

Western University
School of Health Studies
Health Sciences 4093F
Pandemic 101: Life, Law & Health under COVID-19

Instructor: Professor Jacob Shelley
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Office: Online
Office Hours: By appointment and as posted on OWL

TA hours will be posted at the beginning of term

Course Time: This course will be offered fully online and content will be released weekly.

Location: Online

Course Information

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus, deemed COVID-19, a pandemic. At that point, some thought that the pandemic had been called pre-emptively – a decision that few question now given the millions of cases globally. Since then, we have seen innumerable changes happening on a global scale. Economies are faltering, international travel has been diminished, education has been disrupted, millions have lost their employment, and, most tragically, hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost. This course has two aims: first, to explore pandemics generally and, second, to explore the COVID-19 pandemic. The course begins with an exploration of pandemics, including a history of pandemics, international governance of infectious diseases, and responses to past pandemics. This will be followed by an in-depth exploration of the response to and impact of COVID-19, with emphasis placed on exploring the legal response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, nationally and globally. Additionally, this course will reflect on the ethical and policy issues that arise, with particular attention paid to how vulnerable and marginalized populations have been impacted.

Course Objectives

This course aims to provide students with an understanding of pandemics, including how and when they are declared, the various tools used to manage and respond to pandemics, and their impact on society. Emphasis will be placed on legal responses. Given the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this course will ground all discussions in contemporary events and will reflect on current efforts to curb the transmission of COVID-19.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the history of pandemics and their impact, globally and nationally.
2. Understand who is responsible for declaring pandemics, and how that decision is made.
3. Understand and analyze the impact of a declaration of a pandemic domestically and internationally.
4. Identify the legal duties and rights of governments, health care professionals, essential workers and other parties deemed to have responsibilities during a pandemic, including obligations around testing, reporting, treatment and privacy.
5. Describe the various legal, ethical and policy responses to pandemics and analyze and evaluate how these responses impact societal institutions (e.g., health care, education, criminal justice), the economy, international relations, and private citizens.

6. Reflect on the legal rights of citizens, patients, and businesses during a pandemic.
7. Evaluate how vulnerable and marginalized populations are impacted by pandemic policies and to appraise who holds responsibility to ensure that the health of these populations is protected.
8. Evaluate Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in comparison with other commonwealth countries.

Course Materials

Materials will be posted on OWL. The reading schedule for each class will be available on the OWL course page and in the following pages of this document.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants for this course will be announced at a future date.

Email Policy

Email is the primary method I will use (primarily through OWL) to communicate with students. Be sure to check your email regularly or you may miss important information. If you wish to forward your mail to some other address, make sure you set your UWO account to do so properly. Also, please ensure that your UWO mailbox (and the one being forwarded to) does not get so full that emails are rejected.

IMPORTANT: please do not send the instructor or TAs emails – you are required to post all course-related inquires to the discussion board on OWL. Emails to the instructor should be used as a last resort, and should be used for confidential matters only. All emails to the instructor must include HS 4093F as the subject.

OWL

The course page for Pandemic 101 is available on OWL. You can log into the course website at <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>.

Schedule

It is critical that students pay attention to the course schedule, distributed at the start of term.

Evaluation

The grades in the course are based on three components: personal reflections, participation and discussion, and two reports, the second of which will be treated like a take-home exam.

Assignment	%	Due Date
Personal Reflection 1	5%	September 15, 11:59 pm
Personal Reflection 2	5%	December 9, 11:59 pm
Pandemic Pub Discussion	10%	Throughout term
In the News	20%	Throughout term
Perception of Pandemics	15%	October 31, 11:59 pm
Preparing for and Responding to Pandemics	45%	December 16, 11:59 pm

Personal Reflections (10%):

Each student will submit two personal reflections – the first at the start of the term, the second at the end. These reflections will have specific questions that the student must answer, reflecting on their own experience and knowledge about pandemics in general and COVID-19, specifically.

(a) Personal Reflection 1 (5%) – Due September 15th, 11:59 pm

Details to be released on first day of class.

This assignment will be submitted through OWL.

(b) Personal Reflection 2 (5%) – Due December 9th, 11:59 pm

Details to be released December 1st.

This assignment will be submitted through OWL.

Participation & Discussion (30%):

Moving to an online, asynchronous format presents some challenges with encouraging participation and discussion – but it would be a pity to allow those challenges to prevent us from having an engaged, respectful discussion about pandemics and, more specifically, about the COVID-19 pandemic. While the impact of the pandemic will be felt differently, we all have our own stories, experiences, insights, perspectives, criticisms, and concerns about COVID-19. To this end, the following assessments are aimed to initiate discussions. Note: you will be assessed based on the quality of your comments and not simply the quantity.

(c) Pandemic Pub (worth 10%) – Ongoing throughout term

Over the term, I will post a series of 30 minute “Pandemic Pub” videos. These videos will be a discussion between myself and several guests, which will change each week. Each Pandemic Pub will have a theme and a few questions to spur on discussions, but no formal format or approach. Students will be required to engage in online discussions about four of these videos. Discussion forums will be created for this purpose. Students will critically engage with the issues discussed in these videos, raise questions and respond to the issues/questions raised by their classmates. At a minimum, it is expected that students will post several times for each discussion. The discussions will be moderated to some extent. Quality and relevance of comments will matter more than quantity. Marks may be deducted for comments that are rude or disrespectful.

(d) In the News (worth 20%) – Ongoing throughout term

Each student will be responsible for identifying two news articles related to two different topics discussed in class. Each news article must be uploaded to OWL along with a maximum 400 word critique/evaluation/commentary on the news story. Students will also be required to comment on two of the news articles and commentary posted by their classmates from two different topics (i.e., not topics they uploaded articles for). Further instructions/guidance will be provided in class.

Reports (60%):

(e) Perception of a Pandemic (15%)– Due October 31st, 11:59 pm

Popular culture and media has long been obsessed with pandemics, as reflected in the numerous films, Hollywood movies, tv shows, and popular fiction focused on pandemics. These representations suggest catastrophic results for humanity, depicting doomsday scenarios (e.g., *Contagion*), the potential extermination of the human species (e.g., *Last Man on Earth*), and, frequently, zombies (e.g., *World War Z*, *The Walking Dead*). The media representations of a pandemic are not without consequence. As we live through the most serious pandemic of the last century, it is worth reflecting on what these representations of a pandemic mean, whether they were accurate, and how future pandemic stories may be told.

Students will be assigned to review a popular culture representation of a pandemic and then prepare a report based on questions. Further details about this assignment will be provided on OWL.

(f) Preparing for and Responding to Pandemics (45%) – Due December 16th, 11:59 pm

Students will write a policy brief as a take-home exam. This brief will be written for a government seeking guidance, based on experience with COVID-19, with preparing for and responding to pandemics, focusing on one of the topics discussed in class (e.g., education). Instructions for this take-home exam will be provided on the last day of classes. Students will be given an option of topics, but will be required to follow specific guidance about format, length, research required, etc.

Final Grade

If necessary, the final grades in the course may be adjusted up or down to comply with the grading norms in the Faculty of Health Sciences. 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 fall between 74 and 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.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices will be permitted during class time, but discouraged.

Additional Statements

Prerequisites

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.

Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

English Proficiency for the Assignment of Grades

Visit the website http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/english.pdf

Accommodation for Medical Illness or Non-Medical Absences

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:

1. Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;
2. 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
3. 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:

1. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. 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");
6. 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;

7. 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. Participation means not only attendance, but 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.

Scholastic 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 website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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. Additionally, 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>).

Recording prohibited

Course instructors own and retain the intellectual property rights of their teaching materials. These rights extend to materials used in online settings and digital learning management systems like Owl, Zoom, and TopHat. Students do **not** have permission to make audio or video recordings of lectures, take pictures of lecture material, or distribute any course content. It is the decision of the instructor as to how and when teaching materials can be shared or used. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of pre-recorded lectures or other course materials, nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

Wellness & Support Services

As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. Western provides several online and 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.

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

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health – <http://www.uwo.ca/health/services/students/index.html>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombuds Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

Course Schedule

Given the online nature of this course, I have not assigned specific dates to topics. Instead, I am creating the schedule and reading list by weeks. The course is divided into two sections. Part I will provide the background about pandemics. Some of these weeks will be divided into two parts, which will include a general discussion about pandemics and a more detailed discussion about COVID-19. Part II of this course will use the COVID-19 pandemic to engage in a more detailed discussion about pandemics.

Date	Topic	Readings
Part I: Pandemics 101		
Week 1	Introduction to Pandemics	
Week 2	A History of Pandemics	
Week 3	Pandemic Preparedness & Response	
Part II: Evaluating Pandemics Through the Lens of COVID-19		
Week 4	The Politics of a Pandemic	
Week 5	The Science of a Pandemic	
Week 6	The Law of a Pandemic	
Week 7	The Ethics of a Pandemic	
Week 8	The Economic Impact of a Pandemic	
Week 9	The Social Impact of a Pandemic	
Week 10	The Psychological Impact of a Pandemic	
Week 11	The Victims of a Pandemic	
Week 12	Recovering from a Pandemic	