University of Waterloo - ERS 475/650

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH (IN)EQUALITY

In person: May 4th – May 15th (daily) 1:00pm to 4:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Health outcomes are produced by a complex set of factors that span from global environmental crises to local policies that shape the built and natural landscape. At the same time, unequal access to the necessary supports that are required to build and maintain a healthy lifestyle constrain the capacity of individuals and communities to contribute to their own health and well-being. Through the lenses of risk, social equity and environmental justice, **this course** explores the social production of environment and health inequality in urban environments. It also examines the mechanisms that individuals and communities can adopt to counteract or resist this production.

A collaborative and experiential approach to learning will define the problem of environment and health inequality, re-conceptualize solutions to this issue, and examine emerging tools that promote more equitable conditions and outcomes. Through class lectures, field trips, and guest speakers we examine these themes within various contexts including emerging health technologies, urban food insecurity, and active transportation. Student-centred assignments and presentations will also introduce other topics related to the production of environment and health (in)equality (e.g., neighbourhood design; responses to climate change, use of "public" space, etc.).

Pre-requisite: Students should have taken a previous course related to one of the following: healthy/sustainable communities, governance, health administration, or community planning. This is a blended course with preparatory readings and research conducted through the course period. (Note: this interdisciplinary course is open to students across all Faculties, and will be of particular interest to those in the Faculties of Environment and Applied Health Sciences. As such, the concepts of both health and environment are broadly defined.

Course Instructors:

Sara Edge (Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Environment)

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Mark Groulx (Planning)

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Office Hours:

Instructors will generally be available during the two-week period and via e-mail or appointment throughout the duration of the course

Room: Arts Lecture 210
Time: 1:00pm - 4:00pm
(May 4th to May 15th)

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will gain an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges of working across disciplinary, sectoral and knowledge boundaries to promote health equity at a community scale.
- The class, including students and instructors, will engage in collaborative learning and self-reflection to understand how various social actors interact to co-produce environments that either support or constrain health and well-being.
- Course assignments and case studies will take place within local communities, allowing students to get out of the classroom to test and refine ideas developed through readings and lectures.

COURSE READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course. All course readings are available through e-reserves. Required readings are listed by class below. Optional supplementary multimedia content may also be made available through Learn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

	Assignment*	Due Date	Grade
1	Readings Reflection	May 20th, (after 2 week block)	20%
2	Group Presentation	May 15th (last day of class)	25%
3	Final Assignment (Option 1 or 2)	June 27th, (after 2 week block)	30%
4	Participation	Assessed throughout the course	25%

*Late assignments penalty – 5 marks per day (not percentage points)

Assignment 1: Reading Reflections (20% of final grade)

Given that we will be meeting every day for two weeks, it will be difficult to keep up with class discussion unless you are up to date with readings. As such, the reading reflections assignment has been designed to directly build on and recognize the time and effort you will spend on course readings. The readings reflection is a 1,000 word paper drawing on at least 4-5 of the readings from the course. Specifically, your task is to select a community (ideally one you have ample local knowledge of e.g., where you grew up) and use key concepts from your chosen readings to discuss the processes that create (or fail to create) healthy environments and populations. For example, you might discuss how various social, economic, **and/or** environmental factors contribute to health inequality. This assignment is meant to focus on big picture issues and to use your selected readings to prompt critical self-reflection. It will tie together a synthesis of key concepts from your readings with the local knowledge you possess about key issues and concerns facing your community. This is meant to be a creative and flexible exercise that will introduce you to key themes in this course, but it is also an academic assignment that requires essay form and correct citation formatting. If you would like help defining a topic, both course instructors are available to set up a meeting prior to the class to explore options.

Assignment 2: Group Presentation (25% of final grade)

This project will involve the development of a planning vision for the Iron Horse trail, focusing on its role as a community health asset. This project has been designed in collaboration with the City of Kitchener as part of their Iron Horse redevelopment initiative. It will build on other course components like the active transportation panel discussion. Details will be announced during the first class and a detailed assignment handout will be provided.

Assignment 3: Final Assignment (30% of final grade)

Option 1:   In small groups (2-3) you will have the opportunity to develop and facilitate a community engagement exercise as part of the City of Kitchener's community outreach initiative related to the Iron Horse Trail redevelopment. As an individual you will also be responsible for a 500-1000 word critical reflection on the experience: Key questions to consider include (but are not limited to):

- What aspects of the Iron Horse redevelopment project are important to health equity in Kitchener-Waterloo?
- What role does community engagement play in developing community health assets?
- How equitable and effective was the community engagement process you were involved in (i.e., strengths and opportunities for improvements)?

Option 2:   As an individual you will write a 2000-2500 word paper that extends and applies some of the theoretical thinking developed in your readings reflection. More specifically, you will draw on the theoretical arguments from your selected readings, as well as knowledge developed throughout the course, to evaluate a specific community health intervention from a health equity perspective. Health intervention is intentionally defined here in a broad sense as a project (e.g., community pathway enhancement) or program (e.g., food security program) explicitly designed to promote positive health outcomes and well-being within a specific population. As part of your paper you should:

- Describe in general terms the form of health intervention you have selected, including an overview of the history of its emergence as a public policy tool, a conceptual discussion of how it seeks to address health inequality, and an overview of the barriers and opportunities to achieving this goal.

- Select and evaluate a specific program or project currently in existence within a community setting.
    - Provide a description of the initiative (e.g. What are its goals?; Who is responsible?)
    - Analyse the key stakeholders involved (i.e., Who is being served?; What are their needs?),
    - Examine how and why stakeholders are engaged in the design and implementation of the initiative (if at all).

    NOTE: Using literature from the course or literature obtained through research, a strong paper will select an appropriate framework (i.e., key criteria) around which to organize their evaluation, or will develop such a framework from the literature. Some key questions to consider:

    - What dimensions are important to assess?
    - What is an appropriate means or approach to assessing each dimension?
    - What data is being or should be collected? Is data being used effectively? Why or why not?

Assignment 4: Seminar Participation (25% of final grade)

Active and engaged participation of all members of a course is crucial to a successful seminar environment. This is an intensive, interactive 2-week block course. You are expected to attend every class. As such, only serious personal or health considerations will be accepted as reasons for absence. If this is the case, please inform one of the instructors immediately. Be prepared and willing to share your analyses, interpretation and perspectives related to an issue, to attend to alternative viewpoints, and where appropriate, to explore differences in a respectful but critical manner. This is a collaborative, inclusive learning environment where students and instructors are open to learning from each other.

The readings selected for this course will directly inform this active and engaged participation, which is why all readings need to be done in preparation for each class. The readings selected are challenging, but evocative. An effort has been made to include a mix of popular and academic sources that promote diverse perspectives on the range of course topics. Marks will be based on demonstrated knowledge of the readings as well as your overall engagement. During each class, students will be randomly called upon to discuss the main themes of the readings.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class	Date	Topic
		DEFINING THE PROBLEM OF HEALTH (IN)EQUALITY
1	May 4th 2015	**A Socio-ecological Systems Approach to Understanding Health (In)equality** Key Concepts: complex systems; social distribution of risk; environmental justice *Seminar Leader: Sara Edge* *Meeting Location: AL 210* Required Reading(s): Webb et al (2010). Tools for thoughtful action: The role of ecosystem approaches to health in enhancing public health. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 101(6), pp. 439-441. Ali, H.S. (2009). The Political Economy of Environmental Inequality: The Social Distribution of Risk as an Environmental Injustice (pp. 97-111). In Agyeman, J., Cole, P., Haluza-Delay, R. & O'Riley, P., *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*. Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press.
2	May 5th 2015	**Health (In)equality and the Social Production of Risk** Key Concepts: risk society; individualization of risk; vulnerability *Seminar Leader: Mark Groulx* *Meeting Location: AL 210*

		Required Reading(s): Tierney, K. (2015). A different perspective: The social production of risk (pp. 31-50). In *The social roots of risk: Producing disasters, promoting resilience.* Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press. MacKendrick, N. (2010). Media Framing of Body Burdens: Precautionary Consumption and the Individualization of Risk. *Sociological Inquiry*, 80(1), pp. 126-149. **Note: Time set aside for project brain storming**
3	May 6th 2015	**Health (In)equality as a Governance Issue: The complex system of local food insecurity** Key Concepts: multi-stakeholder; collaboration; knowledge integration; social determinants of health *Panel Discussion: **Guests Margaret Ann Munoz (Perth District Health Unit, Perth Food Security Coalition); Paulina Rodriguez (Masters Candidate, School of Planning)*** *Meeting Location: AL 210* Required Reading(s): van Zeiil-Rozema et al (2008). Governance for sustainable development: A framework. Sustainable Development 16 (6), pp. 410-421. Gorton, D., Bullen, C. R., & Mhurchu, C. N. (2009). Environmental influences on food security in high-income countries. Nutrition Reviews , 68 (1), 1-29. **Note: Time set aside for a facilitated work period**
		**RECONCEPTUALIZING SOLUTIONS TO HEALTH (IN)EQUALITY**
4	May 7th 2015	**Rethinking the Production of Health Risks: The role of knowledge and worldviews** Key Concepts: governance; knowledge co-production; procedural justice; place identity *Seminar Leaders: Sara Edge and Mark Groulx* *Meeting Location: AL 210* Required Reading(s): Barten, F. et al (2011). Rights, knowledge, and governance for improved health equity in urban settings. Journal of Urban Health, (88)5, pp. 896 -905. Tierney, K. (2015). Culture and the production of risk (pp. 50-81). In *The social roots of risk: Producing disasters, promoting resilience.* Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

5	May 8th 2015	**Translating Knowledge into Food Security: The case of The Local Community Food Centre**
		Key Concepts: food security, community gardens, community food centres, empowerment, dignity
		Field Trip: The Local Community Food Centre in Stratford, Ontario
		Meeting Location: **Hagey Hall ring road entrance**
		Required Reading(s):
		Ghose, R. & Pettigrove, M. (2014) Urban Community Gardens as Spaces of Citizenship. *Antipode* 46(4), 1092-1112.
		The local community food centre website and newsletter: http://thelocalcfc.org/

NEW TOOLS FOR PROMOTING HEATH EQUALITY		
6	May 11th 2015	**The Built Environment as a Foundation for Health (In)equality**
		Key Concepts: affordances; perception; healthy community
		Field Trip: Iron Horse Trail Safety Audit
		Meeting Location: **Hagey Hall ring road entrance**
		Required Reading(s):
		Northridge et al. (2003) Sorting out the connections between the built environment and health: A conceptual framework for navigating pathways and planning healthy cities. *Journal of Urban Health,* 80(4), 556-568.
		Winters et al. (2010). Built environment influences on healthy transportation choices: Bicycling versus driving. *Journal of Urban Health,* 87(6), 969-993.
7	May 12th 2015	**Active Transportation and Healthy Communities: A case study of the Iron Horse Trail**
		Key Concepts: mode share; safety; inclusion; redevelopment; accessibility
		Panel Discussion: **Iron Horse Improvement Project Team: Lead - Josh Joseph (City of Kitchener)**
		Meeting Location: AL 210
		Required Reading(s):
		City of Kitchener (2010) Executive Summary: Kitchener Multiuse pathways and trails master plan.

8	May 13th 2014	**Access and Control: The winners AND losers of social innovation** Key Concepts: social innovation; regime shift; public space control; technological solutionism *Seminar Leaders: Sara Edge and Mark Groulx* *Meeting Location: AL 210* Required Reading(s): Madden, D. (2010). Revisiting the end of public space: Assembling the public in an urban park. *City and Community*, 9(2), 187-207. **Note: Time set aside for a facilitated work period**
9	May 14th 2015	**Promoting equitable mobility in healthy communities: The case of the Community Access Bike Share Program** *Field Trip: Community Access Bikeshare* *Meeting Location:* ***The Working Centre (58 Queen St. S, Kitchener, On)*** Required Reading(s): Boschmann, E. E., & Kwan, M.-P. (2008). Toward Socially Sustainable Urban Transportation: Progress and Potentials. *International Journal of Sustainable Transportation*, 2(3), 138–157. Community Access Bikeshare website: http://www.theworkingcentre.org/community-access-bikeshare/523
10	May 15th 2015	**Student Presentations and course wrap up** Meeting Location: AL 210 Required Reading(s): None

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

Unclaimed assignments will be retained for one month after term grades become official in quest". After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's confidential shredding procedures.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/
Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Office located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AccessAbility Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health: The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. Please note that help is available. Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services (www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services) is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

Religious Observances: Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Consequences of Academic Offences:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm
Within ENV, those committing academic offences (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) will be placed on disciplinary probation and will be subject to penalties which may include a grade of 0 on affected course elements, 0 on the course, suspension, and expulsion. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance,
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

Appendix 1: Marking Rubric

Assignments will be assessed using the following broad criteria

Name:	
Criteria	**Instructor Comments**
Critical Reflection: Were the chosen explanatory frameworks and concepts clearly defined and thoroughly considered within the context of environmental/health inequalities? Were chosen concepts effectively applied to real-world problem settings? Was a critical understanding of related challenges and opportunities demonstrated?	
Research & Comprehensiveness: Did the assignment make good use of the course materials? Were efforts made to incorporate supplementary materials to further strengthen the research and explanation of findings?	
Organization & Presentation: Was the assignment well organized, accurate, clearly and concisely presented? Were section headings used to improve the communication of material? How well does the argument flow? Are there spelling & grammatical mistakes? Proper citation?	
Quality of Information: How accurate and up to date is the information? Is the information presented in a way that might lead one to some worthwhile conclusions?	
Quality of Recommendations: Was the argument carefully conceived and defended with evidence in a way that would be persuasive?	