



**Course Syllabus  
HS 3050a  
Health-Related Quality of Life  
Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Dr. Philip C. Doyle  
**Lecture:** Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:20 p.m.  
**Class Location:** HSB 35

**Office:** Elborn College, Rm. 2518, Ext. 88942  
**Office Hours:** Monday 8:00 -9:30 a.m. or by appointment  
**Email:** pdoyle@uwo.ca

**Course TA:** Melissa Nash, MSc ([mmandevi@uwo.ca](mailto:mmandevi@uwo.ca))  
**TA Office Hours:** Thursday 2:00 – 3:30  
**Office:** Elborn College, Rm. 1003 (main floor)

### **Description of Course**

This course provides instruction related to comprehensive issues that underlie the conceptualization, definition, and measurement of what is termed “*health related quality of life*” (HRQOL) and *quality of life* (QOL). Understanding concepts specific to [HR]QOL serves to form an essential and fundamental construct of importance in the health sciences AND health professions. Exposure to these concepts offers the student interested in health sciences a broader vision of health, functioning, and well-being, and ultimately how these constructs are interpreted within the context of illness, disease, and disability. The course is designed to introduce the student to comprehensive issues underlying HRQOL, its measurement and utility as an outcomes metric, and the broad application of HRQOL in health care. The course is designed to be of value to a wide range of student interests with particular importance to those who seek to pursue professional degrees in health and health care.

### **Prerequisite Checking**

Unless you have either the pre-requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision cannot be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

For information on prerequisites and/or antirequisites for this course, please review the current Western Academic Calendar at [www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca).

## Requirements

In order to provide the most comprehensive level of instruction, class attendance is expected. There will be three (3) midterm examinations and a final examination. Midterm #1 will take place on Tuesday October 7<sup>th</sup> during class time; Midterm #2 will take place on Tuesday November 4, again during class time; Midterm #3 will be a take-home examination that will be distributed on-line on November 18<sup>th</sup> by 6:00 p.m.; this midterm exam must be completed and submitted online no later than Saturday November 24, 2014 at 12:00 p.m. (EST). The first two midterm exams will be comprised of multiple choice questions. Each midterm examination (Midterm #1 and Midterm #2) accounts for 20% of your final grade, thus, these two exams will comprise 40% of your final course grade. Midterm #3 will be provided as a take home examination that will involve short written responses to a series of HRQOL-related questions. These questions will be provided to you by 6:00 p.m. on November 18th and as noted above, this midterm must be completed and submitted on line before the stated deadline; Midterm #3 will account for 30% of the final course grade. Lastly, the final exam will be similar to the first two in-class midterm examinations in that it will be comprised of multiple choice questions; this Final Examination will account for the remaining 30% of the final course grade. The content of examinations will be facilitated through both lecture material and assigned readings, and in some instances the experience of the student. Because the material to be presented is “additive” in that one issue evolves or builds from another, you may view each sequential midterm and the final examination to be “cumulative” in that respect.

Note: Use of any type of electronic device will not be permitted during either midterm exam or for the final examination.

## Evaluation Summary

<b>Midterm examination #1 (in class, multiple choice)</b>	=	<b>20%</b>
<b>Midterm examination #2 (in class, multiple choice)</b>	=	<b>20%</b>
<b>Midterm examination #3 (take home, written)</b>	=	<b>30%</b>
<b>Final Examination (as scheduled, multiple choice)</b>	=	<b>30%</b>

## Additional Comments

This course is designed to provide students with an introductory, albeit a comprehensive exposure to the concept of [HR]QOL. However, the course also seeks to provide detailed exposure to the multidimensionality of HRQOL and QOL as a concept related to functioning and disability in both health and disease. For this reason, class participation is strongly encouraged, different opinions are welcomed, questions should be asked, and active but informed thinking is essential. As a concept, “QOL” exists in both healthy and non-healthy people, even those who are dying. QOL as a concept that knows no boundary and is not a uniform or predictably selective process to age, gender, ethnic, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation, etc. Keeping this in mind as we proceed through the course will be of substantial benefit as you seek to gain further knowledge concerning this important consequence of human functioning and one’s response to a health condition, disease, etc.

### **Plagiarism Statement, Student Behavior, and Related Information**

Students must produce any written assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and a proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students will be required to submit their written work in electronic format for plagiarism checking. All written materials provided to the instructor will be fully evaluated for plagiarism and violations will be actively pursued according to university guidelines.

**Note:** The above University statement is critically important and violations have serious consequences. Please adhere fully to these rules...it is absolutely essential that you do so.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the ` commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com - <http://www.turnitin.com>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate academic counsellors (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy:

[<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/general/privacy.pdf>].

Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office (Academic Counsellor) in consultation

with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty.

Academic accommodation shall be granted by appropriate agents within the School of Health Sciences or their representatives elsewhere on campus and only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counseling office in a timely manner.

### **Documentation from Family Physicians and Walk-In Clinics**

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>. Hard copies are available from Academic Counselling in the Faculties.

### **Documentation from Student Health Services**

Students obtaining documentation from Student Health Services should sign a “release of information.” This form authorizes Student Health Services to provide information to the student's home Faculty Academic Counsellors. Release of information forms are available from, and can be arranged through, the student's home Faculty Academic Counselling service.

### **Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments**

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that his/her ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

### **Your Own Well-Being and that of Your Peers**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several excellent resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.

### **Grading & Appeals**

Final grades are submitted electronically using marking software (available at <http://www.uwo.ca/its/software/markex.html>). Final grades are due one week after the final examination. For courses without a final examination, marks are due one week after the last scheduled day of classes. All final grades must be approved by the Director before an instructor can

release them to students. Appeals may be pursued in accordance with the guidelines established by the University of Western Ontario.

### **Rounding of Grades (for example, bumping a 83.2% to 84%)**

This is a practice that students sometimes request. The practice will not occur here. The edges of this course are clear and sharp. You will be asked to think about this course and make informed interpretations of the material. Sometimes, one's thinking can lead to incorrect answers, but that is part of the learning process. The mark attained is the mark you achieved and the mark assigned is the one that will be assigned; there is no rounding to the next grade level. Please don't ask me to do this for you. It degrades my experience as your professor and your experience as a student. We both have an appreciation of high standards and I will maintain those standards for your benefit.

### **Required Texts:**

Ablon, M. (1998). *Tuesdays with Morrie*. New York: Doubleday.  
 Hitchens, C. (2012). *Mortality*. Toronto: Random House Canada.  
 Fazakerley, J, Butlin-Battler, H., & Bradish, G. (2012). *Just Stay: A Couple's Last Journey Together*. Toronto: Words Indeed Publishing, Inc.

**Additional Readings:** Additional articles will be placed on OWL for reading during the term. A list with the full citation and the order that these articles are to be read in will be provided during Week 2 (by September 16, 2014). All will be provided as pdf versions for ease of access and use.

### **Some things you might consider reading at some point, but NOT required or mandatory:**

Cohen, R.M. (2005). *Blindsided: A Reluctant Memoire*. New York, NY: Perennial Harper Collins.  
 Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on a Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.  
 O'Kelly, E. (2006). *Chasing Daylight*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.  
 Sontag, S. (1988). *AIDS and its Metaphors*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.  
 Sontag, S. (1983). *Illness as Metaphor*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

### **Additional Curiosities and Item of Interest**

I often post what I consider to be unique, relevant, and interesting published work on OWL that I believe might be of interest to some students given the broad topics addressed as part of this course. These pieces are typically short essays, opinion pieces, or related entities that have been written by authors who represent diverse backgrounds and experience. These readings are not mandatory, but they are there for those who seek to obtain additional and more varied information and perspectives on particular topics that overlay with our interests in HRQOL. Sometimes looking at an issue from a different perspective can provide an opportunity for you to understand the material presented in class even better. For those of you who read one or more of these items, and should you ever wish to discuss them as a non-requirement of the course, let me know and I would be happy to meet with you and talk about them. Again, these items are provided to enhance your knowledge, expand your thinking, and to provide a perspective that you may not have ever considered. But, once again, these readings are not mandatory.



**Health-Related Quality of Life  
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**Date of Class**

**Topic(s) de Jour**

**Sept. 9 - *Introductory Meeting & Getting Started***

***Some class rules and the general design and structure of the course. Where are YOU headed in the future? Maybe I can help you figure out why you took this course? In the beginning, there was life!***

The Instructor's Perspective on HRQOL  
 Definition(s) of Health Related Quality of Life (HRQOL) and Quality of Life (QOL)  
 Why Measure HRQOL?  
 Theoretical Framework for HRQOL - A Brief Snapshot  
 Accepting Subjectivity  
 Finding "Voice" in Illness  
 A Bit of Stark Reality That You Likely Haven't Considered!

**Sept. 16 – *Quality of Life and Health-Related Quality of Life - more than theoretical constructs***

Historical Evolution of HRQOL as a Construct  
 Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced HRQOL  
 Narrow and Broad Views of "Normal Functioning"  
 Development and Refinement of HRQOL Taxonomies  
 Limits of the "Medical Model"  
 The Potential Value of the "Biopsychosocial Model"  
 Quality of Life as a Social Construct  
 HRQOL - A Static Event or a Dynamic Construct?

**Sept. 23 – *Who Knows QOL Best?***

HRQOL as a Multidimensional Construct  
 Stigma, Social Penalty, and Perceived QOL  
 Considerations of Body, Mind, Spirit, and Culture (and other dimensions)  
 "Hidden" Dimensions and Domains Influencing HRQOL  
 Overview of the International Classification of Functioning (ICF)  
 The Impact of Health Care & Professional Interactions on HRQOL

**Sept. 30 – *Is (HR)QOL influenced by other things?***

Construction of Measurement Instruments  
 Ways of Knowing, Validity and Reliability, and Inadvertent Cooking of Data  
 Evaluation of Specific Populations  
 Generic vs. Disease Specific Instruments

**Oct. 7 - \*Midterm Examination #1 (in class)**

**Oct. 14 - *Like most things in life, everybody wants to measure something!***

Application of Measurement Tools and Modes of Administration  
 Survey of Instruments: Advantages and Disadvantages  
 Generic vs. Disease Specific Instruments  
 Discriminative vs. Evaluative Instruments  
 Application of QOL Knowledge – Practical Importance and Meaning

**Oct. 21 - *Is HRQOL actually measured in the “real” world?***

A Change in One’s Self-Perception Secondary to Disease and Treatment  
 Body Image: Conceptual and Applied Considerations<sup>1</sup>  
 Commonly Evaluated Populations, Unique Populations and Associated Concerns  
 Communication Disorders  
 Pain and Suffering  
 QOL in Children: At Least Two Sides of a Coin – Children and their Parents

<sup>1</sup>Lecture (1- ½ hr) to be provided by Melissa Nash, BHSc, MSc (PhD Candidate)

**Oct. 28 - *What do the data say about HRQOL and QOL?***

The Influence of other Factors on QOL - Distress and Disease, Illness, and Treatment  
 Measuring Outcomes using HRQOL Instruments  
 Applications from the Literature  
 The Influence of other Factors on QOL - Distress and its Association with Disease, Illness, and Treatment  
 Fatigue and QOL<sup>2</sup>  
 Applications from the Literature and the Perception of Others

<sup>2</sup>Lecture (1 hr) to be provided by Grace Scott, BA, MSc (Candidate)

**Nov. 4 - Midterm Examination #2 (in class)**

**Nov. 11 – *I plan to be a health care provider; how can thinking about QOL help me?***

Considerations of Age, Gender, Culture, and Community  
 Utility of Measures of HRQOL as an Outcomes Metric: Some Examples  
 Relationship of HRQOL to Client-Centered Care; Family Considerations  
 Considerations of Age, Gender, Culture, and Community  
 Utility of Measures of HRQOL as an Outcomes Metric: Some Examples  
 Pulling it all Together...Subjective Impression and Objective Promise  
 Influence on Health Care and Public Policy

**Nov. 18 – *An entirely different way to learn!***

Cinema Academia and Discussion

***Questions for Midterm #3 (take home) will be provided on the OWL site at the end of class.***

**Nov. 24 – This is not a class day, but Midterm #3 is due by 12:00 p.m. – submit electronically.**

**Nov. 25 – *Continuing to learn in a different way!***

**December 2 – Completing the Circle**

What really defines HRQOL?

Can a Good QOL Exist in Illness?

Pulling it all Together...Subjective Impression and Objective Promise

The Reality of Life - Revisiting "the Passport"

***Final examination – As scheduled by the Office of the Registrar  
Details Forthcoming ASAP***

**Note:** Examinations must be taken on the day and time they are scheduled unless other arrangements are made due to health reasons that can be fully documented according to the requirement of the School of Health Sciences program and the University of Western Ontario. If an examination is missed without appropriate documentation as required, no make-up examination will be offered and the student will forfeit that portion of the exam weighting. All approvals for make-up exams must be processed through the School of Health Studies; once approved, they will notify the instructor as to whether a make-up exam is to be scheduled.