

# Behavioral and Environmental Determinants of Obesity

HSC 4174/6179 | Fall 2025

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

**Layton Reesor-Oyer, PhD**

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## Text & Reading Material

- Readings Posted to Canvas
- No Textbook

## Class Location & Time

Monday 1:55 – 2:45

FLG 220

Wednesday 1:55 – 3:50

RNK 0215

## Office Hours

Wednesdays 10:00 – 12:00 in office or via zoom

Other times by appointment. E-mail to schedule.

# 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>.

## Annotations, 150 points (~15%)

**Students will complete annotations for 6 key course readings on Perusall which incorporate a short quiz on the reading and reflection.**

- Annotations are worth 25 points each for 150 total.

## Course Assignments, 290 points (~29%)

**Students are required to complete several individual and group assignments. Throughout the course. See course website (Canvas) for specific instructions and due dates.**

- Combined, assignments are worth 290 points.

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

**We will engage in activities and discussion during class time.**

- Students will earn 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%)

**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.**

- 6 quizzes (1 per module) worth 60 points each; 360 points total
- Students are required to complete assessments in CANVAS using Honorlock. Please review each assessment's instructions & guidelines.
- Quizzes open on Wednesday of the final week of the module (eg after we have covered all content), and close on the following Monday at 9:00 AM.

## Graduate Student Assignment

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

# Course Schedule

Week	Topic
<b>Module 1: Epidemiology of Obesity</b>	
Week 1 8/25 and 8/27	<b>Introduction to obesity</b>
Week 2 9/3	<b>Obesity prevalence across groups</b> <span style="float: right;">No class 9/1</span>
Week 3 9/8 and 9/10	<b>Obesity prevalence across groups (cont)</b>
<b>Module 2: Biological Determinants and Treatments</b>	
Week 4 9/15 and 9/17	<b>Biological determinants of obesity</b>
Week 5 9/22 and 9/24	<b>Targeting biological determinants to address obesity</b>
<b>Module 3: Dietary Factors and Obesity Research</b>	
Week 6 9/29 and 10/1	<b>Dietary factors and research: Part 1</b>
Week 7 10/6 and 10/8	<b>Dietary factors and research: Part 2</b>
<b>Module 4: Environmental and Economic Factors in Obesity</b>	
Week 8 10/13 and 10/15	<b>Environmental factors</b>
Week 9 10/20 and 10/22	<b>Economic factors</b>
<b>Module 5: Psychosocial Determinants and Stigma</b>	
Week 10 10/27 and 10/29	<b>Social Influence and mental health</b>
Week 11 11/3 and 11/5	<b>Stigma, binge eating, and addiction</b>
<b>Module 6: Psychosocial interventions</b>	
Week 12 11/10 and 11/12	<b>Behavioral interventions for adults</b>
Week 13 11/17 and 11/19	<b>Child &amp; family interventions</b>
Week 14 11/24 and 11/26	University Holiday- No Classes
Week 15 12/1 and 12/3	<b>Catch up and review</b>

## 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 person on Mondays and Wednesdays, unless otherwise noted. Please always check your email/CANVAS the morning of classes, as I will post there if class is cancelled (e.g., due to illness).

## Technology Devices Policy

You may use your laptop/tablet during class only for taking notes and engaging in class activities. 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. I will provide regular technology breaks.**

## 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 quizzes/assignments 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>.

## What to do if you are struggling?

Contact me as soon as possible! I want to help you be successful in this course, but I cannot provide additional assistance/support if I am not aware of a problem. The sooner you reach out, the sooner we can work together to find a solution.

## Academic Policies and Campus Resources

The most up-to-date information regarding academic policies and resources on campus is available here: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

## 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/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

### **Respectful Environment**

I strive to make this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs. 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.” (Edited statement courtesy of Cal Poly Center for Teaching, Learning, & Technology)

**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.