NFS 1201 – Public Health Nutrition

Course Details

Description

This course is designed to provide students with a fundamental understanding of the principles underpinning public health nutrition research, policy, and practice. Topics include population-level dietary assessment and intervention, structural influences on individual diet (e.g., commercial actors, systems of oppression), and emerging topics and controversies in public health nutrition. By the end of this class, students will be able to:

1. Describe key theories and methodologies relevant to population-level dietary assessment and intervention.
2. Evaluate traditional and emerging models for public health nutrition policy.
3. Appraise and communicate evidence-based recommendations for improving dietary patterns among populations.

Time and Location

- Wednesdays, 10:00am – 12:00pm (September 10 – November 26, 2025)
- Sidney Smith Hall (SS) 2125

Instructor

Amanda Raffoul (she/her)

- Email: amanda.raffoul@utoronto.ca
- Office hours are available by appointment

Grading

Assessment *	**Due Date(s)**	**Weight**
In-class participation and engagement	n/a	10%
Assignment 1: Population-level dietary assessment	Oct. 8	25%
Assignment 2: Development of nutrition policy in Canada	Oct. 29	35%
Assignment 3: Presentation on an emerging topic	Oct. 22 (topic) Nov. 5/12/19	30%

* *Assessment details are available in Quercus.*

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic(s)
1	Sept. 10	Course overview Fundamentals of public health nutrition
2	Sept. 17	Assessment of dietary intake among individuals and populations
3	Sept. 24	Dietary reference intakes and adequacy
4	Oct 1.	Development of dietary guidance
5	Oct. 8	Nutrition policy and intervention Application of the socio-ecological model & systems thinking
6	Oct. 15	Commercial determinants of health Nutrition dis/misinformation
7	Oct. 22	Health inequities and systems of oppression Critical perspectives: Body weight
8	Oct. 29	Food insecurity
9	Nov. 5	*Emerging topics:* Ultra-processed foods
10	Nov. 12	*Emerging topics:* Sustainability and ethical consumption
11	Nov. 19	*Emerging topics:* Unintended consequences of policy
12	Nov. 26	Public health nutrition: Past, present, and future

Reading List

Week	Date	Reading(s)
1	Sept. 10	• Rose G. Sick individuals and sick populations. *Int J Epidemiol*. 2001; 30:427-432. doi: 10.1093/ije/30.3.427 • McLaren L, McIntyre L, Kirkpatrick S. Rose's population strategy of prevention need not increase social inequalities in health. *Int J Epidemiol*. 2010; 39:372-377. doi: 10.1093/ije/dyp315

2	Sept. 17	• Meyers LD, Hellwig JP, Otten JJ, editors. *Dietary reference intakes (DRIs): The essential guide to nutrient requirements*. National Academies Press; 2006.
		  ○ Introduction to the DRIs (pg. 5-17)
		  ○ Applying the DRIs (pg. 19-24)
		  ○ Working with Individuals (pg. 24-40)
		  ○ Working with Groups (pg. 40-54)
		• Select "Download as Guest" here: https://nap.nationalacademies.org/download/11537

3	Sept. 24	• Ahmed M, Praneet Ng A, L'Abbe MR. Nutrient intakes of Canadian adults: Results from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)-2015 Public Use Microdata File. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2021;114(3):1131-1140. doi: 10.1093/ajcn/nqab143 • Garriguet D. Accounting for misreporting when comparing energy intake across time in Canada. *Health Rep*. 2018;29(5):3-12.
4	Oct. 1	• Barr SI. Is the 2019 Canada's Food Guide Snapshot nutritionally adequate? *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab*. 2019;44(12):1387-1390. doi: 10.1139/apnm-2019-0432 • Hock K et al. Experimental study of front-of-package nutrition labels' efficacy on perceived healthfulness of sugar-sweetened beverages among youth in six countries. *Prev Med Rep*. 2021;24:101577. doi: 10.1016/j.pmedr.2021.101577
5	Oct. 8	• Health Canada. *Healthy Eating Strategy*. Government of Canada; 2016. Available from: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/healthy-eating-strategy.html • Koios D, Machado P, Lacy-Nichols J. Representations of ultra-processed foods: A global analysis of how dietary guidelines refer to levels of food processing. *Int J Health Policy Manag*. 2022;11(11):2588-2599. doi: 10.34172/ijhpm.2022.6443
6	Oct. 15	• Gilmore AB et al. Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health. *Lancet*. 2023;401(10383):1194-1213. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2 • Raffoul et al. Diet pills and deception: A content analysis of weight-loss, muscle-building, and cleanse and detox supplements videos on TikTok. *Eating Behaviors*. 2024;55:101911. doi: 10.1016/j.eatbeh.2024.101911

7	Oct. 22	• Nixon S. The coin model of privilege and critical allyship: Implications for health. *BMC Public Health*. 2019;19:1637. doi: 10.1186/s12889-019-7884-9 • Olstad DL et al. Socioeconomic inequities in diet quality among a nationally representative sample of adults living in Canada: An analysis of trends between 2004 and 2015. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2021;114(5):1814-1829. doi: 10.1093/ajcn/nqab249 • Hunger JM, Smith JP, Tomiyama AJ. An evidence-based rationale for adopting weight-inclusive health policy. *Social Issues and Policy Review*. 2020; 14(1):73-107. doi: 10.1111/sipr.12062
8	Oct. 29	• Hutchinson J, Tarasuk V. The relationship between diet quality and the severity of household food insecurity in Canada. *Public Health Nutr*. 2022;25(4):1013-1026. doi: 10.1017/S1368980021004031 • Men F, Urquia ML, Tarasuk V. The role of provincial social policies and economic environments in shaping food insecurity among Canadian families with children. *Prev Med*. 202;148:106558. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106558
9	Nov. 5	• Monteiro CA, Cannon G, Levy RB, et al. Ultra-processed foods: What they are and how to identify them. *Public Health Nutr*. 2019;22(5):936-941. doi: 10.1017/S1368980018003762
10	Nov. 12	• World Health Organization. *Sustainable healthy diets: Guiding principles*. Food & Agriculture Organization; 2019. Available here: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241516648
11	Nov. 19	• Bonell C, Jamal F, Melendez-Torres GJ, Cummins S. 'Dark logic': Theorising the harmful consequences of public health interventions. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 2015;69(1):95-8. doi: 10.1136/jech-2014-204671
12	Nov. 26	• Ridgway E, Baker P, Woods J, Lawrence M. Historical developments and paradigm shifts in public health nutrition science, guidance and policy actions: A narrative review. *Nutrients*. 2019 Feb 28;11(3):531. doi: 10.3390/nu11030531

Policies and Procedures

Course communication: Course announcements will be made via Quercus. You will have the opportunity to engage with your classmates on the class Discussion Board. If you have questions for the instructor, you can communicate via email and expect a response within 48 hours during weekdays (excluding holidays).

Class attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend the lectures and participate in class discussions. If you will miss a class (e.g., illness, religious holiday observance), please let the instructor know in advance if possible.

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

Academic integrity: All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to the instructor. You may also visit the University of Toronto's Academic Integrity website.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI): The use of generative AI applications (e.g., Copilot, ChatGPT, Gemini) in this course is discouraged. However, I recognize the growing use of these tools among students across the university. You may use generative AI applications for learning and practicing the concepts in this course, but these tools may NOT be used for completing assignments in this course. Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative AI applications for the purpose of completing assignments or preparing presentations in this course. This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach the course learning outcomes.

Accessibility: The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services as soon as possible.