

Behavioral and Environmental Determinants of Obesity

HSC 4174/ HSC 5925 | Fall 2024

This course will examine the causes of obesity from a variety of perspectives. We will consider biological, psychological, social, environmental, and policy-related causes. We will also consider interventions to prevent and treat obesity.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students are expected to successfully:

- ✓ Explain the extent of obesity in the US and globally and discuss ways in which it is a public health concern.
- ✓ Identify and describe factors associated with the development 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

016 Florida Gym

megan.mcvay@ufl.edu

352-294-1638



Office Hours

- Monday 2-2:50 in office
- Tue 2-3 (zoom)
- Other times by appointment

Zoom link:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/2050849250>

Text & Reading Material

- Readings posted to Canvas
- No textbook

Class Location and Time

Location & Time:

- Monday 3-3:50: CSE E121
- Wednesday 3-4:55: FLG265



Course Requirements

Assignments, reading annotations, and quizzes will be used to assess student's academic standing in this course. **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>.

Reading Reflections, 150 points (~15%)

Overview: For 6 key course readings, students will complete “reading reflections” which incorporate a short quiz on the reading and reflection.

- Reading reflections are worth 25 points each for 150 total.

Course Assignments, 290 points (~29%)

Overview: Students are required to complete several individual and group assignments.

- Combined, assignments are worth 290 points.

In-class activities, 210 points (~21%)

Overview: We will engage in activities and discussion during class time.

- Students will get credit for engagement/completion of activity (typically this will be credit/no credit)
- There will be opportunity for credit in 16 class sessions, each worth 15 points. Your two lowest points will be dropped (i.e., you can miss up to 2 classes with in-class activities and not lose points)

Course Quizzes, 360 points (~36%)

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.

- Students are required to complete assessments in CANVAS using Honorlock. Please review each assessments instructions & guidelines.
- Quizzes open on Thursday of the final week of the module, and close on Sunday at 11:59.

Graduate students: Students taking this course for graduate credit will also complete an annotated bibliography covering 10 empirical articles in a topic area of interest. Worth 100 points.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	
Module 1: Epidemiology of Obesity		
Week #1-2 8/22-8/28	Introduction to obesity	
Week #3 9/2	Obesity prevalence across groups	9/2 is holiday
Module 2: Biological Determinants and Treatments		
Week #5 9/9	Biological determinants of obesity	
Week #6 9/16	Targeting biological determinants to address obesity	
Module 3: Dietary Factors and Obesity Research		
Week #7 9/23	Dietary factors and research: Part 1	
Week #8 9/30	Dietary factors and research: Part 2	
Module 4: Environmental and Economic Factors in Obesity		
Week #9 10/07	Environmental factors	No class Oct 7
Week #10 10/14	Enviro factors cont./ Economic factors	No class Oct 14
Week #11 10/21	Economic factors cont.	
Module 5: Psychosocial Determinants and Stigma		
Week #12 10/28	Social Influence and mental health	
Week #13 11/04	Stigma, binge eating, and addiction	
Module 6: Psychosocial interventions		
Week #14 11/11	Behavioral interventions for adults	11/11 is holiday
Week #15 11/18	Child & family interventions	
Week #16 12/2	Catch up/review	

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>

In-person Meeting Schedule

We will be meeting in Mon 3-3:50 and Wed 3-4:55, unless otherwise noted. Please always check your email/CANVAS the morning of classes, as I will post there that class is cancelled (e.g., due to illness).

Technology Devices Policy

You may use your laptop during class only for taking notes and engaging in activities requested by the instructor. Engaging in activities other than these can distract your classmates and is not permitted. I will occasionally walk around to ensure that no one is off-task, and will deduct 10 points from your final grade if you are engaging in computer use that is not permitted.

Cell phone use is not permitted during class time. Cell phones should not be on desks during class time.

Make Up Policy:

Late assignments will receive a 20% reduction from scored grades for each day they are late.

You are able to make up missed exams if you have documentation of a University-approved reason for missing class, including illness or family emergencies.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Course Policies & Information

Grade Appeal Policy:

Should you want to contest a grade, you will have up to three (3) 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/>

Class Recording Information

Per the House Bill 233 Intellectual and Viewpoint Diversity Act, students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

See additional details here: <http://aa.ufl.edu/policies/in-class-recording/>

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.

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](#).

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."

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](#)