

OT 505 HEALTH POLICY AND LAW  
COURSE SYLLABUS AND TOPICAL OUTLINE

**GRADUATE PROGRAM IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**  
**Health Policy and Law**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**OT505**  
**SPRING 2025**

**Credit Hours:** 2 Credits

**Course Instructors:** Section A and B - Dr. Sharon M McCloskey, EDD, MBA, OTR/L, CTP  
Section A and B – Dr. Stefanie Seanor, EDD, MBA, OTR/L

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**Office Hours:**

Dr. Sharon McCloskey By appointment – please send an email request

Dr. Stefanie Seanor: By appointment – please send an email request

**We strongly encourage you to email and engage with us; we are here to support your success**

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**Class Format:**

Course content will be provided through a workshop experience – readings, lecture, discussion, web-based resources, and inclass experiential learning activities.

**Class Dates and Times**

**(all dates are mandatory – four classes provided on each workshop date):**

January 24th, 8.30am to 4.30pm

February 7th, 8.30am to 4.30pm

February 28th, 8.30am to 4.30pm

March 21st, 8.30am to 4.30pm

(Contingency 'back-up' date: March 28<sup>th</sup>, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Health and education policy, public and private, has direct bearing on occupational therapy practice. Policy has a significant impact on the health of a nation. This course includes an overview of US health and education institutions and systems (recognizing that we are in a current situation of change in our country), policy and law-making processes, and we will examine several national and state health and education policies, and explore legislation that affect occupational therapy practice across a number of settings. You will explore issues in relation to access, quality, and cost (who is covered? how much is covered? classifications and reimbursement); all issues are examined in relation to service delivery models in health and education systems with particular emphasis on policy and legislation affecting populations with needs and conditions that fall within the domain of occupational therapy practice. This course includes key aspects of occupational therapy policy topics, such as insurance coverage, scope of practice, telehealth, and professional advocacy. Course delivery is designed as an in-person workshop format and includes lecture, discussion, reading, web based resources, and online learning activities.

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### **COURSE RELATIONSHIP TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE AND AOTA VISION 2025**

The AOTA vision currently states that “*Occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living.*”

<https://www.aota.org/AboutAOTA/vision-2025.aspx>

OT505 reflects the AOTA Vision 2025 which builds upon the Centennial Vision and describes pillars or guideposts that further defines the Occupational Therapist as being:

- **Effective:** As future OT practitioners, you will utilize evidence based, client centered, and cost-effective solutions as both a matter of best practice and in upholding institution, state, and national policies.
- **Leaders:** In assuming leadership roles, your knowledge and understanding of policies and laws will support your ability to influence changing policies, environments, and complex systems of care.
- **Collaborative:** As a student and future occupational therapist, your knowledge of policies will enhance your working with clients, other professionals, and systems to produce effective outcomes.
- **Accessible:** Occupational therapists are leaders in providing culturally responsive and customized services that are mandated in healthcare, education, and social support systems policy and law. In gaining understanding of the foundations of policy you will enhance your impact as a practitioner.
- **Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity:** We are intentionally inclusive and equitable and embrace diversity in all its forms. Through consideration of healthcare as a right, and by developing an understanding of health inequalities you will be positioned to act as an advocate for social and occupational justice.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM DESIGN**

The cornerstone of the SHU OT program philosophy is “**Transformation through values-based education.**” Our curriculum design is depicted by a longstanding symbol in OT going back to our origins - that of a weaving. The warp are the values of the profession, the program, and the university which run throughout the curriculum. The weft are the threads of occupational therapy content knowledge, skills, and experiences that comprise the foundation of our program.

This course is a comprehensive introduction to systems where occupational therapists find their work and provide care. The Catholic Intellectual Tradition of Social Justice is woven into this course and reflected upon as it relates to the content of OT505. This course addresses the values of authenticity, justice, integrity, altruism, and open-mindedness. It is part of the curricular stream of becoming a professional and a future leader.

### **CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THIS COURSE**

Wilcock’s (1999) reflection on doing, being, and becoming states that our **being** is the essence of who we are; **becoming** is a transformation process; and that **doing** is the process that simultaneously reflects who we are now and is the means for transformation. Policies and systems are complex. Understanding the nuances of policy making, laws and regulations; and how these policy ideas and processes relate to the practice of occupational therapy in changing environments, will be woven throughout the course, so that principles, applications and constructs can be applied in your professional growth and development. This course will offer you the opportunity of ‘doing’, as you gain a greater understanding of policy and systems, and will afford you the opportunity of skill development as you learn the process of influencing and prepare yourself for ‘becoming’ an excellent practitioner.

## FACULTY AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

### Student Expectations of Faculty

#### Attendance

- We will deliver in-person class content over four mandatory workshop days. You are expected to be physically present in class 100% of the time. Under no circumstances should you be absent for any of the four dates. If anything should arise that prevents your attendance, the barriers will be reviewed and a determination will be made if it is possible for other arrangements to be made for alternate instruction (this is an unlikely scenario).

#### Readiness for Teaching

- Readings and class learning activities, not listed on the topical outline, that need to be completed before class will be posted on BB at least 2 days before the workshop class, with the exception of additional material that we may discover within that time frame that will enhance your learning of a particular topic.
- Classes will start on time.

#### Assignments

- Assignments and rubrics will be posted at the beginning of this course under the Assignments button on BB
- We will grade your papers and have things back to you within three weeks of the assignment due date unless circumstances change, for instance, the due date is extended or individual assignments are late and information regarding the completed assignment cannot be communicated to the class until all assignments are completed

#### Professional behavior

- We will answer emails within 2 business days. If something is urgent we expect that you will communicate urgency and we will answer as soon as possible.
- If we have a concern about you or your work, then one of us will speak directly to you.

### Faculty/Program Expectations of Students

- As per school policy, a 100% attendance rate for all courses is required. Absences from classes are allowed only under extraordinary circumstances, such as illnesses, emergencies, religious obligations, or weddings or deaths of immediate family members. In an extreme situation, excused absences must be approved by the course instructor prior to class. Students are to notify the course instructor as soon as possible in emergency situations. Documentation for excused absences confirming circumstances that caused them are required prior to approval or within a week of returning to school following emergencies. All make-up work, including quizzes, exams and other assignments, is at the discretion of the course instructor. Please note that having to go to work, studying for an exam, or attending a family vacation are not excused absences. Failure to follow these procedures will result in the total grade reduction of one letter grade increment for each unexcused absence.
- Unless arrangements are made with the course instructor in advance, assignments submitted after the due date will receive a reduction of one letter grade increment each day following the due date.
- To the extent permitted by federal and state copyright laws, the class lectures and materials provided by the professor are copyrighted. By participating in the class lectures, students consent to the video and audio recording of said lectures. As part of the requirements of the course, students are required to participate, whether in person or via electronic communications. At the professor's discretion, he or she may require students to leave their audio and video devices on during the class lectures.

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- All courses follow the University's Academic Integrity Policies as outlined in the *Sacred Heart University Graduate Bulletins* as well as the *Occupational Therapy Student Manual*. Please refer to these documents for policies and procedures regarding professional behaviors and academic integrity. Students are also expected to adhere to the American Occupational Therapy Association's Code of Ethics.
- Additionally, all assignments unless otherwise specified, must adhere to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) formatting and writing requirements. Please refer to the *APA Manual* for specific guidelines.

**Expectations of students' professionalism**

Professionalism encompasses the following components:

- Professional ethics – defined as the understanding and practice of ethical reasoning and care. Professional ethics are the principles of rules intended to express particular values. It is expected that course content will prompt reflection on your own professional values.
- Professional responsibilities – defined as a state of accountability, concern for, obligation or sense of actions one needs to take. You will be fully engaged in collaborative learning over the course of the semester. It is expected that you take responsibility and show concern for the learning of others.
- Professional behaviors – Defined as conduct or ways of acting. Behaviors refer to one's action or reactions. 'Unprofessional behaviors' could be defined as 'not conforming to the standards of behavior expected'. Professional behaviors are expected at all times.

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- Professional competencies – attaining and maintaining an adequate level of knowledge, skill, and professional attitudes/behaviors, and the application of the knowledge, skill, and attitudes in practice. The skills of analysis and synthesis will be developed throughout this course.

Readiness for Learning

- You should be in class and ready to start on time.
- You are expected to have completed assigned readings and learning activities prior to the class to which they pertain.
- It is impossible to attend to class and attend to your laptop/cellphone unless you are typing notes. This means that you will not be texting, instant messaging, on social media sites, or any other websites that do not pertain to class. It is understood that emergencies happen, and if you receive a text or call of that nature, then you should respond as necessary, but as an adult it is expected that you know what is or is not an emergency.

Responsibility for course material

- All material covered in class and posted on Blackboard is your responsibility even if you are absent.

Assignments

- Assignments must be turned in on time unless you have spoken with the instructor in advance of the due date and have come to an agreement about an alternate arrangement. Professional behavior

Communications

- Students are expected to demonstrate professional communication in all its forms, verbally, written, email, and other electronic communication. The use of email and electronic communication can lead to misunderstandings regarding *tone of voice* in joking or sarcasm. Please be aware of this and be clear in all your communication. All communication must demonstrate respect toward your peers and course instructor.
- Students are expected to follow the University and Program's policies with regards to honesty and academic integrity as well as AOTA's Code of Ethics found on <https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Ethics.aspx>



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- The best way to resolve concerns and or problems is to speak directly with the person involved, be that another student or an instructor. If you need assistance in knowing how best to make your concerns or needs known before speaking with the person involved, your advisor is a good resource to assist you in this.

### TEACHING LEARNING METHODS

This course will be taught through a workshop design - lectures, discussions, group and independent work, readings and projects, which require research and reflection. The readings are critically important, as participation in class discussion is an expectation. The course will take place once weekly, and all students should refer to Blackboard weekly for announcements and assignment updates.

### Office of Student Accessibility (OSA)

The OSA is Sacred Heart University's central academic support service and is open to all SHU students. The OSA is located at the new Student Success Center and offers a range of learning resources across a variety of subject and skills

(<https://mailsacredheart.sharepoint.com/sites/OSAStudentResources>).

The following resources are designed to help students connect to course material including:

- **Tutors:** Both professor and student tutors work with students on specific course material
- **Classroom Learning Assistants (CLA's):** Students who have done well in a specific class lead study groups each week. This is a great way to learn and discuss information before handing in homework, or taking quizzes and exams.

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- **Workshops:** The OSA offers workshops on much-needed skill development for college students. Watch your email for announcements!
- **Writing:** Students can review writing assignments in person with professional tutors who are professors of writing. In addition, students may submit papers electronically for review via the Online Writing Lab (OWL).
- **Academic Coaching:** Students can meet 1-on-1 with an academic coach to discuss academic needs, plans, struggles, and goals. Academic Coaches in the OSA are available to help motivate and strategize the best way to be successful both inside and outside the classroom.

**Academic Accommodations:**

Sacred Heart University provides equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability status. Students requesting accommodations should contact the Office of Student Accessibility, (<https://www.sacredheart.edu/offices--departments-directory/student-success-center/office-of-student-accessibility/accommodations-process/>). Students must be registered with the Office of Student Accessibility and submit appropriate documentation to be granted accommodations. For further information about requesting accommodations, please contact Kathy Radziunas, Director of the Office of Student Accessibility, [radziunask@sacredheart.edu](mailto:radziunask@sacredheart.edu), or Laurie Scinicariello, Assistant Director of the Office of Student Accessibility, [scinicariello@sacredheart.edu](mailto:scinicariello@sacredheart.edu).

**COURSE POLICIES**

- **STUDENT BUDGET FOR COURSE SUPPLIES:** None required for this course
- **INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP WORK:** This course demands both individual work and collaborative group work. All individual assignments and homework must be completed independently.

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- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** refer to *Program Manual*
- **ATTENDENCE:** refer to *Program Manual*
- **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS:** refer to *Program Manual*

**Individual and Group Work:**

Students are responsible for independent reading of all materials. Students are responsible for independent work, unless there is a requirement for group work. If group work is a requirement, students are expected to participate fully, collaborate, share, and exchange in equal measure.

**Artificial Intelligence**

It is expected that any and all written work submitted within this course is your own, as an individual or as a group submission. This includes, but is not limited to, the writing of papers and the business/program plan. Your learning is a product of your own study, inquiry, reflection, and writing, and is built into each assignment. Any writing drawn from other sources must be documented and cited accordingly. You may not use ChatGPT or other AI composition software while completing assignments within this course without the express permission of the course instructor. There will be an automatic zero given for any assignments that utilize AI without transparency to your peers or instructor.

**Academic Integrity**

The graduate occupational therapy program adheres fully to the Sacred Heart University policies and procedures on Academic Integrity, as stated in Student Manual. Please refer to the Student Program Manual.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS** – There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be posted on BB. Students are expected to have completed assigned readings prior to the class to which they are assigned.

**Suggested Readings:**

Singh, D. A., & Shi, L. (2022). *Delivering Health Care on America* (8th ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.  
<https://www.jblearning.com/catalog/productdetails/9781284244625?jblsearch>.

**PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER WITH LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Each program in OT must meet the same Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards. How they are met varies from program to program. In each program, each standard must be addressed in at least two courses. The standards that are addressed in this course are listed below. To review each standard, please refer the **2018 ACOTE Standards and Interpretive Guide**: <https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/standards/>

The course learning objectives are linked to the ACOTE standards as well as the program’s outcomes, mission and vision, and the overall curricular design. The chart below shows the connection between the course learning objectives, the program outcomes they are linked to, the ACOTE standards that are addressed in this course, as well as how we plan to meet and measure the learning objectives for this course. By the time you graduate from the program and in preparation for entry-level practice, you should meet the course objectives, program objectives, and ACOTE standards.

All course expectations are designed according to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains. This course will facilitate students to perform within the cognitive processes dimensions of Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, and Evaluate, and the knowledge dimensions of Factual, Conceptual, and Procedural.

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Refer to <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching-resources/effective-practice/revised-blooms-taxonomy/>

**Course Learning Objectives**

Learning Objectives	Program Outcomes	ACOTE Standards	Learning Experiences	Measured
<p>Students will be able to recognize, and analyze the social, political, and economic factors, that influence public policy and service delivery, across US health environments and educational contexts, and communicate this in a professional manner.</p>	<p>Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning            Promote justice through compassionate service to the local and global communities through leadership, advocacy, or service by developing an understanding of the health and education needs of the US population and communicating this to elected officials.            Engage in continual learning and evidence-based practice with intellectual open-mindedness.</p>	<p>B.5.1. Factors, Policy Issues, and Social Systems - Identify, analyze, and evaluate the contextual factors; current policy issues; and socioeconomic, political, geographic, and demographic factors on the delivery of occupational therapy services for persons, groups, and populations to promote policy development and social systems as they relate to the practice of occupational therapy.            B.5.4. Systems and Structures That Create Legislation - Identify and evaluate the systems and structures that create federal and state legislation and regulations and their implications and effects on persons, groups, and populations, as well as practice.            B.5.2. Advocacy - Identify, analyze, and advocate for existing and future service delivery models and policies, and their potential effect on the practice of occupational therapy and opportunities to address societal needs.            B.7.2. Professional Engagement - Demonstrate knowledge of how the role of a professional is enhanced by participating and engaging in local, national, and international leadership positions in organizations or agencies</p>	<p>Workshop            Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions            Discovery activities</p>	<p>Quizzes and Exam              Final Group Project and Presentation              Advocacy assignment</p>

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<p>Students will be able to differentiate, evaluate and analyze societal trends that influence the practice of healthcare and occupational therapy in the US</p>	<p>Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning. Apply ethical reasoning aligned with the AOTA and the program's values to make decisions and practice professionally.</p>	<p>B.3.1. OT History, Philosophical Base, Theory, and Sociopolitical Climate - Analyze occupational therapy history, philosophical base, theory, and sociopolitical climate and their importance in meeting society's current and future occupational needs as well as how these factors influence and are influenced by practice. B.5.4. Systems and Structures That Create Legislation - Identify and evaluate the systems and structures that create federal and state legislation and regulations and their implications and effects on persons, groups, and populations, as well as practice.</p>	<p>Workshop Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions Discovery activities</p>	<p>Quizzes and Exam  Final Group Project and Presentation  Advocacy</p>
<p>Students will be able to recognize the political and social climate, and the influence of policy on occupational therapy practice nationally and internationally</p>	<p>Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning  Engage in continual learning and evidence-based practice with intellectual open-mindedness.</p>	<p>B.7.1 Ethical Decision Making - Demonstrate knowledge of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) <i>Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics</i> and <i>AOTA Standards of Practice</i> and use them as a guide for ethical decision making in professional interactions, client interventions, employment settings, and when confronted with personal and organizational ethical conflicts. B.1.3. Social Determinants of Health - Demonstrate knowledge of how the role of a professional is enhanced by participating and engaging in local, national, and international leadership positions in organizations or agencies.</p>	<p>Workshop Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions Discovery activities</p>	<p>Quizzes and Exam  Final Group Project and Presentation  Advocacy</p>
<p>Students will understand processes involved in the creation and implementation of legislation, and how</p>	<p>Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning</p>	<p>B.5.4. Systems and Structures That Create Legislation - Identify and evaluate the systems and structures that create federal and state legislation and regulations and their implications and effects on persons, groups, and populations, as well as practice.</p>	<p>Workshop  Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions</p>	<p>Quizzes and Exam  Final Group Project and Presentation</p>

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OT's can advocate and influence the processes	Through advocacy, promote justice through compassionate service to the local and global communities	B.7.2. Professional Engagement - Demonstrate knowledge of how the role of a professional is enhanced by participating and engaging in local, national, and international leadership positions in organizations or agencies.	Discovery activities  Guest Lecturer	Advocacy
Students will demonstrate knowledge of/be able to integrate use of national and international resources, as they relate to OT practice, and be able to compare to US practice	Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning	B.7.2. Professional Engagement - Demonstrate knowledge of how the role of a professional is enhanced by participating and engaging in local, national, and international leadership positions in organizations or agencies.	Workshop Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions Discovery activities	Quizzes and Exam  Final Group Project and Presentation  Advocacy
Students will integrate and demonstrate knowledge of various health and educational laws that influence reimbursement for occupational therapy service delivery in the US	Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required of an entry level occupational therapist, including critical thinking and clinical reasoning	B.4.29. Reimbursement Systems and Documentation - Demonstrate knowledge of various reimbursement systems and funding mechanisms (e.g., federal, state, third party, private payer), appeals mechanisms, treatment/diagnosis codes (e.g., CPT®, ICD, DSM® codes), and coding and documentation requirements that affect consumers and the practice of occupational therapy. Documentation must effectively communicate the need and rationale for occupational therapy services.	Workshop Workshop discussions and group activities/discussions Discovery activities Guest Lecturer	Quizzes and Exam  Final Group Project and Presentation  Advocacy

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**Proper APA in-text citations and references required on all written work. Failure to properly cite could result in unintentional plagiarism.  
 Please familiarize yourself with departmental and university academic integrity policies**

**Academic Integrity, Honesty, and Ethical Reasoning**

All courses follow the University’s Academic Integrity Policies as outlined in the Sacred Heart University Graduate Bulletin as well as the program’s policies which can be found in the Occupational Therapy Student Manual. Please refer to the *Occupational Therapy Program’s Student Manual* and *Sacred Heart University’s Graduate Bulletin* for policies and procedures regarding professional behaviors, academic policies and procedures, and academic integrity. Occupational Therapy Program students and faculty are expected to adhere to the policies outlined in these manuals. Additionally, all assignments unless otherwise specified, must adhere to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) formatting and writing requirements. Please refer to the *APA Manual* for specific guidelines.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

DUE DATE	ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	PERCENT OF GRADE
1/24/2025 2/7/2025 2/28/2025 3/21/2025 (3/28/2025 alternate)	Class Activities/ Assignments	Short Assignments/Reflective Writing (4 assignments – graded. Due dates TBD)  All students are expected to participate in all class discussions actively. All students are expected to submit in-class and short reflections as requested.	<b>12 (4 x 3) pts</b>

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<p>1/24/2025          2/7/2025          2/28/2025          3/21/2025          (3/28/2025 alternate)</p>	<p>Pre and Post-test          Each Session</p>	<p>Multiple Choice Quizzes (14 questions)          Pre-test each session in the morning (not graded). Q&amp;A during the day.          Graded post-test each session in the afternoon.</p>	<p><b>28 (4 x 7) pts</b></p>
<p>2/28/2025</p>	<p>Advocacy Plan and          Execution Plan</p>	<p>Students will identify a topic or situation that requires advocacy and, in pairs, will research the issues involved, identify other entities who would be allies or adversaries, and devise/design an advocacy plan to address the situation and a plan for execution.</p>	<p><b>20 pts</b></p>
<p>3/21/2025</p>	<p>Final Project and          Presentation</p>	<p>This is a major group project and presentation. <b>It will revolve around the different health care policy issues that are of current concern.</b> In groups, you will be assigned a topic and you will examine pros and cons, associated legislative efforts, comparisons to other country's systems, and how each position would affect occupational therapy practice. You will develop a 'Policy Newsletter' about this issue and present your summary of findings to the class. Means of presentation to be determined. Your newsletter for the class will be posted on BB. You will submit the newsletter before Workshop Day Four. Please see the rubric for details.</p>	<p><b>40 pts</b></p>

**Total**

**100 points**

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