5. When to use good and well.

Rule: Use the **adjective form good** when describing something or someone. Use the **adverb form well** when describing how something or someone does something.

Example: She is a **good** candidate for that graduate program.

Example: He did **well** on his doctoral qualifying exam.

6. Missing comma in a compound sentence (compound sentence: any sentence with two independent phrases; you can divide the phrases up in a sentence and they can both be stand-alone sentences; both have subject and verb)

Rule: When two independent phrases are joined by a conjunction (and, but, so, yet, etc.), use a comma to set the phrases apart and signify a pause.

Example: I applied to the English department, but I ended up being accepted by the Public Relations department.

7. Comma Splice

What is a comma splice: The use of a comma between two independent clauses, where the clauses are not connected by conjunction word (and, but, so, yet, etc.)

Rule: If two parts of a sentence are independent clauses and not connected by a conjunction, you have 4 choices:

- (1) Change the errant comma to another punctuation like a semicolon (;) or a dash (—)
- (2) Insert a coordinating conjunction (and, but, so, yet, etc.)
- (3) Insert a semicolon (;) + conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, etc.)
- (4) Split the two phrases into separate sentences
- (5) Make one clause a dependent phrase

Incorrect Example: It is nearly mid-semester, we need to start studying for the statistics exam.

Correction #1: It is nearly mid-semester; we need to start studying for the statistics exam.

Correction #2: It is nearly mid-semester, and we need to start studying for the statistics exam.

Correction #3: It is nearly mid-semester; therefore, we need to start studying for the statistics exam.

Correction #4: Because it is nearly mid-semester, we need to start studying for the statistics exam.

8. Vague pronoun reference

Rule: If your sentence contains more than one subject, make sure your pronoun usage clearly modifies the correct noun. Also, make sure there is no confusion in a sentence where you do not explicitly state an implied noun.

Example	Reasoning	Correction
After putting the disk in the cabinet, Melissa sold it.	What is 'it' talking about? The disk or the cabinet?	After putting the disk in the cabinet, Melissa put the cabinet up for sale.

Example	Reasoning	Correction
UF enacted a policy banning smoking on campus, which some students resent.	Do the students resent UF or the policy?	UF banned smoking on campus, a policy with some students resent.

9. Pronoun-antecedent disagreement

Rule: Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in gender and in number.

Example	Explanation
Each of the puppies had their its own food bowl.	Each is singular; therefore the antecedent must be singular (puppies is a modifier)
The team frequently changed its their position on the court.	Team is a collective noun and can be either singular or plural; choose the antecedent based on whether the people are seen as a single unit or a group of individuals.

10. Missing comma after an introductory element

Rule: Readers usually need a small pause between an introductory word, phrase, or clause and the main part of the sentence, a pause most often signaled by a comma.

Example: In preparation for graduate school, we all decided to attend the Campus Visitation Program.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Tips to Recognize the Passive Voice

Sometimes a sentence in passive voice does not necessarily sound "wrong" or wordy. However, it is still best to write in active voice when possible.

In order to recognize that a sentence is in passive voice, watch out for these keywords:

- Be
- Is
- Are
- A
- Was
- Were
- Has been
- Have been
- Will be
- Being

Sentence Style: Active and Passive Voice

(Adapted from College Writing Skills with Readings, 3rded., by John Langan)

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VERBS

When the **subject** of a sentence **performs** the action of a verb, the verb is in the **active voice**. When the **subject** of a sentence **receives** the action of a verb, the verb is in the **passive voice**.

The **passive form of a verb** consists of a form of the verb **be** plus the **past participle** of the main verb. Look at the active and passive forms of the verbs in the following examples:

Active:

Jan sewed the curtains.

(The subject, *Jan*, is the doer of the action.)

The repairman fixed the air conditioner.
(The subject, *repairman*, is the doer of the action.)

Passive

The curtains were sewn by Jan.
(The subject, *curtains*, does not act. Instead, something happens to them.)

The air conditioner was fixed by the repairman.
(The subject, *air conditioner*, does not act. Instead, something happens to it.)

In general, the active verbs are more effective than passive ones. Active verbs give your writing a simpler and more vigorous style. **At times**, however, the passive form of verbs is appropriate when the performer of the action is unknown or is less important than the receiver of the action, as in the examples below:

Example 1:

The tests were graded yesterday.
(The performer of the action is unknown.)

Example 2:

Alan was very hurt by your thoughtless remark.
(The receiver of the action, Alan, is being emphasized.)

Active voice creates sharp, clear vigorous sentences. It is direct and powerful. Use active voice whenever possible, unless you have a justifiable reason to use passive voice.

Example 1:

(Passive) The dog was found by a police officer.
(Active) *A police officer found the dog.*

Example 2:

(Passive) The baseball game was called off.
(Active) *The officials called off the baseball game.*
(Here a subject had to be added.)

1. Most of our furniture was damaged by the fire.
2. Marsha's new dress was singed by a careless smoker.
3. The problem was solved by the quiet student in the back of the room.
4. The supermarket shelves were restocked after the truckers' strike.
5. The children were mesmerized by the magician's sleight of hand.
6. The missing child was found by the police.
7. A slow ball was thrown by the pitcher.

8. All the cheese was eaten by mice.
9. The people were warned by the Surgeon General that cigarettes could cause cancer.
10. (Add “we” as a subject) Sometimes our freedoms are not fully appreciated.

Appendix C

How Read Research Papers

Summary of things to look for and think about when critiquing research papers

Relevance of the Research

- Do the authors explain the importance of their research? Do they adequately review the current state of knowledge in the literature and identify problems or opportunities to advance the discipline?
- Study purpose: What is the purpose of the study (why did the authors do this study)? What is the research question being investigated? Is it clearly articulated in the article? What are the hypotheses? Do the authors include a statement of how their research advances the literature? Is a theoretical framework referenced or implied? What are the assumptions underlying and the causal relationships contained in the theoretical framework? Are they reasonable in the context of this study?

Method

- Study population: What population is being investigated? What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria? Which subject characteristics did the authors describe (e.g., gender, age, disease status, socioeconomic status)?
- What are the main independent (typically our comparison groups of interest), dependent (outcome), and control variables?
- Sample size and statistical power: How many individuals are included in the study and in each of the comparison groups? Are the numbers adequate to demonstrate statistical significance if the study hypothesis is true?

Data Sources

- What sources of data are used (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, administrative, or clinical records)? What are the advantages/disadvantages of each?

Assignment (Selection of participants for study and control groups)

- Study design: What was the study design? If quasi experimental – do authors address selection bias? If experimental – do the authors describe treatment integrity or unintended effects? What are the implications of the study design for study conclusions?
- Process of assignment/sampling: What is the sampling strategy? What method is being used to identify and assign individuals to the comparison groups (pre-existing groups? randomized?)
- Confounding variables: Are there differences between the comparison groups other than the characteristic under investigation that may affect the outcome of the investigation?
- Masking/blinding: Are the participants and/or the investigators aware of participant assignment to groups (particularly relevant in experimental designs)?

Assessment (Measurement of outcomes or endpoints in the study and control groups)

- Data collection methods: Timing of data collection (repeated measurements?). What specific data collection methods or instruments were used to collect information? Do the authors describe the validity or reliability of the instrument? Were the measures validated in a population similar to the study population?
- Appropriate Measurement: Does the measurement of the outcome address the study question? Is the timing of the procedures with respect to data collection appropriate?
- Accurate precise measurement: Is the measurement of the independent/dependent variables accurate and precise and reflect well the underlying construct/phenomena of interest? How were the variables in the study operationally defined (i.e. what procedures/steps did the researchers use to measure the variables of interest)? Do authors report ceiling/floor effects? Do authors report responsiveness of measures to change or for subgroups of interest?
- Complete and unaffected by observation: Does the author describe participation and attrition rates? Participant/nonparticipant differences? Is participant follow-up affected by the participants themselves or the investigators' knowledge of study group assignment?

Results

- Estimation: What is the magnitude or strength of the association or relationship observed in the investigation? Do authors describe findings both in terms of being statistically significant as well as clinically meaningful?
- Inference: What statistical techniques are used to perform statistical significance testing? What is the unit of observation? What is the unit of analysis? Do they differ? Are data analyses clearly described? Do the authors consider clustering of data that may be introduced naturally (e.g., patients within physicians within a clinic)? What assumptions (or violation of assumptions) were made by the author about the use of the analytic techniques?
- Adjustment: What statistical techniques are used to take into account or control for differences between comparison groups that may affect the results? Was the rationale for identifying control variables sufficient? Are there variables missing?

Interpretation

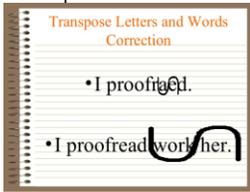
- Did the authors answer the research question they posed in the introduction?
- Do authors keep findings separate from interpretation in the results section? Are data presented in tables, etc. clearly?
- Contributory cause or efficacy: Does the factor being investigated alter the probability that the disease will occur (contributing cause) or work to reduce the probability of an undesirable outcome (efficacy)
- Harms and interactions: Are adverse effects or interactions that affect the meaning of the results identified?
- Subgroups: Are the outcomes in subgroups reported? Is statistical power reported for subgroups?
- Do the authors adequately describe strengths and weaknesses (e.g., whether findings could be generalized, limitations of study design/methods, sample size adequacy, sampling design, etc)?
- What are the major threats to internal as well as external validity? What did the authors miss?
- Do authors describe counterintuitive results? Do the authors describe future/next steps for research?

Extrapolation

- To similar individuals, groups, or populations: Do the investigators extrapolate or extend the conclusions to individuals, groups, or populations that are similar to those who participated in the investigation?
- Beyond the data: Do the investigators extrapolate by extending the conditions beyond the dose, duration, or other characteristics of the investigation?
- To other populations: Do the investigators extrapolate to populations or settings that are quite different from those in the investigation?
- Are conclusions consistent with findings and limitations?
- Check the funding sources and disclosures. Are there potential conflicts of interest that may have influenced the study?

Grading Legend

Cite—needs citations
Clarity—unclear
Concision—too many words or run-on
Cohesion—no flow or transition. Could be between paragraphs or within
Transpose—see below



P.V.—passive voice. Make active
T.P.—topic sentence. Needs a strong introductory or topic sentence to guide reader.
¶—paragraph
Circled items could possibly indicate several things:
W.C.—word choice. Find a better word. Could be repetitive.
Contractions—no contractions in academic writing
P.V.

Congressional Legislative History

Track historical and contemporary legislative actions of Congress. Using internet search protocol via keywords, you can see the full process and the actors of US bills.

<https://www.congress.gov/> (Links to an external site.)

How a Bill Becomes A Law

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66f4-NKEYz4>

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Transition Words and Phrases

Agreement / Addition / Similarity

in the first place
not only ... but also
as a matter of fact
in like manner
in addition
coupled with
in the same fashion / way
first, second, third
in the light of
not to mention
to say nothing of
equally important
by the same token

again
to
and
also
then
equally
identically
uniquely
like
as
too

moreover
as well as
together with
of course
likewise
comparatively
correspondingly
similarly
furthermore
additionally

Examples / Support / Emphasis

in other words
to put it differently
for one thing
as an illustration
in this case
for this reason
to put it another way
that is to say
with attention to
by all means

important to realize
another key point
first thing to remember
most compelling evidence
must be remembered
point often overlooked
on the negative side
on the positives ide

notably
including
like
to be sure
namely
chiefly
truly
indeed
certainly
surely

in fact
in general
in particular
in detail
to demonstrate
to emphasize
to repeat
to clarify
to explain
to enumerate

markedly
especially
specifically
expressively
surprisingly
frequently
significantly

such as
for example
for instance
to point out
with this in mind

Effect / Result / Consequence

as a result
under those circumstances
in that case
for this reason
henceforth

for
thus
because the
then
hence

consequently
therefore
thereupon
forthwith
accordingly

Opposition / Limitation / Contradiction

although this may be true
in contrast
different from
of course ..., but
on the other hand
on the contrary
at the same time
in spite of
even so / though
be that as it may
then again
above all
in reality
after all

but
(and) still
unlike
or
(and) yet
while
albeit
besides
as much as
even though

although
instead
whereas
despite
conversely
otherwise
however
rather
nevertheless
nonetheless
regardless
notwithstanding

Cause / Condition / Purpose

in the event that
granted (that)
as / so long as
on (the) condition (that)
for the purpose of
with this intention
with this in mind
in the hope that
to the end that
for fear that
in order to
seeing / being that
in view of

if
... then
unless

when
whenever
since
while

because of
as
since
while
lest

in case
provided that
given that
only / even if
so that
so as to
owing to
due to

inasmuch as

