

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
LONDON, CANADA**

**School of Health Studies  
Health Sciences 3624B - Social Determinants of Mental Health  
Winter 2020**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will discuss the interplay between social and personal determinants of mental health. We will also discuss the interrelatedness of mental disorder, social inequity, and both trauma and adversity in childhood.

**More specifically:**

According to the World Health Organization “good mental health is integral to human health and well being”. Similarly, the United Nations Human Rights Council states, “there can be no health without mental health”. Although the importance of ‘good mental health’ has risen to an unprecedented state of priority in health-care systems all over the world, burdens resulting from compromised mental health, including personal, family, community, workplace, economic impacts, are increasing, worldwide. The serious impact of trauma, adversity and social inequality, particularly in childhood and adolescence, on mental health in adulthood are now widely recognized as primary precursors to the occurrence of compromised mental health later in life. The design and delivery of services, supports and treatments that are trauma-informed, and that address various impacts imposed by individual, family, and community social inequity, is the new gold standard in mental-health care.

This course focuses on social determinants of mental health, with an emphasis on trauma-informed concepts of mental health that acknowledge the central roles of childhood adversity and social inequity.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the concepts mental health and mental disorder as they have been conceptualized by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Human Rights Council.
- Describe and discuss some of the potential effects of adversity in childhood on overall mental health.
- Describe and discuss some of the potential effects of social inequality and inequity on overall mental health.
- Describe and illustrate key paradigm shifts and various agendas (political, professional, corporate, patient care) in mental health.
- Write a comprehensive and coherently articulated analytical report of a piece of relevant grey literature.

**Prerequisites:** Health Sciences 1002A/B

**NOTE:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not 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

**Extra Information:** 3 contact hours.

**Course Weight:** 0.50

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Dr. Marnie Wedlake, PhD, RP  
Email: mwedlak@uwo.ca **(contact me using this email address only)**  
Office: HSB 340

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Teaching Assistant:** TBA

**Course Website:** <https://owl.uwo.ca>

**Days & Times of Lectures:** Wednesdays - 2:30pm to 3:30pm

Fridays - 11:30am to 1:30pm

**Class attendance is required.**

**Please see the SHS attendance policy under General Course Notes.**

**Location of Lectures:** SSC 3024

## **ASSIGNED READINGS AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS:**

**There are no textbooks for this course.** All assigned readings will be available, without cost, through Western's Library System, online and/or through our OWL site.

Readings and course materials will be assigned for each topic of the course. Sources might include peer reviewed journal articles, grey literature, popular press articles, films, video clips, website content, etc. Materials assigned will correspond to the lecture topic. Additional materials may be assigned at any time, and will be posted on the course website. Students are responsible for the content covered in all assigned course materials.

**A COMPLETE LIST OF LECTURE TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS WILL BE POSTED TO OWL BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS.**

## **LEARNING ENVIROMENT**

This course experience will function according to the assumption that successful learning happens in environments where learning is co-created by the instructor and the students.

As the instructor, I will endeavour to provide students with classes that are optimally engaging, motivating, and interesting. In return, I will expect students to attend all classes, and to contribute to the collaborative nature of the learning experience through their active participation in discussions, by completing the assigned readings, and by offering constructive feedback as will be deemed useful to the overall learning experience. Ideally, we will co-create a learning environment that welcomes and encourages group dialogues that are dynamic, passionate, and open-minded. That is, a learning experience that is vital and engaging for all.

Reading during a lecture, using cell phones/texting, not turning off cell phone ringers, the disturbing consumption of food or drink, littering the classroom, the use of iPods, Facebook, Twitter, and other activities which may impede the ability of you or other students to learn are unacceptable behaviours. As a collective, we will create a learning environment that is supported by civility and mutual respect. In doing so, we will set the stage for a healthy and stimulating intellectual forum. Finally, if you are having problems with any aspect of the course, please contact me. I am committed to your learning experience, I am approachable, and I welcome your comments, your constructive criticisms and, of course, your questions.

**NOTE: Attendance is required to pass this course** and medical documentation will be required for absences. Any such documentation must be submitted, by the student, directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office. It will be the Dean's office that will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. **SEE THE NOTE ON ATTENDANCE UNDER 'GENERAL COURSE NOTES'.**

## EVALUATION

**1. Attendance & Participation - 4%** - Attendance is expected for every class (excepting absences that are self-reported or that qualify for academic accommodation).

**2. Mid-term Examination - 31%** - **In class on Friday February 28<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

**3. Written Assignment (expected length = 5 to 6 pages) - 35%** - **Due date: Must be submitted through OWL by 11:55pm on Wednesday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

**4. Final Examination - 30%** - **Scheduled by The Registrar, during the final exam period.**

## NOTE REGARDING EXAMS:

- **The final exam is cumulative.**
- 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.
- Makeup exams will be different from those originally scheduled, and may include written and/or short answer questions.
  - Makeup examinations will be scheduled by the School of Health Studies. If you are unable to write the makeup examination for either of the two midterm examinations (for **any** reason), the value of that exam will be shifted to your final.
- Examinable materials may include any content covered/presented in classes, including: lecture content, content presented by guest speakers, any/all assigned readings, videos, etc.

## GENERAL COURSE NOTES

### ***Regarding the Use of Plagiarism Checking Software:***

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>)

### ***Academic Consideration***

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;
- (ii) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- (iii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- **Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
- **Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic counselling within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities**

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

- a. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;
- b. The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30pm;
- c. The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period, should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (e.g., write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- d. The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30am on the day following the last day of classes each semester, regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- e. Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations (i.e., “bellringers”);
- f. Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;

Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed.

***Attendance:***

In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets specific expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes.

Regular attendance is expected and essential for all courses, but particularly those that include participation grades in their evaluation schemes. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor's guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures.

Persistent absenteeism may have serious repercussions, and may result in you failing this course. In this course, the equivalent of 3 weeks of unexcused absences, per term, will be considered to be persistent absenteeism. Persistent absenteeism will result in you being contacted by the instructor, who may request a meeting. Continued absence after this point will be reported to the Undergraduate Chair, and may result in debarment from writing the final examination, and/or submitting the final course paper. In such a case, you would receive a grade of zero on the evaluations from which you were debarred.

***On the Use of Electronic Devices:***

**During Exams:** Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

**During Lectures and Tutorials:** Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of**

lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

**Statement on Academic Offences:**

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/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Support Services:**

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>
2. Student Health -- <http://www.shs.uwo.ca/student/studenthealthservices.html>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombuds Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

**On Health and Wellness:**

*As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration fees. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca/>), or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>). Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.*

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [https://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/education/module.html](https://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html).

**The School of Health Studies grade policy:**

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

|    |          |  |
|----|----------|--|
| A+ | 90-100   | One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level  |
| A  | 80-89    | Superior work that is clearly above average                    |
| B  | 70-79    | Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory |
| C  | 60-69    | Competent work, meeting requirements                           |
| D  | 50-59    | Fair work, minimally acceptable.                               |
| F  | below 50 | Fail   |

It is expected that the grades for this course will be in the range of 74-78%. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student's grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.