

## 2020-9-NFS301 Nutrition Literacy: Sorting Science From Snake Oil

**Course Description:** The course will help students learn to recognize the strengths and limitations of various nutrition research methods, find reliable nutrition information on the Internet and develop systematic thinking skills to critically evaluate the quality of nutrition information in both the scientific literature and popular media. *Prerequisite:* NFS284H1

### Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- recognize the strengths and limitations of various nutrition research methods
- find reliable nutrition information on the Internet
- critically evaluate the quality of nutrition information in both the scientific literature and popular media

### Instructors:

**Debbie Gurfinkel**

e-mail: [debbie.gurfinkel@utoronto.ca](mailto:debbie.gurfinkel@utoronto.ca)

**John Sievenpiper**

e-mail: [john.sievenpiper@utoronto.ca](mailto:john.sievenpiper@utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours:** Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is anticipated that only virtual office hours will be possible. Please check contact information on the course website for more information on how to set up an appointment.

### Course time, location, website, and notifications:

Course website: available on Quercus

Lectures: Students meet online on **Fridays: 9:10 AM to noon** for lecture and other interactive activities, via links available on Quercus.

**Notifications:** Announcements are posted on the course website and it is the student's responsibility to read these regularly and to regularly check the course website for new content, upcoming due dates, and the release of grades. It is strongly recommended that students **leave their Quercus notifications on**, to be automatically advised of important course information.

**Textbook:** There is no required textbook for this course.

### Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Before next class
1	Sept 11 <b>Dr. G</b>	Review of Syllabus; Nutrition Research: PICOS & Quality Appraisal Tools Introduction to Observational studies; Nutrition in the Media: How things go wrong <b>Practice Group Work (not for credit)</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Cespedes et al 2016</i> on due <b>Sept 17 at 9 AM</b> . See Reading List Below for link to paper
2	Sept 18 <b>Dr. G</b>	Observational Study 1: <i>Cespedes et al 2016</i> Quality Appraisal Tool for Observational Studies Confounding, Effect Modification, Mediation	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Sim et al 2018</i> : due online <b>Sept 24 at 9 AM</b>

		<b>Group Work 1</b> <i>Discussion of Concept Assignment</i>	See Reading List Below for link to paper
3	Sept 25 <b>Dr G</b>	Observational Studies 2: <i>Sim et al 2018</i> Nutrition in the Media: Fact Checking Nutrition in the Media: Headlines and Clickbait <b>Group Work 2</b>	
4	Oct 2 <b>Dr G</b>	Systematic Review of Observational Studies Quality Appraisal Tool for Systematic Reviews How to search PubMed <i>Discussion of Searching PubMed Quiz</i> <b>Group Work 3</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Mirrahimi et al 2012</i> : due online <b>Oct 8 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
5	Oct 9 <b>Dr G</b>	Systematic Review of Observational Studies: <i>Mirrahimi et al 2012</i> Nutrition in the Media: How Nutrition Studies are reported; Evaluating Health-related Websites Quality appraisal tool for health-related websites Quality appraisal tool for popular media articles <i>Discussion of Media Article Assignment</i> <b>PubMed Quiz Due</b> <b>PubMed Quiz will be available from Oct 2 at 5 pm until due date. No time limit, but one attempt only.</b> <b>Group Work 4</b>	
6	Oct 16 <b>Dr S</b>	Introduction to RCTs: <b>Concept Assignment Due</b> <b>Group Work 5</b>	
7	Oct 23 <b>Dr G</b>	TAKE HOME TERM TEST 1-Open book- online submission: On course content from Sept 11 to Oct 9 inclusive <b>Question paper will be posted online Thurs Oct 22 at 5pm and is due Fri Oct 23 at noon.</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Jenkins et al 2011</i> due online <b>Oct 29 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
8	Oct 30 <b>Dr S</b>	Randomized Controlled Trial: Discussion of <i>Jenkins et al 2011</i> <b>Group Work 6</b> Nutrition in the Media: University Press Releases	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Li et al 2012</i> due online <b>Nov 5 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
9	Nov 6 <b>Dr S</b> <b>Nov 9-</b> last day to drop	Paper 7: Systematic Review of RCTs: Discussion of <i>Li et al 2012</i> When scientists get it wrong: PREDIMED retraction <b>Group Work 7</b> <b>Media Article Due</b>	
10	Nov 13	NO CLASS – NOVEMBER BREAK	
11	Nov 20	<b>TAKE HOME TERM TEST 2</b> – Open Book: On course content from Oct 16, Oct 30, Nov 6 <b>Question paper will be posted online Thurs Nov 19 at 5pm and is due Fri Nov 20 at noon.</b>	
12	Nov 27 <b>Dr S</b>	Canada's Food Guide 2019 <b>Group Work 8</b>	
13	Dec 4 <b>Dr S</b>	Non-Nutritive Sweeteners: Observational Studies vs RCTs <b>Group Work 9</b>	

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Group Work	Sept 18, 25, Oct 2, 9, 16, 30, Nov 6, 27, Dec 4	9 = (9 X 1%)
Pre-class Quizzes	Sept 17, 24, Oct 8, 29, Nov 5 <b>NOTE: QUIZZES ARE DUE Online at 9 AM THURSDAY BEFORE CLASS</b>	10 = (5 X 2%)
Searching PubMed Quiz	Oct 9 online at 9 AM	4
Concept Assignment	Oct 16 online at 9 AM	26
Take Home Term Test 1- Open book-short answer	Oct 23 online at noon	18
Media Article	Nov 6 online at 9 AM	15
Take Home Term Test 2-Open book-short answer	Nov 20 online at noon	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

## Reading List:

Pre-class quiz due online at 9 AM	Journal article
Thurs, Sept 17	Cespedes EM, Hu FB, Tinker L, Rosner B, Redline S, Garcia L, Hingle M, Van Horn L, Howard BV, Levitan EB, Li W, Manson JE, Phillips LS, Rhee JJ, Waring ME, Neuhaus ML. 2016. <b>Multiple Healthful Dietary Patterns and Type 2 Diabetes in the Women's Health Initiative.</b> Am J Epidemiol. 183(7):622-33. <a href="https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00029262/v183i0007/622_mhdpatditwhi.xml">https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00029262/v183i0007/622_mhdpatditwhi.xml</a>
Thurs, Sept 24	Sim M, Blekkenhorst LC, Lewis JR, et al. 2018. <b>Vegetable and fruit intake and injurious falls risk in older women: a prospective cohort study.</b> Br J Nutr. 120(8):925-934. <a href="https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00071145/v120i0008/925_vafiaiowapcs.xml">https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00071145/v120i0008/925_vafiaiowapcs.xml</a> Supplementary files (if this link does not open directly to supplementary files, check for files tab upper left of screen): <a href="https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/journals/british-journal-of-nutrition/article/vegetable-and-fruit-intake-and-injurious-falls-risk-in-older-women-a-prospective-cohort-study/C935AD3C8549D3DF4A6DE1DCC5A7646A#fndtn-supplementary-materials">https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/journals/british-journal-of-nutrition/article/vegetable-and-fruit-intake-and-injurious-falls-risk-in-older-women-a-prospective-cohort-study/C935AD3C8549D3DF4A6DE1DCC5A7646A#fndtn-supplementary-materials</a>
Thurs, Oct 8	Mirrahimi A, de Souza RJ, Chiavaroli L, Sievenpiper JL, Beyene J, Hanley AJ, Augustin LS, Kendall CW, Jenkins DJ. 2012. <b>Associations of glycemic index and load with coronary heart disease events: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective cohorts.</b> J Am Heart Assoc. 1(5):e000752. <a href="https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/JAHA.112.000752">https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/JAHA.112.000752</a>
Thurs, Oct 29	Jenkins DJ, Jones PJ, Lamarche B, Kendall CW, Faulkner D, Cermakova L, Giguere I, Ramprasath V, de Souza R, Ireland C, Patel D, Srichaikul K, Abdunour S, Bashyam B, Collier C, Hoshizaki S, Josse RG, Leiter LA, Connelly PW, Frohlich J. 2011. <b>Effect of a dietary portfolio of cholesterol-lowering foods given at 2 levels of intensity of dietary advice on serum lipids in hyperlipidemia: a randomized controlled trial.</b> JAMA. 306(8):831-9. doi:10.1001/jama.2011.1202.

	<a href="https://jamanetwork-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/journals/jama/fullarticle/1104262">https://jamanetwork-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/journals/jama/fullarticle/1104262</a>
Thurs, Nov 5	Li SS, Blanco Mejia S, Lytvyn L, Stewart SE, Viguiliouk E, Ha V, de Souza RJ, Leiter LA, Kendall CWC, Jenkins DJA, Sievenpiper JL. 2017. <b>Effect of Plant Protein on Blood Lipids: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials.</b> J Am Heart Assoc. 6(12). pii: e006659. doi:10.1161/JAHA.117.006659. <a href="https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1161/JAHA.117.006659">https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1161/JAHA.117.006659</a>

## Important Course Policies:

### Assignment Submissions:

All assignments in this course **are submitted an online**. Students should download their marked assignments and associated feedback, from Quercus, for their personal files so they have complete record of their assignment and its grading.

**LAST MINUTE POLICY CHANGE:** Please see the last page of the syllabus which reflects a recent UT policy change. Students should declare absences on ACORN. Such a declaration will be considered a compelling reason for assignment extensions and for adjustments for missed tests, as described below.

### Late submission of assignments:

**NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED after the due date and time for online submission** except for compelling reasons such as illness, personal distress, family emergency or other unforeseen circumstance. Please contact Dr G by e-mail ([debbie.gurfinkel@utoronto.ca](mailto:debbie.gurfinkel@utoronto.ca)) to request an extension, prior to the due date, if possible. A very brief explanation of why you are requesting an extension is required. This can be a written explanation from you or a medical certificate: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php> Verbal explanations can also be provided. Please e-mail Dr. G to set up a virtual appointment. All information is treated as confidential. Students dealing with intense or ongoing personal distress or chronic illness, who may need special and continuing accommodation, are advised to discuss their situation with their college registrar and consider contacting Accessibility Services (See item below for more info on Accessibility Services)

**Please note** that poor time management, having several assignments due at the same time, having to study for term tests, etc are generally NOT compelling reasons for an extension. Extensions, for such reasons, are granted only in rare situations. Students are expected to complete their assignments as best they can, hand them in on time, even if incomplete, and accept that they may not get as high a grade as they would like.

If you feel you have a compelling reason that cannot be easily documented or are uncertain if your reasons are compelling, you should ideally discuss this with Dr G before the assignment due date. If this is not possible, then **FIRST**, hand-in as much of the assignment as you possibly can on the due date and **THEN** contact Dr G to discuss your situation. All discussions are kept confidential.

**Accessibility Services:** If you are registered with Accessibility Services, extensions are provided in accordance with the terms of your letter of accommodation.

**Assignment re-reads:** If you have concerns about your grading, a re-read can be requested. Instructions on how to submit re-read requests will be provided during the term.

## Turnitin

*"Normally students will be required to submit their assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their assignments to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site."*

All students are expected to either submit to Turnitin, which is voluntary, or provide an alternative. On Quercus, online submissions, including assignments and take-home term tests, will automatically be submitted to Turnitin, but you will have to accept to the Turnitin service agreement. If you have issues with Turnitin, please contact Dr G to arrange an alternate submission. Briefly, for those who do not submit to Turnitin, as an alternative you will be expected to meet with Dr G for a short **oral test** during which you will be asked questions about the writing of the assignment and its content. Your assignment grade may be changed based on how well you answer these questions.

Dr. Gurfinkel reviews the Turnitin submissions and will e-mail students if there are any concerns about their writing. Often this is no more than a discussion of how to properly paraphrase and/or cite references, but the deduction of marks may also result. Failure to respond to such an e-mail **will** result in the deduction of assignment marks. If a serious case of plagiarism is suspected, the student's assignment will be forwarded to the Office of Academic Integrity for review and possible sanction.

### Policy for missed term tests:

Except for compelling reasons such as those described in the policy regarding late assignments, all students will be given a grade of ZERO if they miss a term test. When compelling reasons are provided, a make-up test will be arranged. **Contact Dr Gurfinkel (or Dr Sievenpiper depending on whose test you missed) as soon as possible, but NO LATER than 1 week after the missed test**, so that a make-up test can be arranged in a timely fashion.

### Lecture material, audio recordings, and intellectual property

Lecture presentations and course materials are the intellectual property of the instructors. All students enrolled in NFS301 are permitted to use the material for personal study. The distribution, transmission, reproduction or re-posting of the NFS301 course materials, in whole or part, is NOT permitted without the consent of the instructor.

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to conduct themselves with academic integrity. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>. For more information, also see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>.

### Help with Academic Skills:

**Academic Success Centre:** The Academic Success Centre provides workshops, peer mentoring, and other resources to help all students improve their academic skills. Check out the available services at:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/academic-success/>

**English Language Learning:** Provides support to students for whom English is a second language. It also supports native speakers who would like to improve their language skills. Check out available services at:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

**Writing Centres:** Writing Centres provide assistance with writing assignments for all students. Check out available services at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>

**Accessibility Needs:**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/new-registration>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

## Change of Policy for Verification of Illness (VOI) and Other Documented Absences for 2020-21

For this year, the [University has announced](#) that students will not require a Verification of Illness (VOI) form. The updated FAQ for students reads as follows:

**What should I do if I can't attend class (in-person or remote) and it is affecting my academic work?** Students who are absent from class for any reason (e.g., COVID, other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration. The declaration is available on [ACORN](#) under the Profile and Settings menu. Students should also advise their instructor of their absence.

### **Resources & supports**

If you or someone you know is in distress and there is an immediate risk, call 911.

The following includes supports available to students on all three campuses:

- [U of T St. George \(Downtown Toronto\)](#)
- [U of T Scarborough](#)
- [U of T Mississauga](#)

Additionally, students have access to [U of T My Student Support Program](#) (My SSP) | 1-844-451-9700 24/7. Outside of North America, call 001-416-380-6578.

Culturally-competent mental health and counseling services in 146 languages for all U of T students. For reference, when students log into the Absence Declaration in [ACORN](#), the top of the screen displays:



After clicking on the Absence Declaration tool above, the following is displayed:

**Absence Declaration**

**Declare New Absences**

**i** You should use this system to formally declare an absence from academic participation in the University if you require consideration for missed academic work based on the procedures specific to your faculty or campus. Please note:

- In addition to this declaration, you are responsible for contacting your instructors to request the accommodations you are seeking.
- You are also responsible for familiarizing yourself with the procedures specific to your faculty or campus.

**Date of Absence**

You can record absences for up to 14 consecutive days, one of which must be today (if you are still absent) or yesterday (if you have returned). If you need to record an absence outside of this range, please contact your registrar's office.

1	yyyy-mm-dd	8	yyyy-mm-dd
2	yyyy-mm-dd	9	yyyy-mm-dd
3	yyyy-mm-dd	10	yyyy-mm-dd
4	yyyy-mm-dd	11	yyyy-mm-dd
5	yyyy-mm-dd	12	yyyy-mm-dd
6	yyyy-mm-dd	13	yyyy-mm-dd
7	yyyy-mm-dd	14	yyyy-mm-dd

**Consent to Release COVID-19 Medical Information**

The University requires information about students who are asked to self-isolate for monitoring purposes. Please complete this consent form to allow us to access this information [\[?\]](#).

**Declarations**

I hereby declare that it has been necessary for me to be absent from the University for the period identified above.

By making this declaration I am affirming these statements to be true and that I understand that my declaration is submitted for the purpose of receiving academic accommodation. I also understand and acknowledge that it is my responsibility to complete the requirements of the course and to confirm any necessary academic accommodation arrangements upon my return as directed by my instructor and the policies of my Campus or Faculty.

I understand and acknowledge that making a false declaration would constitute academic misconduct and could be subject to sanctions under the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters [\[?\]](#).

I have completed the Consent to Release COVID-19 Medical Information, if applicable, and I understand the above declarations.