

Behavioral and Environmental Determinants of Obesity

HSC 4174 | Fall 2023

Welcome to *Behavioral and Environmental Determinants of Obesity*! Obesity is a condition that is truly fascinating to study because the causes are so complex and wide-ranging. Additionally, options for preventing and treating obesity are rapidly being developed and tested. This course will introduce you to the complexity of the causes and treatments of obesity, and provide tools for you to evaluate future research so you can keep up with the rapidly evolving science of obesity. We will consider biological, psychological, social, environmental, and policy-related causes and interventions.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students are expected to successfully:

- ✓ Explain the extent of obesity in the US and globally
- ✓ Discuss ways in which obesity is a public health concern.
- ✓ Analyze factors potential causes of obesity at different levels, including individual, social, and environmental/ecological.
- ✓ Analyze claims of obesity causality and of the effectiveness of interventions to treat or prevent obesity, including behavioral, medical, environmental, and policy interventions.
- ✓ Apply knowledge about determinants of obesity to the development of strategies to promote a healthy weight.

Instructor

Megan McVay, PhD

Associate Professor

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Text & Reading Material

- Readings posted to Canvas
- No textbook

Office Hours

By appointment. I am very happy to meet at a variety of times. Email me to set up a time.

Course Requirements

Quizzes, reading annotations, and course assignments will be used to assess students' academic standing in this course.

Total points possible for this course is 1000.

Course Quizzes

6 quizzes (1 per module) worth 60 points each; 360 points total

Overview: At the end of each module, students will complete a multiple-choice quiz that covers the material covered in the lectures, reading, and other activities (such as podcasts or videos).

Reading annotations

7 annotations worth 35 points each; 245 points total

Overview: For most assigned readings in this course, you will complete an annotation of the reading on Perusall. Perusall is a tool that allows you and your classmates to complete a shared annotation, including allowing you to view and engage with classmate's annotations. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to read the article, post annotations, and to reply to other student's posts in Perusall.

Course Assignments

5 assignments (some with multiple parts) worth varying point values; 385 points total

Overview: There are several assignments in this course that require you to apply the course material to create products, such as letters to public officials, a research policy brief, and a video presentation. Most of these are individual projects, and one has a group component.

Introductory assignments

Syllabus quiz and introducing yourself at course start; 10 points total

Overview: At the beginning of the course you will take a simple quiz on the syllabus and also introduce yourself to your classmates on CANVAS.

Late assignments will incur a 20% point deduction for each day they are late.

Requirement for make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Grading Standards

A	= 100-93	C(S)	= 76.99-73
A-	= 92.99-90	C-(U)	= 72.99-70
B+	= 89.99-87	D+	= 69.99-67
B	= 86.99-83	D	= 66.99-63
B-	= 82.99-80	D-	= 62.99-60
C+	= 79.99-77	E	= 59.99-0

See current UF Grading Policies for further details:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Schedule

<i>Module 1: Epidemiology of Obesity</i>		
Lesson 1	Introduction to obesity	
Lesson 2	Obesity prevalence across groups	
<i>Module 2: Biological Determinants and Treatments</i>		
Lesson 1	Biological determinants of obesity	
Lesson 2	Targeting biological determinants to address obesity	
<i>Module 3: Dietary Factors and Obesity Research</i>		
Lesson 1	Dietary factors and research: Part 1	
Lesson 2	Dietary factors and research: Part 2	
<i>Module 4: Environmental and Economic Factors in Obesity</i>		
Lesson 1	Environmental factors	
Lesson 2	Economic factors	
<i>Module 5: Psychosocial Determinants and Stigma</i>		
Lesson 1	Social influence and mental health	
Lesson 2	Stigma, binge eating, and addiction	
<i>Module 6: Psychosocial interventions</i>		
Lesson 1	Behavioral interventions for adults	
Lesson 2	Child & family interventions	

Course Policies & Information

Grade Appeal Policy:

Should you want to contest a grade, you will have up to five (5) days after a grade has been posted to contact me and discuss your issue; after which the grade is final. Grades are based on a point scale and will not be rounded. Discussion about grades will occur in-person or via a phone or video call, not via email.

Honor Code Policy:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” The following pledge will be either required or implied on all work:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

All students must adhere to university regulations regarding academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty (including but not limited to any form of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, etc.) will not be tolerated. Any student guilty of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade (E) for the course, and the matter will be forwarded to the UF Office Student Affairs and the Dean of Students.

It is the duty of the student to abide by all rules set forth in the UF Undergraduate Catalog. Students are responsible for reporting any circumstances, which may facilitate academic dishonesty. University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Copyright Statement:

The materials used in this course are copyrighted. The content presented is the property of UF and may not be duplicated in any format without permission from the College of Health and Human Performance and UF, and may not be used for any commercial purposes.

Content includes but is not limited to syllabi, videos, slides, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy or distribute the course materials, unless permission is expressly granted. Students violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the UF Conduct Code.

Diversity and Inclusion

I endorse this statement about respect for diversity and inclusion: “I strive to make this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, social classes, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, documentation statuses, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. This does not mean we cannot disagree or have different ideas. It does mean we try to consider perspectives other than our own, though they may differ from our own beliefs/experiences. If you experience disrespect or discrimination in this class, please report your experiences to me.” (Statement courtesy of Cal Poly Center for Teaching, Learning, & Technology)

I endorse the following UF-suggested comments on preferred names and name changes: “It is important to the learning environment that you feel welcome and safe in this class; and that you are comfortable participating in class discussions and communicating with me on any issues related to the class. If your preferred name is not the name listed on the official UF roll, please let me know as soon as possible by e-mail or otherwise. I would like to acknowledge your preferred name, and pronouns that reflect your identity. Please let me know how you would like to be addressed in class, if your name and pronouns are not reflected by your UF-rostered name. I welcome you to the class and look forward to a rewarding learning adventure together. You may also change your “Display Name” in Canvas. Canvas uses the “Display Name” as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as “Ally” instead of “Allison.” To update your display name, go to one.ufl.edu, click on the dropdown at the top right, and select “Directory Profile.” Click “Edit” on the right of the name panel, uncheck “Use my legal name” under “Display Name,” update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click “Submit” at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records.”

Course Policies & Information

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents the objectives and tentative plans for the course. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, will be communicated clearly, are not unusual, and should be expected.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

I care about your health and wellbeing. I am happy to discuss any challenges you are having this semester—please reach out if you want to talk.

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

[E-learning technical support](#), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

[Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

[Library Support](#), Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[Student Complaints Campus](#)

[On-Line Students Complaints](#)