

**NFS 486H1S: Obesity: Metabolic and Clinical Aspects**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**January 8 to April 1, 2020**

**Lectures:** Wednesdays, 09:00 to 12:00, Sandford Fleming Building, SF 3201

**Course Description:**

This course will examine the metabolic aspects of obesity and investigate its causes, consequences, prevention, and treatment.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. describe the changes in the metabolism that typically occur as body weight increases
2. explain the biological mechanisms linking obesity to common co-morbidities such as type-2-diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer
3. explain the biological mechanisms that limit most weight loss strategies
4. describe the best practices with respect to obesity prevention and treatment

**Prerequisites:** NFS284H, BCH210H, PSL300, PSL301

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

**Instructor:** Laurie Ricciuto, PhD [laurie.ricciuto@utoronto.ca](mailto:laurie.ricciuto@utoronto.ca)  
Office Hours: Mondays, 12:30-13:30, Tuesdays & Wednesdays 13:30 to 14:30,  
Medical Sciences Building, MS 5347

**Course Organization:**

The course will include a combination of lectures and group work following the schedule below. Dr. Ricciuto will randomly assign students to groups of five or six. Your group number will be available on Quercus on **Tuesday January 21st**. There are 8 group activities; each activity is a problem or set of questions that you will work on as a group, related to the day's lecture. There are two short answer tests (**February 5th and March 18th**) that will have a similar format as these group activities.

**Course Schedule:**

Date	Content	Group Activities & Assignments
Jan 8	Course overview and Review of carbohydrate and lipid metabolism	
Jan 15	Discussion of assignments	
Jan 22	Consequences of Obesity: Insulin Resistance and Type-2-Diabetes	Group Activity #1
Jan 29	Consequences of Obesity: Cardiovascular	Group Activity #2

	Disease, Hypertension	Bibliography group discussion
Feb 5	<b>Short Answer Test (online)</b> - on material Jan 8, 22 & 29 inclusive	
Feb 12	Energy Metabolism	Group Activity #3 <b>Reading the Obesity Literature Assignment Due</b>
Feb 19	Reading Week - no class	
Feb 26	Food Intake Regulation: Gut Peptides	Group Activity #4
Mar 4	Treatment of Obesity: Motivational Interviewing Guest Lecture: Brian McCrindle, Hospital for Sick Children	Group Activity #5
Mar 11	Weight Management: Clinical Case Study	Group Activity #6 <b>Research Paper Due</b>
Mar 18	<b>Short Answer Test (online)</b> - on material Feb 12, 26 & Mar 11 inclusive	
Mar 25	Childhood Obesity Guest Lecture: Laura Chiavaroli, Clinical Nutrition & Risk Factor Modification Centre, St. Michael's Hospital	Group Activity #7
Apr 1	Other Perspectives on Obesity, The Obesogenic Environment Guest Lecture: Mavra Ahmed Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Toronto	Group Activity #8

**Course Assessments:**

Assessment	Due Date	Weight (%)
Group Activities (Best 7 out of 8)	<b>In class</b> , weekly, Jan 22 to Apr 1 (except Feb 5 & Mar 18)	10
Short Answer Test 1	Feb 5, <b>online</b>	15
Reading the Obesity Literature Assignment: Readings will be provided on Quercus	Questions based on the posted readings will be available on Feb 6 at 10AM. Submission due Feb 12, <b>online at 9AM AND hard copy</b> at beginning of class	25
Obesity & Cancer: Research Paper	Mar 11, <b>online</b> submission at <b>9AM</b> <b>Hard copy</b> at beginning of class	35
Short Answer Test 2	Mar 18, <b>online</b>	15
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>100</b>

**Course Expectations:**

Turnitin.com: Students will be required to submit their assignments and term tests to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their assignments and tests 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 submit to Turnitin, which is voluntary, or provide an alternative. There will be a link through Quercus where you can upload your document to Turnitin, and you will be asked to agree to the Turnitin license agreement. If you have issues with Turnitin, please contact Dr. Ricciuto to arrange an alternate submission. Failure to do so could result in a grade of **ZERO** for the assignment or test. For those who do not submit to Turnitin, as an alternative you will be expected to meet with Dr. Ricciuto for a short **oral test** during which you will be asked questions about writing the assignment or test and the content. Your assignment or test grade may be modified based on how well you answer those questions.

Dr. Ricciuto reviews the Turnitin submissions and will e-mail students if there are any concerns about their writing. For assignments, this is often 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 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.

Short Answer Tests: These will be given as **online** tests. Tests will be posted on Quercus and available to students at 9:10 am on the day of the test. Within 24 hours, students must submit test responses on the Quercus test template and upload a document with all their responses to Turnitin (*i.e.*, by 9:10 am the following day).

Group Activities: Group work is a very important part of this course and students are expected to attend all group work sessions. If course conflicts necessitate repeated absences from class, students are urged to consider seriously whether this course is suitable for them as no accommodations will be made for students in this situation.

Electronic Communication with Instructor: A discussion board will be set up on Quercus where students can ask questions about the lecture material. Students are asked to limit the use of e-mail to specific questions about assignments or subjects of a more personal nature.

Quercus Notifications and Announcements: Students are directed to the **Student Quercus Guide** for information on how to navigate Quercus: [https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/student-quercus-guide#h\\_715083276961534948795461](https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/student-quercus-guide#h_715083276961534948795461) 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 be advised of Quercus announcements, posting of new course content, upcoming due dates, the releasing of grades and other course website changes and additions.

#### **Policy Regarding Missed Tests and Group Activities:**

If you miss a test, it will be necessary to write a make-up test. **If you miss a test, please contact Dr. Ricciuto as soon as possible, but no later than 1 week after the test was written, to schedule**

**a make-up test.** Except for compelling reasons, such as illness, personal distress or similar unforeseeable circumstance, all students will be given a grade of ZERO if they miss a test or group activity. You will be asked to provide a reason for your absence. This can be a written explanation from you or a verification of illness or injury form:

<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php> . If you prefer, verbal explanations will also be accepted. See Dr. Ricciuto during her office hours. All discussions are kept 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.

**IMPORTANT:** Often students don't believe their situation is compelling, when, in fact, it is, so please speak to Dr. R about your circumstances.

### **Policy Regarding Late Submission of Assignments:**

Assignments (Annotated Bibliography, Literature Reading, and Cancer-Obesity Paper) are due online at 9AM on the stated due dates. A hard copy is also due at the beginning of class on the due date. **An assignment will be judged late based on the digital time stamp on Quercus.**

**NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED except for compelling reasons such as illness, personal distress, or similar unforeseeable circumstance.** Please contact Dr. Ricciuto by e-mail as soon as possible to request an extension. You will be asked to provide a brief explanation for the request. This can be a written explanation from you or a verification of illness or injury form: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php> . If you prefer, verbal explanations will also be accepted. See Dr. Ricciuto during her office hours. All discussions are kept 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.

Please note that poor time management, having several assignments due at the same time, having to study for term tests, etc are generally NOT considered compelling reasons for an extension. Extensions for these reasons are only granted in very 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 are uncertain if you have compelling reasons for an extension or if you are unable to contact Dr. R for an extension prior to the due date, then you should:

- 1) FIRST hand in as much of the assignment as you possibly can on the due date and THEN
- 2) Make an appointment to meet with Dr R to discuss your situation. All discussions are kept confidential.

**IMPORTANT:** Often students don't believe their situation is compelling, when in fact, it is, so please speak to Dr. R, whatever your circumstances.

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

**Policy Regarding Assignment or Test Re-Reads:**

If you have substantive concerns about the grading of an assignment, you may request a re-read online. A link will be made available on Quercus for you to upload your request and any supporting files. Describe as specifically as possible your concerns. This can be in the form of comments, or alternatively, or in addition, an uploaded copy of your assignment with annotations and/or highlighting that indicate the specific areas of concern. If comments about your assignment are not included with your request, a re-read will not be done. As a result of the re-read, **your mark can go up, down, or stay the same**. Please note that the higher your original mark (especially marks >80%) the less likely an upward adjustment in your mark will occur. Dr. R's decision is final.

**Deadlines for rereads:** One week after the assignment is returned, unless otherwise indicated.

**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>  
Students are urged to regularly review the code as ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse.

**Accessibility Needs:**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:  
<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

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