

**Syllabus: Special Topics: HS 3092B
Impacts of Climate Change on Health
Winter 2023**

Instructor: Dr. Lesley Gittings

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Building

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Date/Time: Monday 1:30-2:30pm; Tuesday 10:30-12:30

Location: University Community Centre Room 41

Teaching Assistant: Sanna Rao

Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:5:30 pm (in office) or by appointment.

Course Description

This is an advanced undergraduate course that explores the impacts of climate change on human health. Students will learn about the impacts of environmental changes – such as changing temperatures and precipitation, extreme weather events and resource scarcity– on population health outcomes. Specifically, this course will equip students with a nuanced understanding of the following cross-cutting issues:

1. Environmental justice

Students will learn about environmental justice, and relationships between the social, environmental, and structural production of health and illness. We will focus on the health of populations that face a disproportionate burden of climate-change-related environmental impacts for social, geographic and structural reasons. These groups may include: people living in humanitarian contexts or who have been forced to migrate, Indigenous peoples who have been dispossessed of land due to colonization, racialized peoples, women and gender-non-conforming folks, people living in poverty and those who are precariously housed or homeless.

2. Diverse impacts of climate change on health-related outcomes

Students will learn about relationships between climate change and diverse health-related outcomes, with a focus non-communicable and communicable diseases, with attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

3. Climate change impacts on human health across the life course

Students will learn about health-related impacts of climate change from a life course perspective. Specific attention will be given to age-related environmental and socio-structural impacts of climate change, with a focus on childhood, adolescence and older age.

4. Place and environment

This course will focus on readings and case studies from diverse geographic contexts.

Specifically, students will learn about geographies that have seen severe climate-change related impacts in places least able to buffer against these changes. Special attention will be given to Eastern Africa, the Arctic and small-island states.

Prerequisites

Prerequisites: Minimum of 60% [mandatory] in each of Health Sciences 1001A/B and Health Sciences 1002A/B.

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisite Checking

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

Readings and course materials:

There are no textbooks for this course. All readings will be available, at no cost, through Western’s Library System, online and/or through our OWL site. In this course students will engage a variety of knowledges from within and beyond academia, including traditional, subjugated and Indigenous knowledges, activism, and art (e.g. visual, performances, written). In addition to peer reviewed journal articles, additional sources may include grey literature, policy documents, art (visual, performance, written), video, popular press articles and website content among others.

Students can expect 3 readings and/or alternative sources to explore each week. 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 will be posted to OWL before the first class. Required readings and resources will be posted on OWL on a weekly basis.

*Please see the end of the syllabus for sample weekly readings.

Assessment

Below you find a general description of each method of assessment. Detailed guides for each assignment will be delivered in a timely fashion throughout the course.

Assessment Method	Date	Weight (%)
Group Assignment (Presentation)	Weeks 5-12: Each student will co-deliver 1 presentation	30%
Mid-term exam	February 14 th	30%
Final research paper	April 7 th	40%

Mid-term Exam

This mid-term exam will include short answer and essay questions.

Group Assignment

In small groups, students will prepare and deliver a 10-15 minute presentation on a current climate and health-related issue. While the format of the presentation is flexible, each group will be asked to respond to three critical questions during the course of their presentation. A class discussion will follow. Group presentations will take place during weeks 5-11. Further detail, alongside sample topics and a sign-up process will be provided during the first weeks of class.

Research Paper

Students will write an end of year research paper. Further instructions and a rubric for evaluation will be disseminated in the first weeks of the course. This assignment must be submitted by the end of the submission date using the assignment tool on OWL.

Extensions and late assignments

In order to be fair to your peers, the instructor and teaching assistant, assignments submitted after the deadline which did not receive a written, pre-arranged approval for extension by the instructor will be penalized by 5 percentage points per day (including Saturday and Sunday) and will only be accepted up to seven days after the due date/time. If you think you will be unable to hand in an assignment on time, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Contingency plan for in-person pivoting to online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. For those classes in which we use this technology, it is your responsibility to ensure that the device is activated

and functional. You must speak with the course instructor immediately, if you have any concerns about whether or not your clicker is malfunctioning.

You must use only your own clicker. For all components of this course in which clicker records are used to compute a portion of the grade:

- The use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence;
- The possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offense

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) 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
- (ii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to academic advising office 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 an SMC
- *Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;*
- *Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic advising office within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities*

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.*

Plagiarism and other 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 Web site:

https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_189

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>).

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/>

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 \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/health_wellness/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.familyserVICETHAMESVALLEY.COM/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/health_wellness/). 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.

Grading

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 74-78%. 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.

Common Concerns

The table below summarizes a list of common student concerns and how they are to be resolved. If you have a concern that is not listed here, then please email your instructor.

Concern	How to address concern
Course administrative matters	Read through the course outline or email instructor if question cannot be answered from information in the course outline
Course content questions	Refer to the OWL Resources (notes, calendar, etc). Email the instructor.
Grade disputes and requests for appeals	A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination must first contact their instructor to discuss such matters. Visit the following website for guide on submitting an appeal: https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html

*Sample Readings:

Introductory Readings (Weeks 1 & 2)

Romanello, M. et al. (2021). The 2021 report of the *Lancet* Countdown on health and climate change: code red for a healthy future. *The Lancet*, 389 (103110) 1619-1662.

Atwoli, L. et al. (2021). Call for emergency action to limit global temperature increases, restore biodiversity and protect health. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 385, 1134-1137.

Liu, A. et al. (2021). Toward an integrated system of climate change and human health indicators: a conceptual framework. *Climatic Change* 166, 49.

Boylan, S., et al. (2018). A conceptual framework for climate change, health and wellbeing in NSW, Australia. *Public Health Res Pract.* 28(4):e2841826.

Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Lieber, M., et al. (2021). The Synergistic Relationship Between Climate Change and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: A Conceptual Framework. *AIDS and Behaviour* 25, 2266–2277.

Logie, C.H, et al. (2021). Exploring resource scarcity and contextual influences on wellbeing among young refugees in Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, Uganda: findings from a qualitative study. *Conflict and Health.* Jan 7;15(1):3.

FÒS FEMINISTA (2022). Climate Change is a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Issue. <https://fosfeminista.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FOS-FEMINISTA-FACT-SHEET-CLIMATE.pdf>

Climate Change and Health: Life Course Perspectives

Helldén, D. et al. (2021). Climate change and child health: a scoping review and an expanded conceptual framework, *Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(3), e164 - e175

Tilstra, M. H., et al. (2021). Risk and resilience: How is the health of older adults and immigrant people living in Canada impacted by climate- and air pollution-related exposures? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 10575.