

NFS 284H1F: Basic Human Nutrition**Course Syllabus****Land acknowledgement:**

I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Wendat Nation, the Seneca, and the Mississauga's of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

1) Lectures: Wednesday 11:00 – 1:00 pm EST at **Ontario Institute for Studies in Education** (OISE) G162. Thursday 12:00 - 1:00 pm EST at **Ontario Institute for Studies in Education** (OISE) G162

2) Course Description: An introductory course to provide the fundamentals of human nutrition, to enable students to understand and think critically about the complex interrelationships between food, nutrition, health, and environment.

3) Recommended Preparation:

BIO120H1, BIO130H1, CHM138H, CHM139H/CHM151Y/CHM135H, CHM136H

4) Learning objectives:

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- a) assess the quality of your diet and use Canada's Food Guide to plan healthy meals.
- b) describe the types of studies used in nutrition research and recognize their strengths and limitations
- c) explain the functions of essential nutrients
- d) describe the relationship between diet and chronic diseases

5) Instructor contact information:

Course Instructor: Matilda Essandoh Laar

Email: matilda.laar@utoronto.ca

Office: Medical Sciences Building, Room 5267 (1 King's College Circle).

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm (Sep 8 to Dec 8, 2026), no appointment necessary. If you cannot make office hours, please book a virtual appointment (Sep 8 to last Friday before final exam) at:

[Book time with Matilda Laar: Office hours NFS284](#)

6) Course Delivery, Website, and Notifications:

Course Delivery: This is an in-person course (refer to course schedule). Lectures will be delivered on Wednesdays and Thursdays. **Online tutorial sessions (1hr) will be hosted on Zoom (links for assigned tutorial sessions with TAs will be shared on Quercus announcements).** Supporting lecture materials will be posted on the course website on a weekly basis. The materials are a combination of lecture slides and independent readings assigned from the textbook and other supporting documents.

Course website: The course website is available on Quercus.

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

Course Expectations: It is expected that students will attend all lectures and tutorials and actively participate in class activities and discussions.

7) Required materials/resources:

Required Textbook:

Authors: Smolin, Grosvenor, & Gurfinkel

Title: Nutrition: Science and Applications, 3rd Canadian Edition, Wiley

Copies of the textbook can be purchased from the U of T bookstore.

WileyPLUS through the bookstore only (this includes the full eTextbook, video resources, practice questions): \$65.00. Link to the bookstore [here](#).

eTextbook rental: \$57.00. Link to the bookstore [here](#)

Purchase:

Loose-leaf textbook with WileyPLUS: \$163.95. Link to the bookstore [here](#).

8) Course Overview and Assessment

Course Format:

The course content has **four** equally important components:

- 1) Face-to-Face lectures
- 2) Tutorials (online) - Sessions led by course TAs.
- 3) Supporting documents – additional reading materials to help consolidate student learning; these supporting documents cover more basic concepts of the course and are based on textbook material.
- 4) Textbook readings – short readings from specific sections of the textbook with textbook-provided questions to direct student learning.

IMPORTANT: Tests and the final exam are based on the content of the lectures, tutorials (review of lectures), supporting documents, and textbook readings.

Course Assessments:

Assignment/Test/Quiz	Due date	Weight (%)
Nutrition Numbers Quiz (MCQ)	Sep 26, 2026 online at 11:59 pm	2
Nutrition Assessment Assignment (3-day food record)	Oct 3, 2026 online at 11:59 pm	17
Tutorial (Quizzes)	Attendance	5
	Quiz is due every Friday at 11:59 pm	10
Term Test (MCQ)	Oct 21, 2026 during the scheduled class time (Venue: TBA)	20
Nutrition Concepts Assignment	Nov 7, 2026 at 11:59 pm	16
Final Exam (MCQ)	April exam period: Cumulative: 30% on material also covered on term test; 70% lecture material not covered on term test (scheduled by Registrar)	30
Total		100

9) Course Schedule: Lectures (L), Textbook (Tx), and Supporting Document (SD) Readings

The schedule is designed to help students stay organized and read ahead, ensuring they are well-prepared for in-class review of the material. This approach supports active participation during lectures and promotes deeper understanding of key concepts. In addition, short, assigned readings and activities from the textbook will be provided during lectures and tutorials to encourage active engagement with the material.

Course Schedule: All times indicated are Toronto time

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	READINGS (supporting documents-SD & Textbook - Tx)	QUIZZES/TESTS/ASSIGNMENTS
1	L - Sep 9	- Course overview - Introduction to Nutrition - DRIs	Tx-1; SD-1;	
	L - Sep 10			
2	L - Sep 16	- Canada's Food Guide - Food Labelling	Tx- 1 &Tx-2; Tx-3; Tx-7	
	L - Sep 17			Quiz 1 due at 11:59 pm
3	L – Sep 23	Nutrition Research	Tx-4; SD2	Nutrition Numbers Quiz (MCQ): Sep 26, 2026 online at 11:59 pm
	L – Sep 24			Quiz 2 due at 11:59 pm
4	L – Sep 30	- Special short topics: 1) Digestive System 2) Food Safety 3) Food Intake Assessment 4) Natural Health Products	Tx-2; Tx-4	
	L - Oct 1			Quiz 3 due at 11:59pm

5	L – Oct 7	Carbohydrates and Diabetes	Tx-4; SD-3	Three-day food record: Oct 3, 2026 due online at 11:59 pm
	L - Oct 8			Quiz 4 due at 11:59 pm
6	L- Oct 14	Lipids (GUEST LECTURE)	Tx-6	
	L - Oct 15			Quiz 5 due at 11:59 pm
7	L- Oct 21	Term Test (MCQ): during scheduled class time (on Weeks 1-6 content)		
	L - Oct 22			Quiz 6 due at 11:59 pm
8	Oct 28 Oct 29	No classes- Fall Reading Week (No Quiz)		
9	L- Nov 4	- Protein & Vegetarian Diets continued - Consequences of Obesity (GUEST LECTURE)	Tx-7, Tx-8, Tx-9, Tx-10, Tx-11; SD-4, SD-5	Nutrition Concepts Assignment: Nov 7, 2026 due online at 11:59 pm
	L - Nov 5			Quiz 7 due at 11:59 pm
10	L - Nov 11	Weight Management Strategies Body Weight through the Lifecycle	Tx-11, Tx-12; SD-6, SD-7	
	L - Nov 12			Quiz 8 due at 11:59 pm
11	L - Nov 18	- Water-soluble vitamins - Fat-soluble vitamins	Tx-13; SD-8, SD-9	
	L - Nov 19			Quiz 9 due at 1pm
12	L - Nov 25	- Sodium, potassium, & hypertension - Major minerals	SD-10	

	L - Nov 26			Quiz 10 due at 11:59 pm
13	L - Dec 2	Minor minerals	Tx-13	
	L - Dec 3			Quiz 11 due at 11:59 pm
	Final Assessment Period			Cumulative Final Examination (scheduled by Registrar)

Textbook Readings

Number	Textbook Section:	Page
Tx1	F4: Focus on Phytochemicals 2.1 - 2.6: Chapter on Nutrition Guidelines	443-449 43 - 88
Tx 2	3.3: Digestion and Absorption 3.4: Digestion and Health	98-108 109 - 117
Tx 3	7.10 Weight-loss Drugs and Surgery	336 - 341
Tx 4	4.6: Carbohydrates and Health - Critical Thinking Dietary Fibre, Glycemic Index, and Type-2-Diabetes-Focus on 1 Beyond the Basics	162 - 174 183 - 190
Tx 5	Critical Thinking: Fish Consumption and Heart Disease	220
Tx 6	Critical Thinking: Choosing a Healthy Vegetarian Diet	286
Tx 7	7.3 Estimating Energy needs: Measuring Energy Expenditure & Table 7.5 Calculating your EER	302, 305
Tx 8	7.4 Body Weight and Health 7.5 Guidelines for a healthy body weight: Assessing Body Composition	306, 308
Tx 9	13.3 Critical Thinking: The Benefits of Interval Training	601
Tx 10	Chapter 15: Chapter Opener & Case Study Outcome	677 & 715
Tx 11	F7 Focus on Eating Disorders	720 - 739
Tx 12	8.1 Your Choice: To Supplement or Not to Supplement	360
Tx 13	10.3 Science Applied: A Total Dietary Approach to Reducing Blood Pressure Critical Thinking: A Diet for Health	471-472 473

Supporting document readings

Supporting Document	Posted in module for:
SD-1: Physiology Fundamentals	Week 1
SD-2: Natural Health Products	Week 3
SD-3: Lipids: Chemistry & Digestion	Week 5
SD-4: Energy Expenditure	Week 8
SD-5: Exercise	Week 8
SD-6: Intro to Vitamins	Week 9
SD-7: Vitamin C & Vitamin E interactions	Week 9
SD-8: Water	Week 10
SD-9: Introduction to Minerals	Week 10
SD-10: Zinc-Copper-Iron	Week 11

10) 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 circumstances. Please book a time on [Book time with Matilda Laar: Office hours NFS284](#) OR email Dr Laar @ matilda.laar@utoronto.ca (use subject line: “NFS284 Late Submission of Assignment”) 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, an absence declaration form ([Absence Declaration - University Registrar's Office](#)) or a medical certificate: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php>.

Please note that any requests submitted without the subject line indicated above will not receive a response.

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 #18 below).

Please pay attention to all assignment guidelines as revised submissions will not be accepted after grading/ feedback per rubric is provided.

Note that not being aware of the submission deadline, 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. The Academic Success Centre provides workshops on study skills to help students manage their time effectively (See item #19 below).

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. Laar before the assignment's 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 Laar 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. (See also # 19 below).

11) Assignment re-reads: If you have concerns about your grading, a re-read can be requested. Instructions on how and the times to submit re-read requests will be provided during the term. Please make use of the assigned times for re-reads. Requests made at the end of the term without relevant reasons for lateness will not be granted.

12) Plagiarism Detection Tool (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 website."

All students are expected to either submit to Turnitin, which is voluntary, or provide an alternative. On Quercus, online submissions will automatically be submitted to Turnitin, but you will have to agree to the Turnitin license agreement. If you have issues with Turnitin, please contact Dr. Laar 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 Laar 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. Laar 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.

13) Policy regarding missed term test:

Except for compelling reasons, such as illness, personal distress, or similar unforeseeable circumstances, all students will be given a grade of **ZERO** if they miss the term test. There are **NO MAKE-UP tests**. If you miss your term test (worth 20%), for compelling reasons, your final exam will be worth 50% of your final grade (20% + 30%).

You are required to provide a very brief explanation for your absence. This can be a written explanation from you, an absence declaration form ([Absence Declaration - University Registrar's Office](#)) or an explanation from you or a medical certificate <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php>. If preferred, verbal explanations will also be accepted. See Dr. Laar during office hours on Tuesdays 1:30 - 2:30 pm (MS 5267) OR [Book time with Matilda Laar: Office hours NFS284](#)

If you are dealing with intense or ongoing personal distress or chronic illness and may need special and continuing accommodation, students are advised to discuss their situation with your college registrar and consider contacting Accessibility Services (See item #18 below).

14) Policy regarding missed final exam:

Policy regarding missed final exam is determined by the Faculty of Arts and Science. **If you have compelling reasons for missing your final exam, contact your college registrar to file a petition; do this quickly as there are deadlines.** You must provide documentation to support your petition. If your petition is accepted, you will be permitted to write a deferred exam. A deferred exam fee must be paid.

15) Lecture material, audio recordings, and intellectual property:

Please note that the lecture presentations, videos, and other course documents are the intellectual property of the instructor. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors. The distribution, transmission, reproduction or re-posting of the NFS284 course materials, including audio and video recordings, in whole or part, is

not permitted without the consent of the instructor. All students enrolled in NFS284 are permitted to use the material for personal use and study. You may also make audio recordings of the lecture for personal use only.

16) Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to conduct themselves with academic integrity. The Code of Behaviour clearly describes activities that are considered academic misconduct:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

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

17) After NFS284:

NFS284 is a required prerequisite for all higher level NFS courses (except NFS386 Introduction to Food Science for which you only require first year chemistry). We hope that you will enjoy NFS284, read about these other courses in the calendar, and consider majoring in Nutritional Sciences or taking additional NFS courses in the future. If you have any questions about the Nutritional Sciences program don't hesitate to contact Dr Laar.

18) 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.

19) 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: <http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/>

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 aid with writing assignments for all students. Check out available services at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>

20) Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools:

Students may not use artificial intelligence tools for taking tests/quizzes, writing research papers, or completing major course assignments. However, these tools may be useful when gathering information from across sources and assimilating it for understanding.

21) Conduct Expectations & Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The University welcomes and includes students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all U of T community members, whether in person or online. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Conduct (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>).

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

22) Extreme circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labor disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular U of T communication channels, such as Quercus and/or U of T email.