The University of Western Ontario  
School of Health Studies  

Health Sciences 4991G - 2022  
Independent Study in the Health Sciences

The Independent Study in the Health Sciences course was created and previously taught by Dr. Andrew Johnson. In 2022, the course will be coordinated by Dr. Aleksandra Zecevic in the Fall semester and Dr. Marie Savundranayagam in the Winter semester. All teaching materials provided on OWL are Dr. Johnson’s original contributions.

We hope your independent study experience will be inspiring and empowering.

1.0  CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
Readings and discussion on, or field experience in, selected topics in Health Sciences agreed upon through consultation between the student and the supervising professor
Prerequisites: Enrolment in the fourth year of an Honors Specialization module in the School of Health Studies with a minimum average of 75%

2.0  COURSE INFORMATION
Coordinators: Dr. Aleksandra Zecevic (azecevi2@uwo.ca) - Fall semester  
Dr. Marie Savundranayagam (msavund@uwo.ca) - Winter semester
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom (see OWL signup for details)
Course Website: https://owl.uwo.ca

3.1  TEXTBOOKS
There are no required readings of any kind for this course, other than readings that may be provided by your supervisor or generated collaboratively within your project.

4.0  COURSE OBJECTIVES
The purpose of this course is to provide students with practical research experience under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Students will have an opportunity to develop their research skills and learn to apply these skills to a contemporary health issue.

5.1  EVALUATION
Research proposal 2022.01.24  4%
TCPS 2 Ethics Certificate 2022.02.14  4%
Abstract 2022.03.07  4%
Online presentation 2022.03.18 14%
Peer evaluation 2022.04.01  4%
Independent study project report 2022.04.08 70%
*Research Proposal.* You are responsible for submitting a research proposal to the course coordinator that indicates the learning goals and objectives for your independent study, created in consultation with your faculty mentor. This assignment must be submitted through the assignment tool in OWL, **no later than 4:30 pm on 2022.01.24.** This research proposal should be approximately 500 words in length (2 double-spaced pages). This is designed to be a brief description of your plan of action for the developing project. It is possible that the objectives may change over the course of the independent study – this is perfectly understandable, and any such changes should be documented by you and approved by your faculty mentor. It is not necessary to re-submit the proposal should your plans change during the course of the independent study.

*TCPS 2 Ethics Certificate.* On your own, you will complete the TCPS 2 Core tutorial ([https://tcps2core.ca](https://tcps2core.ca)), and submit your ethics certificate (online, through the assignment tool in OWL), as proof of completion of the tutorial, **no later than 4:30 pm on 2022.02.14.**

*Project Abstract.* You will create an abstract for your online presentation and submit this to the course coordinator (through the assignment tool in OWL), **no later than 4:30 pm on 2022.03.07.** The abstract is to be approximately 250 words in length and should be formatted as an “unstructured abstract.” Further details as to how to structure an abstract is provided in the online lecture videos.

*Online Presentation.* In lieu of giving an in-person presentation, you will create an online presentation using the resources available at [PowToon.com](https://powtoon.com). The goal of this PowToon presentation is to showcase the work that you have done within your independent study. Video presentations should be 3 to 5 minutes in duration. Detailed information is available on OWL.

After you have created your online presentation, you will “present” it to a group of your peers, on a page that you will customize on OWL. This page should present your abstract, a link to your presentation, and any additional information that you would like to provide to your audience (e.g., reference list or a handout). You will also upload a script of your presentation through the assignment tool in OWL – this is not explicitly “graded” by the instructor (or your peer reviewers) but may be used as reference during the grading process. **Failure to upload a script of the presentation will result in a loss of 4/14 marks for this evaluation component. This script is due at 4:30 pm on 2022.03.18.** Given that we are expecting all students to view all presentations, approximately two weeks have been set aside within the course for these presentations. All of the presentations are due at the same time, and you may work through the presentations at your own pace. Your presentation is worth 14%:

- 9/14 grade assigned by the course coordinator
- 5/14 grade assigned by five of your peers (i.e., the average of their assessment)

*Peer Evaluation.* As noted above, your presentation grade will be partly determined by peer evaluation. More information will be provided on OWL. **Your peer evaluation must be completed (and submitted) by 9:00 am on 2022.04.01.**
Independent Study Project. The nature of the project and its specifications are organized and agreed to between you and your faculty mentor. The project in its entirety is to be submitted online no later than 4:30 pm on 2022.04.08. The paper is to be at least 2,000 words in length, not including references, title page, and abstract. It should be double-spaced and formatted using a font size no smaller than 12 points. You are encouraged to use subheadings to identify the main sections of the paper. Referencing and formatting of the paper should conform to the most recent version of APA guidelines. Your paper will be checked for textual similarity and plagiarism using Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

5.2 LATE POLICY
All assignments are due on the date and at the time indicated. Late assignments are penalized at a rate of 1% for each full hour after the deadline. No assignments will be accepted more than four days late. This includes your final deliverable for the independent study (i.e., the deliverable that is graded by your supervisor).

6.0 TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week starting</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022.01.03</td>
<td>Welcome and orientation to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.01.07</td>
<td>Asking good questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.01.14</td>
<td>Putting together an effective research proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.01.21</td>
<td>Accessing library resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.01.28</td>
<td>Electronic reference management</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.02.04</td>
<td>Scientific and scholarly writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.02.11</td>
<td>Putting together an effective abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.02.18</td>
<td>Putting together an effective online presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.02.25</td>
<td>No content – Reading Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022.03.04</td>
<td>Independent work on online presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.03.11</td>
<td>Independent work on online presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.03.18</td>
<td>Online Presentations (and Peer Feedback)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022.03.25</td>
<td>Online Presentations (and Peer Feedback)</td>
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<td>2022.04.01</td>
<td>Online Presentations (and Peer Feedback)</td>
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7.1 GENERAL COURSE NOTES

**Student Code of Conduct**
You are expected to comply with the Code of Student Conduct at all times. The purpose of this Code 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.

**Course Website**
This asynchronous course is “paperless”, and as such the course website will be your sole source for lecture presentations, readings, and course information (including this course outline). Due to privacy regulations, grades will only be provided to you through OWL. Grades will not be discussed or conveyed via email or over the phone under any circumstance.

**Email**
For all correspondence regarding this course, please use your UWO email address. Because the University ‘anti-spam’ programs often reject emails from non-UWO email addresses, there is no guarantee that I will receive your emails if you send them from a public email program – or from any off-campus server. Course coordinators will do our best to answer your emails promptly.

**Grade Adjustments**
Final grades in this course will be “round off” and calculated out of 100%. Do not expect “bump up” of the final grade, including grades that end in a “9”.

**Policy on Lecture Materials (and other content on OWL)**
Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

7.2 POLICY REGARDING ILLNESS
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:

- Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;
- 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
- 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 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., completing and submitting assignments, participating in or evaluating 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-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;
f. 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.

7.3 POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and you are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: Academic Calendar - Western University (uwo.ca)
7.4 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it’s important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/. You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery (http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca) 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: Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca). It’s also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don’t want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

7.5 SUPPORT SERVICES

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

1. Student Development Centre -- http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/
2. Student Health -- https://www.uwo.ca/health/
3. Registrar’s Office -- http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/
4. Ombudsperson Office -- http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/

8.0 PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

In the first instance, all appeals of a grade must be made to the course instructor (informal consultation). If you are not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal must be sent to the Undergraduate Chair for the School of Health Studies. If you consider this response to be unsatisfactory, you may then appeal to the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. If this response is unsatisfactory, you may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office.