

## 2023-9-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:

**Dr. John Sievenpiper**

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

**Dr. Laura Chiavaroli**

Email: [laura.chiavaroli@utoronto.ca](mailto:laura.chiavaroli@utoronto.ca)

**Office:** MS 5334, Medical Sciences Building, 1 King's College Circle

**Office Hours:** Fri 1-3 pm Sep 8-Dec 15, 2023 inclusive. Exceptions should they arise will be posted on Quercus. Please post questions on the Discussion board on Quercus. Only email Dr. Sievenpiper or Dr. Chiavaroli for personal reasons.

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

**Lectures:** [PB](#), Pharmacy Building, 144 College Street

Students meet **in-person** on **Fridays: 9:10 AM to noon** for lecture.

**Course website:** available on Quercus

Currently there is no mandate to provide proof of vaccination or complete daily health screenings before attending University premises. If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, you should stay home and self-isolate. Take the [Province of Ontario's COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to determine what to do next. Note your absence through the student absence declaration tool on ACORN or follow the instructions below.

In high-density indoor spaces (where physical distancing is not possible), the use of a medical mask is strongly encouraged. The University is a mask-friendly environment, and we ask everyone to respect each other's decisions, comfort levels, and health needs. The University will continue to monitor public health conditions to adjust our response as needed, and we will update you on any changes.

In addition, individuals in specific circumstances may continue to be required to wear masks in all settings, subject to changes in provincial or federal requirements, such as those who have been recently exposed to COVID-19 or to someone with symptoms.

For updates on how the university is responding to the pandemic, check [UTogether](#).

**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 8	Review of Syllabus; Nutrition Research: PICOS & Quality Appraisal Tools Introduction to Observational studies; Nutrition in the Media: How things go wrong <b>Dr. John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Cespedes et al 2016</i> : due online <b>Sept 14 at 9 AM</b> . See Reading List Below for link to paper
2	Sept 15	Observational Study 1: <i>Cespedes et al 2016</i> Confounding, Effect Modification, Mediation Quality Appraisal Tool for Observational Studies <i>Discussion of Concept Quiz</i> <b>Dr. John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Sim et al 2018</i> : due online <b>Sept 21 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
3	Sept 22	Observational Studies 2: <i>Sim et al 2018</i> Nutrition in the Media: Fact Checking Nutrition in the Media: Headlines and Clickbait <b>Guest Speaker: Meaghan Kavanagh, MSc, PhD(c)</b>	
4	Sep 29	Systematic Review of Observational Studies Quality Appraisal Tool for Systematic Reviews How to search PubMed <b>Dr. John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD</b>  <b>Concept Quiz Due</b> <b>Concept Quiz will be available from Sep 15 at 1 pm until Sep 29, 9am. No time limit, but one attempt only.</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Mirrahimi et al 2012</i> : due online <b>Oct 5 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
5	Oct 6	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>Dr. John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD</b>	
6	Oct 13	Introduction to RCTs: <b>Dr. Laura Chiavaroli, MSc, PhD</b>	

7	Oct 20	<b>TERM TEST 1</b> -Open book- Room EX100: On course content from Sept 8 to Oct 6 inclusive	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Jenkins et al 2011</i> : due online <b>Oct 26 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
8	Oct 27	Randomized Controlled Trial: Discussion of <i>Jenkins et al 2011</i> Nutrition in the Media: University Press Releases <b>Dr. Laura Chiavaroli, MSc, PhD</b>	Complete <b>pre-class quiz</b> for <i>Li et al 2012</i> : due online <b>Nov 2 at 9 AM</b> See Reading List Below for link to paper
9	Nov 3 <b>Nov 6-</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>Media Article Due</b> <b>Dr. Laura Chiavaroli, MSc, PhD</b>	
10	Nov 10	NO CLASS – NOVEMBER BREAK	
11	Nov 17	<b>TERM TEST 2</b> – Open Book – Room EX100: On course content from Oct 13, Oct 27, Nov 3	
12	Nov 24	Canada’s Food Guide 2019 <b>Guest Speaker: Jo-Anna Baxter, PhD</b>	
13	Dec 1	Non-Nutritive Sweeteners: Observational Studies vs RCTs <b>Dr. John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD</b>	

### Grading:

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Pre-class Quizzes	Sept 14, 21, Oct 5, 26, Nov 2 <b>NOTE: QUIZZES ARE DUE Online at 9 AM THURSDAY BEFORE CLASS</b>	15 = (5 X 3%)
Concept Quiz	Sep 29 online at 9 AM	15
Term Test 1- Open book-short answer	Oct 20	25
Media Article	Nov 3 online at 9 AM	20
Term Test 2-Open book-short answer	Nov 17	25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

## Reading List:

Pre-class quiz due online at 9 AM	Journal article
Thurs, Sept 14	<p>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> <i>Am J Epidemiol.</i> 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></p>
Thurs, Sept 21	<p>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> <i>Br J Nutr.</i> 120(8):925-934. <a href="https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00071145/v120i0008/925_vafaiowapcs.xml">https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/00071145/v120i0008/925_vafaiowapcs.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></p>
Thurs, Oct 5	<p>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> <i>J Am Heart Assoc.</i> 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></p>
Thurs, Oct 26	<p>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> <i>JAMA.</i> 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></p>
Thurs, Nov 2	<p>Li SS, Blanco Mejia S, Lytvyn L, Stewart SE, Vigiouliou 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> <i>J Am Heart Assoc.</i> 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></p>

## Important Course Policies:

### Assignment Submissions:

The assignment in this course **require both an online submission AND a hard copy**. The hard copy is being requested so that TAs can read your assignments from paper – which is much easier than reading from a screen. All feedback to students, however, will be provided online, so the hard copy is not returned to students; instead it is shredded shortly after final marks are submitted. **Students should download their marked assignments and associated feedback, from Quercus**, for their personal files, so they have a complete record of their assignment and its grading.

**POLICY UPDATE:** Please see the last page of the syllabus which reflects how 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 S or Dr. C by e-mail ([john.sievenpiper@utoronto.ca](mailto:john.sievenpiper@utoronto.ca) or [laura.chiavaroli@utoronto.ca](mailto:laura.chiavaroli@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 completion of the [Absence Declaration tool](#). Verbal explanations can also be provided. Please e-mail Dr. S or Dr. C to set up an 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. S or Dr. C 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. S or Dr. C 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.

### **Original:**

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).”

All students are expected to either submit to Ouriginal, which is voluntary, or provide an alternative. On Quercus, online submissions, including assignments, will automatically be submitted to Ouriginal, but you will have to accept to the Ouriginal service agreement. If you have issues with Ouriginal, please contact Dr. S or Dr. C to arrange an alternate submission. Briefly, for those who do not submit to Ouriginal, as an alternative you will be expected to meet with Dr. Sievenpiper or Dr. Chiavaroli 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. Sievenpiper and Dr. Chiavaroli review the Ouriginal 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.

#### **Re-reads:**

If you have concerns about your grading (term tests, assignment), a re-read can be requested. Re-read requests must be made **within 2-weeks** of receiving your graded test or assignment. Further instructions on re-read requests may be provided during the term; check Quercus.

#### **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. Sievenpiper or Dr. Chiavaroli 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 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.

### **Policy for Verification of Illness (VOI) and Documented Absences for 2023-24:**

Similar to last year, the University has once again announced that students will not require a [Verification of Illness \(VOI\)](#) form.

### **Absence Declaration:**

[Starting in the 2023-2024 school year](#), students may use the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool to declare an absence **once per academic term** (e.g., the fall term) for a maximum period of seven (7) consecutive calendar days. The seven-day declaration period can be retroactive for up to six (6) days in the past, or proactive, up to six (6) days in the future. The ACORN Absence Declaration Tool cannot be used to seek academic consideration for any matters that requires a petition such as missing a final exam or final assessment. For more information: [Absence Declaration - University Registrar's Office \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Students who are absent from class for any reason (e.g., health condition (e.g., COVID) or injury, family emergency, bereavement) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration (see screenshots below\*). The declaration is available on [ACORN](#) under the [Profile and Settings menu](#). Please review the [ACORN how-to](#) for a step-by-step guide on how to submit an Absence Declaration (see "How do I declare an absence?"). If for any reason you are unable to submit your declaration, reach out to your [College Registrar's Office](#) to ask for their advice and help. **\*\*Students should also advise their instructor of their absence and attach your receipt for the absence declaration. This will be sent to your U of T email address as well as to email addresses you provided in the declaration.**

### **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.

Further supports for students may be found on the [Mental Health Portal](#).

More information on resources available to support students is available at [UTogether - Preparing for a Safe Semester | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#).