

**NFS 486H1S: Obesity: Metabolic and Clinical Aspects**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**January 13 to April 7, 2021**

**Classes:** Wednesdays, 09:00 to 12:00  
**Format:** Online (Bb Collaborate), synchronous  
**Instructor:** Laurie Ricciuto, PhD [laurie.ricciuto@utoronto.ca](mailto:laurie.ricciuto@utoronto.ca)  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 13:30 to 14:30, online (Bb Collaborate)

**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 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.

**Course Organization:**

The course will run fully online, synchronously. Each class will be comprised of lecture material and group work; three of the group activities will be submitted for grading, as indicated on the course schedule below.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Graded Group Activities &amp; Assessments</b>
Jan 13	Course Introduction and Overview Review of Carbohydrate & Lipid Metabolism	
Jan 20	Searching and Reading the Literature (Preparation for research paper) Guest Lecture: Laura Chiavaroli, PhD Clinical Nutrition & Risk Factor Modification Centre, St. Michael's Hospital	
Jan 27	Consequences of Obesity: Insulin Resistance and Type-2-Diabetes	<b>Group Activity #1</b>
February 3	Consequences of Obesity: Cardiovascular Disease, Hypertension	<b>Group Activity #2</b>
Feb 10	<b>Short Answer Test 1 – online, no class</b>	
Feb 17	Reading Week - no class	
Feb 24	Energy Metabolism and Food Intake Regulation	<b>Group Activity #3</b>
Mar 3	The Changing Narrative of Obesity: Update for Future Clinicians Guest Lecture: Jennifer Brown, MSc, RD, CBE The Ottawa Hospital Bariatric Centre of Excellence	
Mar 10	Effective Counselling for Behaviour Change Guest Lecture: Brian W. McCrindle, MD, MPH The Hospital for Sick Children	<b>Due End of Day: Research Paper Draft for Peer Review</b>
Mar 17	Work Period - Preparing final research paper	<b>Due 9AM: Peer Review</b>
Mar 24	Weight Management: Clinical Case Study	<b>Due End of Day: Final Research Paper</b>
Mar 31	<b>Short Answer Test 2 – online, no class</b>	
Apr 7	New Research: The relationship between obesity and type 2 diabetes Guest Lecture: Zhila Semnani-Azad, PhD Candidate Department of Nutritional Sciences	

**Course Assessments:**

Assessment	Due Date	Weight (%)
<b>In-Class Group Activities (3)</b>	<b>In class</b> , Jan 27, Feb 3, Feb 24	10
<b>Short Answer Test 1</b>	Feb 10	25
<b>Research Paper – Obesity &amp; Cancer</b>		
Paper draft and peer review	Mar 10 and Mar 17	10 (Peer review)
Final Paper	Mar 24	30
<b>Short Answer Test 2</b>	Mar 31	25
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>100</b>

**Course Expectations:**

Online lectures and recordings: To support access to course content by all students, recordings of online lecture sessions held within the context of this course will be archived and posted to Quercus. These resources are intended to be used as a student study aid and are not a substitute for class participation.

Video recordings will primarily capture the instructor and onscreen content. Students will not be visible on video recordings unless their webcam is enabled. Your voice, however, may be captured as an audio recording if you ask a question in class. The same would hold true for questions posted in the chat tool. If you have any concern about your voice or text being recorded, please speak to Dr. R to determine an alternative means of participating.

In-class group activities: Dr. R will randomly assign students to groups of four or five. During class time, students will work in their assigned groups on structured activities designed to help them achieve the learning outcomes of the course, develop their collaboration skills and connect with their peers. There will be a group activity in every class, and three of these activities will be submitted for grading (see course schedule). Everyone in the group will be assigned the same grade.

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 seriously consider whether this course is suitable for them, as no accommodations will be made for students in this situation.

Term tests: There are two short answer tests, given as online tests, that will be similar in format to the group activities. Tests will be posted on Quercus and available to students at 9:00 AM on the day of the test. Within 48 hours, students must submit test responses on the Quercus test template and upload a document with all their responses to Turnitin.

Research Paper: The major assignment in this course is a research paper on a particular topic related to obesity and cancer. Students are expected to submit a draft of their paper for peer review; each student will review one of their peer's drafts and will be graded on the quality of their peer review. Due dates for paper draft, peer review and final paper are provided on the course schedule.

Turnitin.com: Students will be required to submit their work to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their work 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.

Dr. R 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.

If you have problems that prevent you from submitting to Turnitin, please contact Dr. R. All students are expected to submit to Turnitin, which is voluntary, or provide an alternative. Failure to do so could result in a grade of zero for the test or assignment. For those who do not submit to Turnitin, as an alternative you will be expected to meet with Dr. R for a short oral test during which you will be asked questions about the process of writing the term test or assignment and your knowledge of the content. Your test or assignment mark may be modified based on how well you answer those questions.

### **Communication:**

Discussion boards: Questions about course content, such as lecture material and group activities can be posted to the Quercus discussion board at any time.

Online office hours: Dr. R will be available once a week for online office hours, to be held virtually in the course room in Bb Collaborate. Students can sign-up in the course calendar for a time slot within the office hours, in order to secure one-on-one time to talk with Dr. R.

Students are asked to limit the use of e-mail to subjects of a more personal nature.

Quercus announcements: Announcements are posted on the course website and it is the student's responsibility to read these 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 course website changes and additions.

**Course Policies:**

Missed tests and in-class group activities: 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 (e.g., graded group activities, term tests) 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 Dr. R of their absence as soon as possible, ideally prior to the test/class date, but NO LATER than one week after the date.

Students will have to write a supplemental test/activity. Failure to write a supplemental test or class activity within a reasonable time frame will result in a mark of zero for that component. It is the student's responsibility to contact Dr. R to schedule a make-up test or class activity.

Late assignments: No late assignments will be accepted except for compelling reasons (e.g., COVID, other illness or injury, family situation). To request an extension, please contact Dr. R as soon as possible. If you are uncertain if you have compelling reasons for an extension or if you are unable to contact Dr. R prior to the due date, then you should FIRST, hand in as much of the assignment as you possibly can on the due date and THEN, contact Dr. R.

Re-read policy: If you have substantial concerns about the grades on your tests or assignments, you may request a re-read. 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 test or assignment with annotations and/or highlighting that indicate the specific areas of concern. If comments about your test or 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** are one week after the test or assignment is returned, unless otherwise indicated.

Copyright, intellectual property and privacy considerations: A lecture is considered the intellectual property of the instructor, and copyright guidelines and regulations apply to the recording of lectures. Furthermore, recording a lecture also requires the observation of privacy guidelines and regulations for students in the class whose presence or statements might also be recorded.

**The unauthorised use of any form of device to audiotape, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce lectures, course notes or teaching materials provided by instructors is covered by the Canadian Copyright Act and is prohibited.** Course videos and recordings may not be reproduced or posted or shared anywhere other than the official course Quercus site and should only be used by students currently registered in the course. Recordings may be saved to students' laptop for personal use. Because recordings will be provided for all lectures, students may not create additional audio or

video recordings without written permission from the instructor. Permission for such recordings will not be withheld for students with accommodation needs.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Toronto is deeply committed to the free and open exchange of ideas, and to the values of independent inquiry. Academic integrity is fundamental to the University's intellectual life. What does it mean to act with academic integrity? U of T supports the International Center for Academic Integrity's [definition of academic integrity](#) as acting in all academic matters with **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.**

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct. Plagiarism (the presentation or paraphrasing of another person's work as if it was one's own) is a form of academic fraud with potentially serious consequences. All university policies regarding plagiarism will be upheld in this course. Refer to <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

**Accessibility:** The University provides support and accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure equitable access to opportunities and achievement of students' full potential. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Refer to <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

### **University Resources and 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 counselling services are available in 146 languages for all U of T students.

**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>