

The University of Western Ontario
School of Health Studies
Faculty of Health Sciences
HS 1002B (Summer 2024): Social Determinants of Health

Time: This course is asynchronous, there are no in-person lectures or labs.

Location: online via OWL. (A strong internet connection is recommended.)

Instructor: Dr. Josh Tobias – jtobias2@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Farnaz Vafaei – fvafaei@uwo.ca

Office Hours: listed on OWL. Students are required to sign-up 24 hours in advance.

Course Description

This class introduces you to the social determinants of health as a framework for understanding how human health is impacted by a variety of social characteristics and processes. Together, we will enhance our awareness and understanding of basic terms, concepts, and measurements related to health, public health, population health, health inequalities, and social justice. We will also emphasize exploring and internalizing these ideas through critical reflection on our own lived experiences.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Differentiate between the Personal and Social Determinants of Health, including demonstrating an awareness of a variety of ways that the social determinants of health are understood and measured;
- Identify and critically analyze social determinants of health and their impacts in the Canadian and International contexts;
- Explain the relationship between social determinants of health and strategies to reduce health inequities;

Prerequisites

Prerequisites: there are no prerequisites for this course

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees if you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Structure

This course is comprised of a series of modules, each exploring a key social determinant of health as well as associated concepts. Each module includes one lecture – delivered asynchronously – as well as learning materials (see below). There will be 2 modules released each week, according to our course calendar. You are responsible for consuming materials on your own time, noting any associated deadlines.

Course Materials (Required Learning):

Online learning materials – including readings as well as non-written resources – will be posted on OWL within each of the relevant modules. Noting that there may be restrictions on the number of individuals who can access material at any given time, please schedule your learning time accordingly. Please check our OWL site often to keep informed of important course information or announcements.

Contacting the Professor and Teaching Assistant

Both the Professor and Teaching Assistant are here to support your learning. We kindly ask that your first point of contact be your TA (Farnaz). Please refrain from emailing the professor unless your question or concern is one that the TA has been unable to resolve to your satisfaction. To ensure a prompt response, you must include ‘HS1002’ in the subject line of your email when contacting us. We will try our best to respond to you within 48hrs during the week, and within 72hrs if your email was sent after 3 pm on a Friday or during a holiday.

Evaluation

Your grade in our class will be calculated according to the following:

Assignment	Short Summary	Value
Weekly Quiz	A 3-question quiz following modules 1-10. 10x3%	30%
Minor Assignments	A total of 7 available throughout the course. Complete 4, worth 5% each	20%
Exam Questions	Five questions (1% each)	5%
Forum Participation	Contribution – at a minimum 1 quality original post and 1 quality response to a fellow student – per module.	15%
Final Exam	Cumulative of all course content	30%

Full details about each assignment, due dates, and marking criteria can be found on our OWL site.

Quizzes/Exams

Weekly quizzes and the final exam will test students on the course material, inclusive of lecture videos, media, and required readings. Computer-marked multiple-choice quizzes and exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for

potential academic dishonesty. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca)

Minor Assignments

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database to detect plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)

Forum Participation

To maintain a collaborative and productive learning environment, everyone must be respectful. Behaviour via forum posts and other interactions will not be tolerated. The professor will use his discretion in deciding how to best deal with the situation. If the behaviour persists, the individual may ask that that offending student be removed from the course. The professor has the right to remove any posted content without warning.

Policy on missed Quizzes and Assignments

Each quiz and minor assignment must be completed one week after the respective learning module has been posted. If a student misses a due date for medical reasons, religious reasons or other extenuating circumstances, academic consideration must be obtained from the counselling office and – once granted – it is the responsibility of the student to notify the professor as well as the teaching assistant. Medical documentation must be presented to an academic counsellor, not the instructor or teaching assistant. Due to the short length of this course, there will be no make-up quizzes or assignments upon completion. Final exams will be weighted accordingly for students who have received approved accommodation.

Course Calendar

Week	Content
June 17-21	Module 1 – What are the Social Determinants of Health? Module 2 – Employment and Income
June 24-28	Module 3 – Researching Social Determinants Module 4 – Education
July 2-5	Module 5 - Policy Module 6 – Health & Social Services
July 8-12	Module 7 – Indigenous Health Part 1 (Physical Environments) Module 8 – Indigenous Health Part 2 (Culture)
July 15-19	Module 9 – Geographical Distribution Module 10 – Food
July 22-16	Module 11 – Climate Change Module 12 – Health Inequities and the SDOH

*Please note: timetable and content can change. A detailed course calendar is available on OWL. Announcements will be posted to the announcements section of OWL.

SHS Policies

Use of Electronic Devices

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. For those classes in which we use this technology, it is your responsibility to ensure that the device is activated and functional. You must speak with the course instructor immediately, if you have any

concerns about whether or not your clicker is malfunctioning. You must use only your own clicker. For all components of this course in which clicker records are used to compute a portion of the grade:

- The use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence;
- The possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offense

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, in the [Academic Calendar \(westerncalendar.uwo.ca\)](http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca).

Plagiarism

Student work is expected to be original. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and could lead to a zero on the assignment in question, a zero in this course, or your expulsion from the university. You are plagiarizing if you insert a phrase, sentence or paragraph taken directly from another author without acknowledging that the work belongs to him/her. Similarly, you are plagiarizing if you paraphrase or summarize another author's ideas without acknowledging that the ideas belong to someone else. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Re-submission of Previously Graded Material

Without the explicit written permission of the instructor, you may not submit any academic work for which credit has been obtained previously, or for which credit is being sought, in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

Use of Statistical Pattern Recognition on Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Academic Considerations and Absences from Lectures and Assessments

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request (in writing) any necessary academic considerations at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the academic counsellors in their Home Department. Additional information is provided in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Accommodation

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. Students with ongoing accommodation needs within this course are also encouraged to contact [Accessible Education](#), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances that are medical or compassionate in nature. These extenuating circumstances may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. In all cases, students are advised to consult with the academic counsellors in their home units, at their earliest opportunity. Academic counsellors may refer students to [Accessible Education](#) for ongoing academic accommodations.

Most forms of academic consideration require documentation, and this documentation is to be submitted to academic counsellors within five (5) business days of their return to academic responsibilities. Any such documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's [Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy](#). Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic considerations shall be determined by academic counseling, in consultation with the student's instructor(s).

Academic considerations may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic considerations shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to

provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”).

Whenever possible, students who require academic considerations should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Under no circumstances are students expected to submit rationales for (or documentation of) any absences, to course instructors. Students are, however, required to follow-up with course instructors, in a timely fashion, to identify the ways in which the academic consideration will be implemented.

Examination Conflicts

A student completing tests or examinations with flexible submission times (e.g., where one or more evaluation is a take-home assessment) cannot request alternative arrangements unless a conflict cannot be avoided by rescheduling writing the exam to a different time within the window specified by the instructor. This applies to direct conflicts as well as “heavy load” conflicts (e.g., three exams within a 23-hour period). The student should discuss any concerns about a potential conflict and/or request academic considerations with their academic counselling unit prior to the deadline to drop a course without academic penalty.

In the case of online tests and examinations, use of a “Conflict Room,” wherein student can write two proctored exams concurrently, will be interpreted as arrangements for continuous proctoring.

Online Proctoring

Tests and examinations in this course may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western’s Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Appealing a Grade Within this Course

You have the right to appeal any grade within this course. The grounds for a grade appeal may be one or more of: medical or compassionate circumstances, extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control, bias, inaccuracy, or unfairness. All grounds advanced in a request for relief must be supported by a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for the request together with all supporting documentation.

Appeals generally proceed in this order:

1. Course instructor (informal consultation)
2. Department Chair (submission of written request)
3. The Dean of the Faculty (submission of written request)

In the case of perceived procedural unfairness, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within the Department and Faculty offering the course. In the case of extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances that impact on a grade, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within a student's Home Department and Faculty.

A request for relief against a mark or grade must be initiated with the instructor as soon as possible after the mark is issued. In the event that the instructor is not available to the student, or fails to act, or if the matter is not resolved satisfactorily with the instructor, a written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the Department within three weeks of the date that the mark was issued. In the case of a final grade in a course, the written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the department by January 31st (for first-term half courses) or June 30th (for second-term half courses or full-year courses).

SHS Grade Policy

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable.
F	below 50	Fail

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 68-72. If the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student's grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.

Student Health & Wellness

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it's important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>) for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year.

Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state. If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca). It's also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don't want to reach out to formal services. Having the contact information of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

There are various support services around campus, and these include but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://academicssupport.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>