

**HSC 4643 –
Access and Rehabilitation in
Serving Vulnerable Populations
(3 credit hours)**

Semester: Fall 20254

Location: HPNP G210

Day/time: Thursdays- 9:35am - 11:30am

Delivery Format: On-Campus

Course Website or E-Learning: Canvas

Instructor Name: John Kramer, PhD
Phone Number: 352-273-9638
Email Address: john.kramer@phhp.ufl.edu
Office Location: HPNP 4150
Office Hours: M – 11 am-12 pm; Th – 1-2 pm; or by appointment
[Book hours with me here](#)

Teaching Assistants: None

Preferred Communication: Email: john.kramer@phhp.ufl.edu
Zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/john.kramer.fall2025>

Prerequisites

Disease and Disability 1 (HSC3502) and 2 (HSC4558) or approval of instructor.

PURPOSE AND OUTCOME

Course Overview

This course traces the interplay of social movements and federal law designed to improve the participation of people with disabilities in society. The purpose of this course is to impart understanding of legislation about vulnerable citizens. The knowledge gained from this class will enable students to critically analyze and evaluate policies affecting vulnerable populations.

Relation to Program Outcomes

This course addresses the following outcomes in the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program: 1) by focusing on policies related to health care and rehabilitation access, students will be able to describe key elements of the US healthcare system; 2) through its central activity, students will apply knowledge and application of bioethical principles, and 3) through its highly collaborative lesson plan, students will be developing and implementing professional behaviors in health careers.

Course Objectives and/or Goals

To meet the goals of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how a policy covered in this class can impact access on education, employment, or community life

2. Describe the purpose of disability, aging, or healthcare policy that is relevant to your interest or your possible career
3. Compare and contrast two different policies and how they impact vulnerable people and make an argument for which one would be the most appropriate.
4. Interpret one current policy and how it might impact healthcare
5. Create a reasoned response/improvement and provide a rationale to justify a disability-related policy that will a) improve function for people with a disability to participate in communities, and/or b) improve access to rehabilitation services.

Instructional Methods

This class will be delivered in a hybrid format, combining both in-person and online/blended learning methods.

Blended Learning

What is blended learning and why is it important? In a Blended Learning class the instructor uses a mixture of technology and face-to-face instruction to help maximize your learning. I will provide online content for students to review before the live class sessions. This lets me focus my face-to-face teaching on course activities designed to help students strengthen higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Competency in these skills is critical for today's health professional.

What is expected of you? It is expected that students will be fully engaged with the course content and come prepared to participate in, and contribute to, the weekly class activities and discussion. Students are expected to spend 6-7 hours per week preparing for and participating in assigned course activities. Instructors and students will formally interact approximately 4 hours per week reviewing and applying course content. The expectation is that students will be present and using their webcam.

The course is housed in UF e-Learning in Canvas. This course is blended and taught through a discussion and lecture format with some online "Blended Learning" assignments. Participation in the class is vital to student success. If voluntary participation lags, the instructor will call on students randomly. Additionally, the instructor expects that students will check your e-mail and the course announcements daily as the instructor will use Canvas to communicate with you throughout the semester.

By successfully completing this course you will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge and skills in social policy and disability to your present or future major area of practice (e.g., medical rehabilitation, early intervention, mental health services).
2. Evaluate current social policy on disability as it impacts your present or future major area of practice.
3. Describe ways that you can take an active role in shaping disability policy in your present or future major area of practice.
4. Discuss the implications of social, political and cultural forces for practice models and methods in your present or future area of practice.

Topical Outline/Course Schedule (subject to revision)

Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Lab Schedule/Readings
Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Lab Schedule / Readings
1	8/26	Introduction to the Course & ThinkTank	Agenda: First Half – Course Walkthrough Second Half – Subcommittee Assignments & Breakout Groups
2	9/2	Orientation to relevant policies	ThinkTank Full Meeting Agenda: First Half – Current Context, Policy Process Overview & Class Goal Setting Second Half – Subcommittee Updates & Planning
3	9/9	History of Rehabilitation in the U.S.	ThinkTank Subcommittee Meetings First Half – Process Check-in Second Half – Subcommittee Work
4	9/16	Rehabilitation: Veterans Administration	ThinkTank Full Meeting Agenda: First Half – Process Check-in Second Half – Subcommittee Updates & Planning
5	9/23	Institutions	ThinkTank Subcommittee Meetings First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Work Note: Preliminary Policy Document due 9/29 @ 11:59pm
6	9/30	Eugenics Policy	ThinkTank Full Meeting Agenda: First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Updates & Planning Note: Exam 1 due 10/6 @ 11:59pm
7	10/7	Rehabilitation Act (Sections 501, 504, 508) & ADA	ThinkTank Subcommittee Meetings First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Work
8	10/14	Developmental Disabilities Act	ThinkTank Full Meeting Agenda: First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Updates & Planning
9	10/21	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	ThinkTank Full Meeting First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Updates

10	10/28	The Affordable Care Act	Subcommittee Work Time First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Updates Note: Exam 2 (Policy) due 11/3 @ 11:59pm
11	11/4	Deinstitutionalization	ThinkTank Subcommittee Meetings First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Work
12	11/11	Independent Living Movement	ThinkTank Full Meeting First Half – Class Lecture Second Half – Subcommittee Updates & Planning
13	11/18	Arts, Humanities & Identity	Note: Exam 3 due 11/24 @ 11:59pm
14	11/25	THANKSGIVING WEEK	
15	12/2	ThinkTank Final Meeting & Presentations	Final Policy Proposal due 12/4 @ 11:59pm Exam 4 (Integrative Case) due 12/6 @ 11:59pm

Course Materials and Technology

Textbooks. There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will consist of book chapters, manuscripts, online sources and policy materials and are subject to revision. Please check Canvas regularly about updated readings.

Technology. This course will use Canvas. We will also make use of Microsoft Whiteboard for class collaboration and discussion.

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Additional Academic Resources

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Participation (20%). Participation in this class will be considered contributing to all in class Canvas discussions and providing weekly minutes of your subcommittee meetings. Students will be expected to respond thoughtfully to all aspects of this course. Students who attend class, demonstrate knowledge of the materials, and contribute thoughtfully to discussions will be considered effective participants. Please refer to the rubric for specifics of how participation will be assessed. Students will be provided mid-term feedback on their participation to give them a chance to respond, improve if needed. **IMPORTANT: Though this is a group level assignment, I assign grades individually, based in individual contributions to the group. I reserve the right to assign different scores to individuals for the same minutes if there is an uneven/unfair contribution from individual members.**

In class activities. The lab time in this class will consist of a “ThinkTank” – where the class will oversee different elements of a complex problem around access.

What is a "ThinkTank"?

For this class, we use the definition from Websters. A ThinkTank is "an institute, corporation, or group organized to study a particular subject (such as a policy issue or a scientific problem) and provide information, ideas, and advice."

In this class, the central class activity centers on a fictional ThinkTank entitled "*The Access and Rehabilitation for America Institute*" or "*TARA*" Institute.

What is my role in TARA?

You are one of the members of the ThinkTank and you are tasked with sitting on one of the subcommittees of the institute. Each subcommittee will oversee researching an aspect of the Institute's overarching policy problem for this term.

What is the group going to do?

The mission of TARA is to:

Advance policies that rehabilitate Americans into mainstream life and to make America a more fully accessible and integrated society.

TARA provides policy recommendations that focus on increasing Rehabilitation services in the United States and promoting policies that advance full access for all Americans in every facet of American life. This Institute does this through the following:

- *Research and Expertise* - TARA fully researches every facet of an issue including budgetary impact, constituencies involved, ethical standards and quality standards.
- *Writing White Papers that influence constituents and lawmakers*- TARA writes convincing, well-researched position papers that give constituents and lawmakers the need to write a goal-oriented policy that advances the quality of life of all Americans. As a member of TARA, you will contribute in the following ways:
 - Serve on a subcommittee and are tasked with researching the area covered by your subcommittee

- Contribute to the bi-monthly (twice a month) TARA business meetings. These meetings will serve as an official place for the subcommittees to share their current work and to provide expertise to the other subcommittees.
- Research the current constituencies involved in your topic
- Contribute to the final policy proposal that will constitute your portion of the final class grade.

What is This Term's Overarching Policy Problem?

This term, TARA will focus on one of the following **current and pressing disability policy challenges** (or another topic we may decide together):

1. Restoring Accessibility Services Amid Federal Policy Changes

Recent federal policy shifts have led to funding cuts and the elimination of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) programs

- These changes have disrupted access to essential services like transcription, CART, and interpreting, especially for students and workers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. TARA will explore how to restore and protect accessibility services in this evolving landscape.

Key questions:

1. What services have been most affected by recent policy changes?
2. How can federal or state-level policies be designed to ensure consistent access?

2. Safeguarding Disability Rights in Education

The proposed dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education has raised concerns about the enforcement of disability rights laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- TARA will examine how to maintain equitable access to education for students with disabilities amid decentralization.

Consider:

1. What are the risks of shifting oversight to individual states?
2. What policy safeguards can ensure IDEA compliance across all states?

3. Addressing Health Disparities for People with Disabilities

The National Council on Disability has highlighted ongoing health disparities affecting people with disabilities

- TARA will investigate how to create policies that improve healthcare access, quality, and outcomes for disabled populations.

Key questions:

1. What barriers exist in current healthcare systems?
2. How can rehabilitation and preventive care be expanded equitably?

4. Local Accessibility Reform in Gainesville

In this project, TARA will develop recommendations to improve accessibility in the Gainesville community.

Focus areas may include:

- Physical infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, public buildings)
- Cognitive and sensory accessibility in public spaces
- Local transportation and healthcare access

Exam 1 (10%). This take-home exam will consist of 3 questions that will be posed to you. Each question will cover a historical element of the course. The responses will need to be hand-written and closed book.

Exam 2 (10%). This take-home exam will consist of 3 questions that will be posed to you. Each question will cover a policy-related element of this course. The responses will need to be hand-written and closed book.

Exam 3 (10%). This take-home exam will consist of 3 questions that will be posed to you. Each question will cover a disability movement-related element of the course.

Written Assignments. There are two main assignments that the ThinkTank is tasked with in this course. They are *Preliminary Policy Proposal Document* and *Final Proposal*. The preliminary proposal outlines a policy and a major problem that you have identified. The Proposal outlines a solution to the problem you have identified. **NOTE: if you use Artificial Intelligence in your writing for this class, you must cite/add a footnote indicating that you used it and which tool you used.** A summary of these assignments are as follows:

Preliminary Policy Document (10%).

Preliminary Policy Proposal Document. This proposal will summarize an understanding of the topic related to a policy and assess/critique the consequences of the change, cultural movement or policy. In this preliminary proposal, identify the main problem themes related to the topic. As you write this section, it helps to think about how your interest fits within a larger topic.

- For example: If you are writing about current problems with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in a community that is of interest to you, it would be helpful to up front declare generally where the ADA is going. As an example, you could start this section by saying something like "Since the ADA was passed in 1991, its mandate has been refined and, in some cases, rolled back." Then you can list some examples of some ways the ADA has changed, including your specific topic which you are about to tell me more about.

Guiding questions:

1. What were the reasons for this change/culture movement/policy?
2. What were the gaps created by this change/culture movement/policy?
 - ADA example: "Since its inception, The Americans with Disabilities Act has been weakened, particularly around areas of public accommodation. Critics have argued that it is too onerous for businesses to change their environments." (reference , in APA format).
3. What was the context in which the change/culture movement/policy developed – what social, political or economic challenge was the change/culture movement/policy trying to explain, or what shortcomings of previous approaches was it trying to remedy?
 - ADA example: "The ADA was designed to increase the ability of people with disabilities to access society. After the ADA was passed, activists used it to improve access to the community instead of institutions." (reference , in APA format),
4. How has the change/culture movement/policy changed?
 - ADA example: "In 2018, the House of Representatives passed a law that would weaken some key provisions of the ADA. The effect of this law, if passed, would be..." then explain what the benefits and drawbacks would be. Describe any major thought leaders/players involved in change/culture movement/policy.

Final Policy Proposal (30%).

The final proposal will be a creative, theory-based solution to an issue/problem and a plan for how you would assess if the solution works. **In this final proposal, based on the analysis of the theoretical change in a model of disability, cultural movement or policy developed in the three previous assignments, provide a programmatic or policy approach to addressing the remaining gaps relevant to the topic.** This assignment's goal is to provide a creative, theory-based approach to addressing the problem that you have analyzed in the previous assignment. Ultimately this will prepare you to become practitioners who are actively involved in policies around access for vulnerable populations. While you are not probably not going to be a politician, the contexts in which you provide care in large part are determined by policies that define who can and cannot access health care and related services.

Exam 4. (15%) (Finals Week). This individual exam will be based on the whole course. This take-home exam will consist of 3-5 questions that will be posed to you. Each question will pose a different "case" in which students will need to 1) identify which policy or policies are relevant to the case, 2) which cultural movement is related to the case, and 3) how the group would approach responding to or resolving the case. Students will be graded on how well they demonstrate knowledge gained from the course and how well they integrate the knowledge.

Requirement	Due date	% of final grade
<i>Participation and Minutes</i>	Ongoing	20
<i>Exam 1 (History)</i>	10/1	10
<i>Exam 2 (Policy)</i>	10/29	10
<i>Exam 3 (Movements)</i>	11/19	10
<i>Preliminary Policy Document</i>	9/24	10
<i>Final Policy Proposal</i>	12/3	25
<i>Exam 4 (Integrative Case)</i>	12/8	15
Total		100

Point system used (i.e., how do course points translate into letter grades).	The Bachelor of Health Science and Bachelor of Public Health Programs do not use C-grades.
--	--

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

Example:

Points Earned	Letter Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
70-76	C
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	E

Letter Grade	Grade Points
A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
D-	0.67
E	0.0
WF	0.0
I	0.0
NG	0.0
S-U	0.0

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Exam Policy

Policy Related to Make up Exams or Other Work

Consistent with College policy, students are allowed to make up work only if missed as a result of an excused absence, other unanticipated circumstances warranting a medical excuse, or with instructor permission. You must notify the instructor in advance if you will miss a quiz/exam or project deadline. Documentation from a health care provider is required upon your return to class. Project extensions requested must be negotiated at the time of excused absence.

Note about unexcused absences. Unanticipated problems come up sometimes and are understandable. For absences that are not covered under the definition of an excused absence, work due that day will be counted as a zero. However, I will drop the lowest grade from the Semester and *not* include it in your final grade. So, if you miss a live class session due to an unexcused absence, grading for that day will automatically be dropped from your final grade in the class.

Please note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the UF Computing help desk (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) correspondence. You MUST e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

Please note all faculty are bound by the UF policy for excused absences. For information regarding the UF Attendance Policy see the Registrar website for additional details:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

Student Expectations, Roles, and Opportunities for Input Expectations Regarding Course Behavior

It is expected that students act in an appropriate, respectful manner during these lab time and all online correspondence. The use of cellphones, tablets and laptops for anything unrelated to the class is STRONGLY

DISCOURAGED during lab time. The instructor reserves the right to address excessive violation of this policy, including grade reduction. Attention is a precious resource – please devote all of it to our work during our limited lab time.

Additionally, mutual respect is expected when communicating via email or any other channel with either the instructor or TA. Our goal is to learn, espouse, and enact professionalism in all aspects of this class.

Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Please refer to Academic Policies and Resources for further information.

[UF Syllabus Policy Links - Online Course Syllabi - University of Florida](#)

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior. This includes unauthorized and/or unattributed use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) for the completion of assignments. You are paying good money for your education. You are 100% responsible for the content of what you turn in. Don't cut corners. Don't cheat. If you are worried about your grade, talk to me. It's your education.

Professionalism

As students pursuing a path in the health professions or public health, it is crucial to demonstrate professional behaviors that reflect integrity and commitment to the health of patients, fellow health professionals, and to populations we serve. To accomplish this, a strong responsibility for the well-being of others must be evident in our decisions, along with accountability for our actions. Professionalism in the health disciplines requires adherence to high standards of conduct that begin long before graduation.

Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three

ways:

The email they receive from GatorEvals

1. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
2. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Policy Related to Guests Attending Class

Only registered students are permitted to attend class. However, we recognize that students who are caretakers may face occasional unexpected challenges creating attendance barriers. Therefore, by exception, a department chair or his or her designee (e.g., instructors) may grant a student permission to bring a guest(s) for a total of two class sessions per semester. This is two sessions total across all courses. No further extensions will be granted. Please note that guests are **not** permitted to attend either cadaver or wet labs. Students are responsible for course material regardless of attendance. For additional information, please review the Classroom Guests of Students policy in its entirety. Link to full policy:

<http://facstaff.php.ufl.edu/services/resourceguide/getstarted.htm>

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Public health and health professions are based on the belief in human dignity and on respect for the individual. As we share our personal beliefs inside or outside of the classroom, it is always with the understanding that we value and respect diversity of background, experience, and opinion, where every individual feels valued. We believe in, and promote, openness and tolerance of differences in ethnicity and culture, and we respect differing personal, spiritual, religious and political values. We further believe that celebrating such diversity enriches the quality of the educational experiences we provide our students and enhances our own personal and professional relationships. We embrace The University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads, "The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act." If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities for inclusive learning environment, please see your instructor or refer to the Office of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs website:

www.multicultural.ufl.edu

To create as inclusive a learning environment as possible, I will work to ensure that the classroom environment is conducive to the sharing of ideas, allowing students to explore relationships among course material, personal, and social experiences. I strive to teach content objectively and create space for a respectful dialogue of ideas related to the impact of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, (etc.) on the topics taught in class. I seek to nurture a supportive peer culture both inside and outside of the classroom, and expect that students will treat each other in caring, empathic, and respectful ways.

Government Censorship.

I am prevented by Florida and US law from referring to iversityday, equityay and inclusionay in an instructional setting. This means that the government prevents me from speaking freely on these issues, even though they pertain to health policy. I remain dedicated to making sure all students feel included and all perspectives that do not infringe on the rights of others feel welcome in my class.

Positionality Statement.

I removed my previous statement at the request of previous students who felt it is “divisive.” I believe in being open and honest about one’s biases and graciously accepting feedback when I receive it.

Academic Resources:

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.